

II.

TWO UNRECORDED CROSSES IN WIGTOWNSHIRE. BY REV. R. S. G. ANDERSON, B.D., F.S.A. SCOT.

I. ST NINIAN'S CAVE.

In the spring of this year (1924) I had occasion to visit, with a friend, St Ninian's Cave, in Glasserton parish, Wigtownshire. The immediate



Fig. 1. Crosses at St Ninian's Cave, Wigtownshire.

approach is between two rock-walls that, before a fall of the roof, once formed part of the cave itself. On the west wall, about 25 feet from

the iron gate that guards the cave-mouth of to-day, there is a group of four crosses, all of one type. These are well known, and have been fully described to the Society (vide *Proceedings*, vol. xvii. p. 318, and vol. xix. p. 86). In Sir Herbert Maxwell's paper in vol. xix., fig. 1, p. 83, represents the topmost cross on the rock. Fig. 4, p. 85, shows the farthest to the left of the lower group. Fig. 5, same page, lies next on the right. The other, being imperfect, has not been figured. Our illustration (fig. 1) shows the grouping; and also the much-weathered condition to-day that makes the detail, especially of the shafts of the lower crosses, very uncertain. While examining this group, our attention was drawn to the traces of another figure close by. After removing some lichen, the much-weathered remains of a small incised cross were disclosed. It lies practically in line with the three lower crosses of the group, 10 inches to the caveward side of the nearest measuring from the centre of intersection of arms in each, and 23 feet from the gate. The figure consists of what is, roughly, a circle, 4 inches in diameter, defined by a single incised line that originally could not have been much more than $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch deep. Within this circle is an incised cross—the full-length double arms measuring vertically $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches and horizontally 3 inches. Each double arm is composed of two roughly parallel lines, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart, expanding at the extremities to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Each expansion begins about 1 inch from the end, and has inner lines curving parallel to the outer. The workmanship is very crude; the devotion of the pilgrim who may have cut the cross evidently having been on a higher plane than his craftsmanship.

II. BARMORE, PARISH OF KIRKOWAN.

On Barmore Farm, to the north of the Glenluce-Kirkcowan Road, and on the east bank of the Tarf, where a suspension footbridge leads over the water to Blairderry, a modern shrine, rudely constructed of drystone, is set against the inner side of the field dyke. The shrine holds the fragment of a cross-slab (fig. 2) which, about eight years ago, was found in the old ford at this place. As far as I can learn, there are no remains of any ancient church or graveyard in the neighbourhood, so that very probably the cross-slab stood in olden days by this ford to call the passers-by to an act of devotion.

The fragment is badly mutilated—the sculpturing on the left-hand side being almost wholly gone; but enough is left to disclose the original design, which has been that of a large central cross with a smaller cross in each angle. The stone to-day is 1 foot 7 inches in height and 1 foot 4 inches broad. The central cross is 14 inches long,

the shaft $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch broad, and the cross-arm 7 inches long by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch broad. There has been a boss, with a depression in the centre, at the intersection of arms with shaft. The whole has been outlined by a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch groove. Probably the shaft was not closed at the lower end.

In each angle of the central figure has been cut a linear cross. The



Fig. 2. Cross-slab near Barmore.

shaft of that in the lower right-hand angle measures $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length and the arm $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. In the upper right angle the stone has been weathered away, and only a part of the arm of the cross remains to show that it was similarly formed to that below, but on a smaller scale. Like all the other figures, the cross is formed by $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch grooves.

A novel feature of this sculpture is the enclosing of the upper part of the subordinate crosses by brackets. A small remnant of one on the left-hand side of the central cross suggests that the design on both

sides was exactly similar. The only other cross I know of as possessing anything like this feature (and that distantly) is the one found in Drummore (vide *Proceedings*, vol. ix. p. 581). But the other parts of the designs show no recognisable relationship. There seems a closer connection with the sculptures at Laggangarn, in New Luce parish. On the standing stones there one sees the same reduplication of crosses, and on a cross-slab near at hand there is a linear cross very similar to that on this Barmore slab. Laggangarn lies seven miles to the north-west on the same moor, and close to the same Tarf Water. The design and execution of the Barmore sculpture suggests a later period, but the sculptor may have received his inspiration at the Laggangarn shrine.

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