

6. TWO KIRKINTILLOCH ANTIQUITIES: CARVED DRAGON HEAD AND SHORT CIST.

1. The Dragon Head sculptured in sandstone which is illustrated in Pl. XLII, 1, was found thirty-five years ago in the "Auld Aisle" cemetery SE. of Kirkintilloch, where there had stood the ancient barony church of St Ninian, vacated when the congregation moved to St Mary's, Kirkgate, Kirkintilloch, in 1644. The stone is 8 ins. wide and the sides measure 15 by 11 ins. at most. The neck, which is broken off short, bears large scales, the lips open with tongue protruding, and there is a crest along the top and back of the head, but it is broken so that its original shape is unknown. Dr P. Macgregor Chalmers, the eminent architect, had a sketch sent to the British Museum in 1919, where it was pronounced Scandinavian, 9th or 10th century. He suggested that it was from the front of the arm of a stone seat like a bishop's stool.

Since its recent presentation to our Museum (p.) Dr J. S. Richardson has seen it, and suggests that it was an architectural ornament of 16th- or 17th-century date. The tooling on the underside of the neck and jaw is different from what appears in early sculpture in Scotland. The lips and tongue, and curious snout perforated with small nostrils, have an architectural quality as if imitating a horizontal moulding. Mr C. A. R. Radford, agreeing that it is too massive for a seat, thinks that an 11th to 12th-century date is a possibility, in which case the sculpture might have been the gable ornament of a church.

2. Prehistoric burials such as are common in the eastern counties are sufficiently unusual in the Kelvin valley for it to be worth recording a short cist even though it contained no urn or other indication of date. It was found in 1922 at Adamslie, west of Kirkintilloch. The site is 200 yds. SE. of the farm buildings and 50 yds. NE. of the Park Burn in sand and gravel workings of Messrs Keir & Cadder (Nat. Grid ref. 26/644736). The cist measured about 30 by 21 ins. and 15 ins. deep, and was built of stout slabs; the long axis ran N-S.

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