

## II.

## CROSSES FROM THE RHINNS OF GALLOWAY.

BY REV. R. S. G. ANDERSON, B.D., F.S.A. SCOT.

Some months ago a friend told me of a carved stone which he had seen in a cart-shed on the farm of Ringuinea, immediately to the south of the well-known Kirkmadrine. On enquiry the farmer, Mr Nay, said that he had found the stone in a dyke near the cot-houses, and had brought it home in the hope, some day, of finding an explanation of



Fig. 1. Kirkmadrine Slab (face).

the marks. It seems to be a long-lost companion of the famous Chi-Rho crosses (fig. 1).

The rough slab is a slice of greywacke, split off an ice-scored rock or boulder, the upper half of the drill-hole still showing a little to the left of the foot of the central figure. Evidently the separation had taken place prior to the carving, as the design has been modified to fit the space. Owing to the hardness and toughness of the stone the various figures have been well preserved and are wonderfully sharp considering the shallowness of the lines—less than an eighth of an inch. The stone is 18 inches long, 13 inches broad, 7 inches thick at the greatest depth of the face, declining to 2 inches at the rear. There are sculpturings both on the narrow face and on the sloping top. The design on the face consists of a composite cross in an oval,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long,  $2\frac{7}{8}$  inches broad at the greatest diameter; whilst outside, a little to the left,

there is a crosslet of Latin form in a rectangle, and another to the right under the angle of two lines meeting, probably the two sides of a square not completed for lack of room. Much of the work has been by pecking, the rest with the knife. The initials J O and H E are modern.

The central cross has the Christian monogram like its three neighbours, but with a different combination—I X T. The Rho which the others have is gone; a sign perhaps of the later date of this cross, for the Rho was the first of the letters to fall into disuse. Another change is made, with the same significance, by the oval taking the place of the circle. The Iota and the Tau have been combined, intentionally or not, to form a cross of the long-shafted type.

The sculptor has used his artistic gifts to emphasise the various elements of the monogram by distinctive treatment; but unfortunately he has not completed his work, and some details are uncertain. The Iota has long, fan-shaped terminals, scratched out with a knife. One and a half inches from the top of the oval, the upper serif starts from the transverse of the Tau, expanding slightly to a half-inch from the top, when it suddenly widens out to a semicircle one inch wide at the line. The upper arms of the Chi are much worn, but they seem to consist of incised lines enclosing a narrow stem, leading up to a semicircular hollow terminal. Their form is suggestive of affinity with those on some of the Lindisfarne and Hartlepool stones, though the execution is much ruder. The lower arms are unfinished, but are meant to be similar to the upper, even to the hollow semicircular terminal. A plasticene impression of the upper right-hand terminal shows a triangle at the bottom. The lower right-hand terminal is evidently a half-made semicircle, and not a different type. It is clear that all the terminals were meant to be alike. The Tau cross has been left plain, unornamented; but the lines are cut a little more deeply and strongly than the others.

About A.D. 600 a form of cross was becoming popular in which the outward curve of the bifurcated serif, such as we see in the early Galloway crosses, was being extended down to the intersecting arm, leading ultimately to the cross formed by the arcs of circles.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that our Kirkmadrine cross, with its long fan-shaped serifs reaching to the transverse of the Tau cross, must have been carved at a later period than A.D. 600.

In A.D. 660 King Oswiu conquered the South of Scotland, and Dumfries and Galloway became part of Northumbria. "Some time after," we are told, "English settlers began to inhabit Galloway. Before Bede finished his *Ecclesiastical History* (A.D. 731) there were so many of

<sup>1</sup> Baldwin Brown, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. liii. p. 224.

them that they required a bishop of their own race, and Pecthelm was appointed to the see." <sup>1</sup> The arrival of these settlers, with novel customs and ideas, with different arts and training, must have had a quite noticeable effect on the cultural life of Galloway. So the reorganisation of the church in Whithorn, with the powers behind it, must have given a great stimulus to progress in many ways, and one of these was certainly the fine arts. The stone monuments in Whithorn, and their influence throughout this northern region in the ninth and tenth centuries, manifest this. But there is no sign of the new Anglian manner in our Kirkmadrine stone. Though the sculptor has kept his mind open to the changes of the ages, he has not forsaken the old. We can see this by comparing his Tau cross with that on the headstone of Carausius in Wales.<sup>2</sup> His cross is still the Christian monogram.

There is one point on which something more should be said, viz. the semicircular terminal. The expansion at the centre and semicircle as a termination is of Teutonic origin, and had a great vogue on the Continent in very early years.<sup>3</sup> At both Hartlepool and Clonmacnois there are gravestones with such ornaments. The earliest of these stones at Clonmacnois that can be dated belongs to the close of the ninth century. Baldwin Brown, in a paper read to this Society in 1919, shows, almost conclusively, that the Hartlepool stones antedated those at Clonmacnois by over two centuries, and that Ireland had learned the type from England. He also showed that these forms had been known in England, as used in metalwork, from the fourth century. W. G. Collingwood, writing of the Hartlepool crosses, states that the earliest, from the lettering, might be regarded as pre-Danish.<sup>4</sup> There seems good reason to believe that the knowledge of such forms was widely spread by the seventh and eighth centuries, and craftsmen would be free to use the ideas as they pleased. The arms and shaft on that earliest Hartlepool slab are just the outline of the arm of the Chi on that at Kirkmadrine. It might quite possibly be that the Kirkmadrine sculptor got his idea from a Northumbrian source. This would be quite in keeping with the date which I had deduced from other characteristics of the stone—that it was wrought some time in the seventh century or early in the eighth.

The crosslets on each side of the oval stand a little above the level of its foot; the one on the left a little higher than that on the right. The former is in a rectangle, and measures  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in length; the latter

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Baldwin Brown, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. liii. p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>4</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses*, p. 12.

is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch long, though at some time it has been continued to the angle of the two containing lines. Neither has the triangular terminals, but the lines may taper slightly in nail fashion. The three figures may represent the three crosses on Calvary.

On the sloping top of the slab there is a Latin cross, 9 inches long, and 5 inches across the arm (fig. 2). It is sunk half an inch in the stone, which has been gouged out with a narrow chisel, leaving the sides almost vertical. The work has been roughly done, and has been left unfinished, as shown by the right arm being half an inch short of the end of the tracing line which is still clearly cut. The shaft is about an inch in breadth, and ends, as does also the left arm, in a triangular terminal, with a base of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch. At the intersection, the lower corners have been rounded. The shaft above the transverse is 2 inches in length, and on the right is slightly broken away, but the left side shows that it has expanded considerably to be almost funnel-shaped. An unusual feature is that the top of the cross



Fig. 2. Kirkmadrine Slab (top).

has been carried to the edge of the stone and left open. This is clearly intentional, for the foot of the cross is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches above the lower edge of the stone. Other examples of this type are on record. At Cladh Bhile, in Knapdale, the "patriarchal" cross has been cut on two stones with the same expanded or funnel-shaped top open on the edge of the stone.<sup>1</sup> So at Lag ny Keeillee, I.O.M., there is a slab with a Latin cross, "slightly expanding towards the ends, which appear to have been rounded or bulbous, and which has the shaft opening at the top on the upper edge of the stone, and also the right arm opening on the right edge."<sup>2</sup> The two crosses at Kirkmadrine are not likely to be contemporary. When the Latin cross is in its natural position, the oval cross is hidden on the base; when the oval is in position, the former has its foot in the air. Also, the face with the oval looks as if it had stood for a considerable time on the earth, being roughened and whitened by a slight encrustation, whilst the face with the Latin cross is quite clear. The probabilities

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xii. pl. 3, No. 5b; pl. 4, No. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xlvi. p. 58, fig. 4.

seem in favour of the Latin cross being considerably later than the other. Such open-armed crosses may have been moulds.

We have suggested that the design of the three crosses, in which the largest overtops the other two, may be a symbol of the three crosses on Calvary. Whether or no this be correct, it is certain that the design was a favourite in Wigtownshire. We have three so designed at Kirkmadrine and one at Whithorn. The first we have already noticed. The second example at Kirkmadrine is an Anglian cross-slab with three crosses in relief, belonging to the late ninth century <sup>1</sup> (fig. 3, face). The

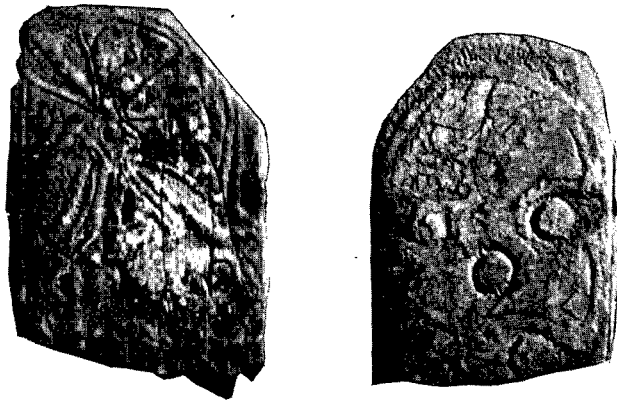


Fig. 3. Kirkmadrine Slab (face and back).

upper half of the slab is filled with an equal-armed cross, having a lozenge at the intersection of the arms and a pellet within the lozenge. The arms contain interlacing which is connected round the lozenge in the centre. Unattached cone-shaped lines issue from the parabolic angles of the arms. There has been a beading round the whole cross, and also a border line outside extending round the stone. Beneath this cross are the remains of other two crosses side by side, of equal size but much smaller in the head than the one above. The two have been, almost certainly, long-shafted crosses; but now they are broken away in a slanting line across the arms. What they were is suggested by the third cross, at Whithorn.<sup>2</sup> It is incised, but of the Anglian type also, and about the same date. The large cross here is shafted as well as the two smaller, these being placed below its arms. There seems to have been a tendency on the part of the workman to drop back into the older straight-line style.

<sup>1</sup> *Inventory, Wigtown*, fig. 96, No. 443.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 110, No. 473.

The third stone with the three crosses is at Kirkmadrine: a slab about 2 feet 10 inches long, 7 inches at greatest breadth, and over 3 inches thick (fig. 4). It is a fine black stone, taking a high polish, and has been unusually well engraved, but some vandal has cut a strip off to serve a menial purpose. The upper part contains a "Whithorn" cross considerably debased, having the upper arm a rectangle in which is a key pattern; the hollows between the arms are no longer parabolic but egg-shaped; whilst the ring and boss at the centre are decorated outside with four tiny circles, placed "at the points of the compass." The lower arm of the cross is almost wholly broken away, but underneath it are the other two crosses, one above the other, to conform to the necessities of the narrow stone. The upper of the two has a beading round it, and a pellet in the centre. The lowest cross, of similar type, has no beading, its decoration consisting of a debased spine-and-boss ornament. There has been ornament to the left of the middle cross, but the break in the stone prevents identification. This cross may be eleventh century. These four stones, practically in the same area, possessing similar figures, in similar relations to each other, suggest that there is an effort to express the same symbolic meaning, which would naturally be—the three crosses of Calvary.



Fig. 4. Kirkmadrine Slab.

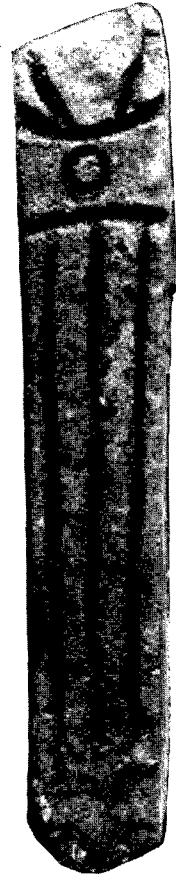


Fig. 5. Inch Slab.

An exceptional feature with these small stones is found on the second of the triple-cross slabs at Kirkmadrine. The back has been carved as well as the front (fig. 3, back). In this, the true Anglian type is becoming debased: the arms are no longer equal; the upper arm is beginning to swell into the circle, with premonitions of the disc face and the future "Whithorn" type. This may not be very much, if any, later than the cross on the other face.

In the old churchyard of Inch parish in the Rhinns, there is a narrow stone slab on which is cut a somewhat unusual form of cross (fig. 5).

(Measurements of slab: 2 feet 10 inches long;  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches across arms; 2 inches thick.)

It has a head of the Anglian type, but with the edges of the stone acting as the end lines of the arms, after the fashion of some of the stones from Whithorn.<sup>1</sup> There is a boss, with hollow ring round it, at the crossing. The shaft consists of three straight lines, the two outside lines representing the border of the cross, and the central serving for an ornament. The foot is not closed.

The open-foot cross seems to have been a favourite in one or two districts. On the slab with the three crosses at Whithorn the crosses are all of this type. The one at Kirkmadrine with a similar design had almost certainly the same feature. On the rock wall outside St Ninian's Cave, near Whithorn, in a small group of Anglian crosses, there is an equal-armed cross surmounting a shaft that seems to be open-foot. At Laggangarn, farther north in the county, there is a larger open-foot cross on a standing-stone near an ancient road now gone back to the moor.<sup>2</sup> Kirkcudbrightshire had another very much the same, but better cut, at Auchenshinnoch, near Dalry.<sup>3</sup>

Other examples of this type of cross are to be seen on the west coast. From the second century at least, Wigtownshire has had contact with Kintyre and the West. Professor W. J. Watson suggests<sup>4</sup> that there were settlements in Wigtownshire from Argyll in the middle of the eighth century; for in 742 Angus, son of Fergus, king of the Picts, dealt Dal Riata a "smiting" from which she did not recover for a long time, and many of the nobles would be forced to flee. By the middle of the ninth century there was a considerable body of the Galwegians, whose language before had been Welsh, who now spoke Gaelic. There is nothing very strange, then, in finding an open-foot cross in a graveyard at Knapdale in Argyll. At Cladh Bhile<sup>5</sup> there are two of the simple Latin, straight-lined, form; the shapes show no Anglian influence here. Still another is found at Dyce,<sup>6</sup> "one of the most remarkable early Christian sites in Aberdeenshire," where it is associated with other two early slabs. Of these No. 1 seems to have affinities with the cross of Tutgus at Clonmacnois,<sup>7</sup> and No. 2<sup>8</sup> may be related to a fragment there, which has a square instead of a circle. There is a shaped slab, of late

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lvii. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, *Christian Symbolism*, p. 190; *Inventory, Wigtown*, fig. 67, No. 282.

<sup>3</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xlvi. p. 262.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. W. J. Watson, *Celtic Place-Names*, pp. 171-2, 180.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xii. pl. 6b and 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xlv. p. 335.

<sup>7</sup> Petrie, *Christian Inscriptions*, No. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Macalister, *Memorial Stones of Clonmacnois*, No. 198.

date, at Birse, Aberdeenshire,<sup>1</sup> with a sword and two open-foot crosses carved on it, showing the persistence of the type, probably from some special reason in this instance. It is noticeable that it has the Anglian head, and has probably derived from the Whithorn direction rather than from Argyllshire.

Specific variations in the form, beside the two mentioned, are also known. Such is found at Ford, Loch Awe,<sup>2</sup> where a seemingly Greek cross has all the limbs left open. In the Isle of Man, at Lag ny Keeillee, there is one with a shaft expanding from a narrow head to a wide open-foot.<sup>3</sup> Over a well at Kilmory Oib, Argyll,<sup>4</sup> there is a peculiar, long-shafted cross, with a short triangular terminal at the head, and the ends of the feet turned outwards at right angles. Other straight lines a little above on the shaft, and others on the arm, mark it out as having a meaning peculiar to itself.

At Cladh Bhile there is a cross that shows not only a change but a development.<sup>5</sup> On one of the slabs with an open-foot cross already mentioned, the other side has quite a changed form of the cross. It is of the Latin shape, and is ornamented with an equal-armed cross at the intersection and a pellet under each arm. A more noticeable change, however, is that at the shaft terminals the lines are curved outwards and upwards, almost to a circle. You find something of the same development at Kirkmadrine, where there is a cross<sup>6</sup> with plain straight-lined head, ornamented with a boss and ring at the intersection, with curved lines below the arms and three straight lines shutting off the head from the shaft of the pillar below. In this cross we find the shaft terminals curved round inwards and then turned up for a short distance. The likeness between these two crosses is too great for it to be a mere chance coincidence. There seems to me little doubt that the last features are simply shorthand for the spiral. At Clonmacnois you find the same general idea, but with the Celtic head instead of the Latin, and the full spiral, turned inwards, at the foot.<sup>7</sup> On several other crosses the spiral is shown with less than the full circle.

The head of the Kirkmadrine cross has the arms extending to the edge of the stone, with the same mannerism as those on the Inch cross, using the edge of the stone as the end line. They evidently belong to the same period, but the Kirkmadrine possibly at a slightly earlier stage. The Celtic crosses at Clonmacnois are dated as ninth century;<sup>8</sup> and No. 98,<sup>9</sup> which bears the closest resemblance to the cross at

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xlvi, p. 365.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xlvi, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xii, pl. 4, 6a.

<sup>7</sup> Macalister, *Memorial Stones of Clonmacnois*, No. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xiv, p. 346.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. xxxviii, p. 136.

<sup>6</sup> *Inventory, Wigtown*, No. 442, fig. 95.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, fig. 98.



Kirkmadrine, is the simplest and probably the earliest in this design. So that we may be safe in dating the Inch and Kirkmadrine crosses to the late ninth or early tenth century.

The last cross to note is a cross fitchée found on the farm of Glaik,



Fig. 6. Glaik Slab.

about five miles west of Stranraer (fig. 6). It was found some years ago at the bottom of a drain, and is now preserved at the House of Knock. The stone measures 3 feet 2 inches in length, and 11 inches broad at the top, with the cross 18 inches in length, and the arms 8 inches over-all. The cross has the Anglian head with the expanding arms, with a boss and circle at the junction; and an oval shaft terminating in the triangular

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foot, which is marked off by a transverse line, almost 3 inches from the point. The triangle is ornamented with two small hollows or cups. In this cross we have a great resemblance to that of Inch; the Inch cross head differing from that of Glaik simply in having the stone edge forming the end lines of the fans. The shaft of the Inch cross is straight-lined, while that of Glaik is oval, but both have the ornamental central line. The chief difference between the two is the foot: Inch cross having the open foot, while Glaik is a cross fitchée. Evidently both belong to the same period.