

## II.

### CROSSES AND ROCK SCULPTURES RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN WIGTOWNSHIRE. BY REV. R. S. G. ANDERSON, B.D., F.S.A.Scot.

#### CROSSES.

1. *Boghouse, Mochrum.*—In the end of September 1926, I was told of a cross having been seen in the wall of a byre at the farm of Boghouse, in Mochrum parish, Wigtownshire. The farm steading is at the entrance to the village of Mochrum as one comes from Portwilliam, and on the opposite side of the road from the Parish Church grounds. The cross-slab had been first noted as such by Mr Borthwick, a visitor from London, who was staying with friends in the district. From one of these I gained my first knowledge of it. The sculpture was so exposed and so distinct that the wonder is that it had not been noted and recorded long ago. Whilst crossing from the farm-house to examine it, my eye caught sight of another stone, on which was carving of a running design, built into the side wall of the byre. But neither of the stones could be examined satisfactorily as they were; and, at my request, Mr Goodwin, the proprietor, very kindly consented to allow them to be removed and placed in Whithorn Museum. This was done a few weeks later by H.M. Office of Works.

On being exposed the stones were found to be even more interesting than anticipated. Stone "A," as it lay in the end wall of the byre, had exposed a face with two incised crosses (fig. 1). The cross-slab was of whinstone, 3 feet 2 inches long, by 8 inches wide at its broadest part, by 5 inches thick. It had been cut about by the masons to give it a firmer seat in the byre wall, but happily not to such an extent as to injure the crosses or obscure the



Fig. 1. Front of Cross-slab "A" at Boghouse, Mochrum, before removal.

original proportions of the slab. On the front face there were incised the two crosses mentioned, the one above the other—the upper of Latin form and the lower of Maltese. The Latin cross is 1 foot 1 inch in length to the closed end of the shaft; but the side lines are continued below this, an inch on one side, and half an inch on the other. Similar

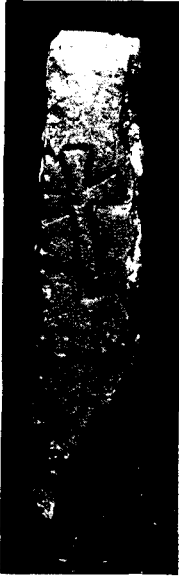


Fig. 2. Back of Cross-slab "A" at Boghouse, Mochrum.

lengthening of the closed shaft ends can be observed on other crosses in the district, *e.g.*, on the rock wall outside St Ninian's Cave. The shaft measures 8 inches below the arms, expanding but slightly from 1 inch in breadth at the offset. Above the arms, the shaft extends for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and expands to a breadth of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the top. The horizontal arm of the cross measures, over all,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and at each end expands to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

The Maltese cross is placed below the Latin cross so close as practically to be touched by the longer side of the shaft. The vertical arm measures  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, expanding from the intersections to 3 inches at each end. The horizontal arm is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, expanding from the intersections to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth at the ends.

When the cross-slab was taken out of the wall, it was found that a Latin cross was incised on the back (fig. 2). This cross is almost 11 inches long and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches over the cross-arm. The shaft is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches below the arms, expanding from 1 inch at the offset to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch at the end. It extends above the arms for 3 inches, expanding to 2 inches at the top. The arms of the cross are each  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches to the point of intersection, and expand to 2 inches at the ends.

The incised lines defining the three crosses are hacked deeply with a chisel, and are almost as sharp and clear to-day as when they were cut.

All "the internal evidence" points to a late date. The design is of a style that is characteristic of the eleventh century; and the careless setting and rude workmanship point to a period when the sculptor's art was far in its decline and the best traditions forgotten. The cross may date as late as the beginning of the twelfth century.

2. *Boghouse, Mochrum.*—Stone "B" (fig 3), when taken out of the wall, proved to be the most interesting of the various crosses that I have been privileged to bring, from time to time, to the notice of the Society. It is a fine example of "the rude stone monuments" that

mark in this district the period of the decadence of the sculptor's art before its revival under Norman influence.

The stone is 2 feet 10 inches long, 7 inches broad at the top, and is wedge-shaped, narrowing gradually to 1¼ inch at the foot. The thickness varies from 3½ inches to 5½ inches. Like the former cross-slab it is of whinstone, and like it, too, was evidently intended for a headstone.

Under a broad border at the top, the front face of the stone shows

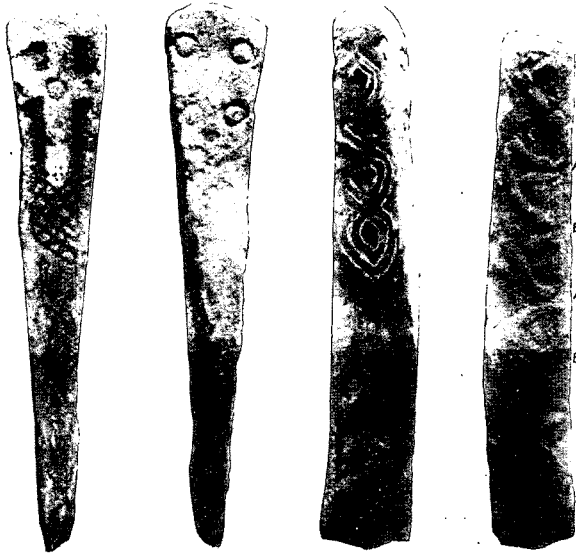


Fig. 3. Front, Back, and Sides of Cross-slab "B" at Boghouse, Mochrum.

a hammer-headed cross, with a boss at the centre of the intersection of the arms. The foot of this cross is V-shaped, and fits into a design of cross-broaching that extends for 4½ inches further down. The background of the cross is punched, evidently by the same tool that was used to work out most of the other ornament of the general design. On each side of the cross, the stone has a ½-inch border in high relief; and on the right-hand side this is continued down past the cross-broaching and some weathered markings that suggest the dragon symbol. This latter ornament has been so worn that it is now difficult to restore a definite outline to the details. The shaft of the cross below the arms has been decorated with an angular twist ornament in at least two of the loops of which are Maltese crosses. Owing

to the condition of the stone at present, it is impossible to say if there has been further decoration on the arms of the cross, but it has been suggested that there is something like a face on the upper arm, and that a crucifix may have been intended, the hands being extended on the lateral arms.

The shaft of the cross is 10 inches in length over all; and the cross-arm which merges into the border on each side is 6 inches.

On the back of the stone is carved a cross of the Whithorn type. The four bosses that separate the arms are complete; but the centre boss, though it has been marked out, has not been cut down. The marks of the punch used to excavate the rings are sharply visible. Below the cross-head there has evidently been a panel containing ornament, now badly defaced. The ornament has probably been a four-strand plait in relief.

On the right-hand side of the stone there is a twist ornament, outlined by a double strand, doubly interlaced, forming a series of loops arranged vertically. Only the two lowest are now fairly well defined.

On the left side of the stone, there has been carved a running design, formed by a strap twisted to make a series of triangles. The origin of this design is debatable, but the best solution seems to be that it is a carelessly executed attempt to produce a series of Stafford Knots (cf. *Early Christian Monuments*, fig. 597, p. 232.). This may well be, for these knots were used in Cumberland in the Viking period. Also, the double figure at the top of the series on this side of the stone is almost certainly a Stafford Knot. Probably a careless and incompetent carver proved unequal to copying his master's design correctly, and failed to observe that at *b, b*, he ought to have gone over and under, and should not have disjoined his straps as at *a, a*. The work is eleventh century, and probably late in the century.

In the field to the west of the Mochrum Church grounds, there once stood an old chapel; but the ruins have been long removed, and nothing now marks the site. Doubtless, from the graveyard that surrounded it, this late eleventh-century cross was borrowed for meaner uses.

In the walls of the Boghouse byre are visible many dressed stones. One of these, seen at the top of the cross-slab in fig. 1, is evidently for the foot of a pillar. Others have been cut as if meant for the sides of doorways or arches. But whether these came from the old chapel also, or from Druchtage Castle that once stood in the far corner of the field to the west of the farm, no one can now say.

I am greatly indebted to Mr W. G. Collingwood, M.A., F.S.A., for help in dating the stones, and in connection with the identification of the ornament.

## ROCK SCULPTURES.

1. *Drummoral, Isle of Whithorn.*—For some time I have been interested in the distribution of the cup-and-ring culture in Wigtownshire—especially in the Machars. When the *Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in Wigtownshire* was published, such rock sculptures were known at ten different places. These were all within a “corridor,” about six miles broad, running north-east across the peninsula from Luce Bay to Wigtown Bay. The northern line of this strip of land ran from Portwilliam in the west to Balfern in the east; and the southern line



Fig. 4. View of Cup- and Ring-marked Rock at Drummoral, Wigtownshire, from the north.

from Glasserton in the west through Gallows Outon towards the east. As stated in the *Inventory for The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright* the cup-and-ring sculptures in that county are not evenly distributed, but are located in three separate localities. I was desirous of finding how general the distribution and influence of this culture had been in Wigtownshire. Since the publishing of the *Inventory for Wigtownshire* other cup-and-ring rocks had been discovered in the county, but these also were in the “corridor” already mentioned. Last May, however, I was fortunate in locating a rock with cup-and-ring markings in the most southerly district of the Machars. In a field, known as the Forrans, on the farm of Drummoral, within a mile of the village of Isle of Whithorn, the rock lies in the north-east corner, where a line 70 yards long, drawn inwards from the north wall, touches a line drawn inwards 100 yards from the east wall. The rock is on the summit of an outcrop, and forms a raised block about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet square, inclining somewhat steeply towards the north, with the angles pointing about 10 degrees off the points of the compass (fig. 4).

There are six clear and unmistakable figures on the rock; other four that are almost certainly artificial cups; whilst other markings may have been cups but are now so weathered as to be indistinguishable from natural pittings (fig. 5).

On the highest point of the rock, in the angle towards the south, is a cup with two rings. The diameter over all is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches; that of the



Fig. 5. Rubbing of Cup- and Ring-marked Rock at Drummoral.

cup alone,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch. The cup fills the full space to the first ring. Two feet from this figure, in a direction 10 degrees east of north, lies a cup with a single ring. The diameter over all is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; that of the cup is 2 inches. Ten inches north-west from this second figure is a group of three—first a cup and one ring,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter over all; the cup diameter being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Then comes a cup without rings, 2 inches in diameter, touching the last figure. An inch to the right of it is the third of the group—a cup with one ring,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches over all; the cup diameter being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Distant from the last of this group, in a direction west of north, is a cup and one ring; the diameter over all being  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and the cup diameter,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The other four isolated cups lie—the first 15 inches below the figure with two rings; the second

about 3 inches above the isolated cup in the group of three; the third  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches to the right of this group; and the fourth 3 inches to the right of the lowest figure on the stone.

A few weeks after the discovery of this rock sculpture, a friend handed me a small fragment of stone that he had picked up on the "Duck's Back" green on the Whithorn golf-course. It was only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, and  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch broad, by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. It showed plainly two rings and possibly a third. How it had come there he could not say. Possibly the horse-mower had chipped it off an outcropping rock and deposited it some distance away. I have not had an opportunity as yet of making any search.



Fig. 6. View of Spiral cut on Rock at Knock, Glasserton, from the south-west.

Doubtless many more of these ancient records lie hidden under the turf that now covers most of the rocky outcrops in the southern end of the peninsula; but already we have enough to prove that the race of the cup-and-ring culture, if it did not occupy the whole of the southern Machars, occupied at least a deep fringe of coast from Monreith in the west, southwards to Burrow Head, then up the east coast as far as Balfern, where they would have easy contact with another settlement of their people immediately across the narrow waters of Wigtown Bay. The evidence of the rocks goes also to show that the district about Monreith was the headquarters of the settlement. The numerous sites there of sculptured rocks testify to this.

2. *Knock, Glasserton.*—There are few spirals known among the sculptured rocks of Wigtownshire. Only two have been definitely recorded—one at Balfern (*Proceedings*, vol. xxxvii, p. 221), and one at Gallows Outon (*Proceedings*, vol. lvi, p. 44). A third can now be added to the list (figs. 6

and 7). It is to be found on Knock Farm, not far from the village of Monreith, on the road leading down to the ruins of Kirkmaiden Church.



Fig. 7. Rubbing of Spiral cut on Rock at Knock, Glasserton.

Fifty yards or so past the iron gate across this road, there is a bit of rough ground on the right-hand side, with no dyke to the road. Close to the summit of this rising ground there is an exposed rock; and on a narrow shelf, facing south, there has been cut a single figure of a spiral. The spiral has four twists and is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. No other figures seem to be cut on this rock.

This rock sculpture is the nearest to the sea of all known in Wigtownshire. It is within a few yards of the edge of the cliff, at the foot of which is Monreith Bay. Not far to the north, in the field immediately before regaining the Glasserton-Portwilliam road there is a cup-and-ring stone, as mentioned in the *Inventory of Monuments*, No. 14, p. 12.