

An incised Pictish figure and a new symbol stone from Barflat, Rhynie, Gordon District

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INCISED FIGURE

INTRODUCTION

On 10 March 1978, Mr K Alston ploughed up a large slab in the field immediately S of the old kirkyard at Rhynie. This field had been formerly part of the farm of Mains of Rhynie but is now incorporated in the farm of Barflat. The carving of a man on one surface of the stone was noticed by Mr G Alston who realised the significance of the discovery. We are grateful to the Alston family and to Mr W G McPherson of Rhynie for reporting the stone's discovery and for their assistance in its recovery. The writers examined the stone and its findspot on the following day.

THE SITE (fig 1)

The stone was discovered lying face down at the base of c 0.5 m of ploughsoil some 40 m downslope from the crest of a low NE shoulder of Quarry Hill, at c 210 m OD, and c 0.7 km S of the village of Rhynie. The stone lay at NJ 4976 2636, some 40 m ENE of the Class I monument known as the Craw Stane or Rhynie No 1 (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 182, fig 197) which stands on the crest of the steep E-facing slope above the Water of Bogie. The writers found the stone lying on its side on the surface of the ploughsoil c 0.5 m from the spot where the plough had struck it.

The immediate findspot of the stone was examined by clearing the overlying soil but no trace of a stone hole, packing or other feature was revealed. The steepness of the field in this area suggests that the stone may have been plough-dragged down from an original position on the crest of the hill shoulder, near the Craw Stane.

THE STONE (figs 2 & 3; pls 11; 12a-b)

This is a large roughly kite-shaped gabbro boulder, 1.78 m long, 0.70 m maximum width, 0.39 m thick at the base and 0.13 m thick at the top. The waterworn reverse of the stone suggests that it may have been obtained locally from the glacial drift in a stream bed (Dr N H Trewin – pers comm). Incised on its upper, flatter, face in a firm, positive line c 10 mm wide, is the standing figure of a man, 1.03 m tall, in profile, looking to the right. Two recent plough-scratches run over the upper part of the depiction. The man is wearing a sleeved tunic which falls to just above the

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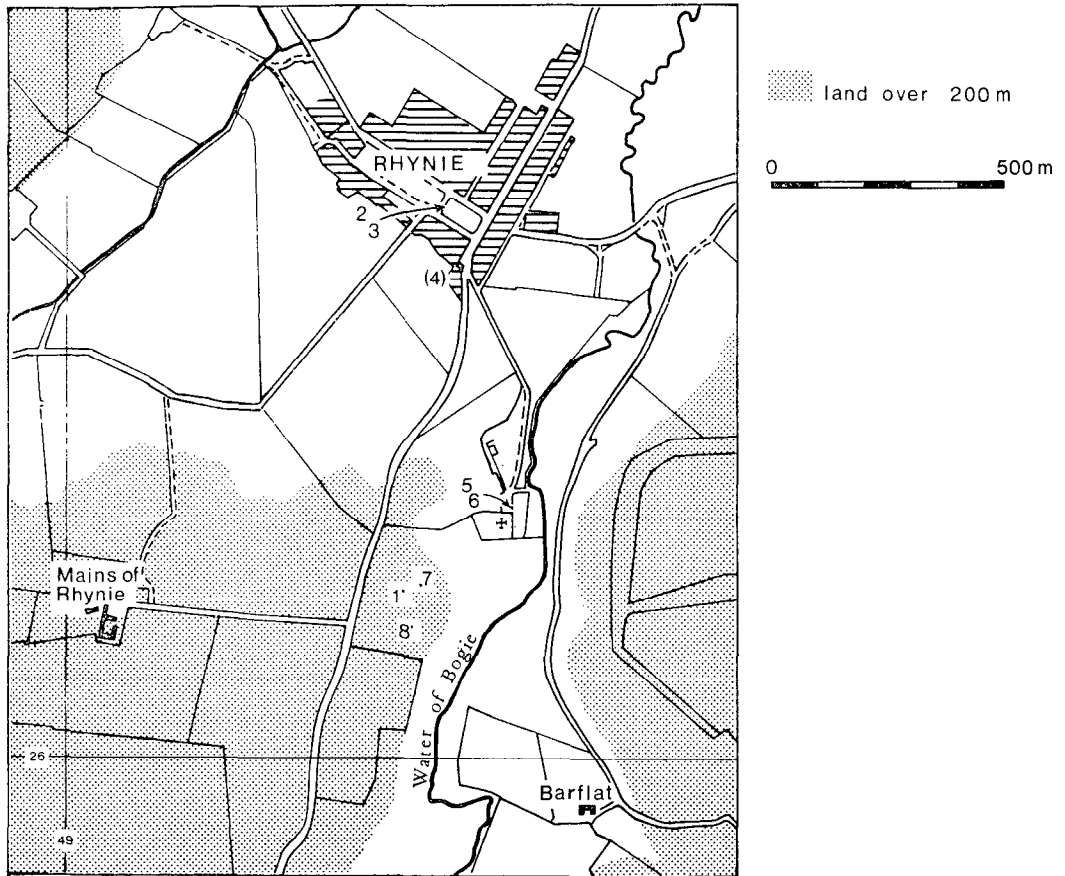


FIG 1 Map showing location of Pictish stones in the Rhyynie area, including the new figure (7) and symbol (8) stones. Based upon the Ordnance Survey map. Crown Copyright reserved

knee and is belted at the waist, and what appear to be pointed shoes or leggings. He appears to be walking forward while carrying over his shoulder an implement or weapon resembling an axe, with its blade pointing forwards; the shaft is represented by a single thin line grasped in the man's fingers (pl 12a). The shaft passes outside the right thumb, behind the fingers of the right hand, in front of the left thumb, and through the left fingers. The thumbs are slightly crooked and protrude above the lines of bent fingers, accurately reflecting their position when holding a thin shaft. The carving of the second finger on the right hand has been damaged. The shaft of the axe appears to have been carved last: it is thinner than the outlines of the body and overlies them.

The man's chest swells out in a convex line while his back is very slightly stooped. The bulge of the right shoulder is suggested most economically by a short curve terminating below the thick neck.

It is in the treatment of the head that this depiction is at its most vivid and detailed (pl 12b). The elements are carved in three basic and almost continuous lines which flow around the face with all the vigour of caricature. From the bold lenticular eyebrow, one line etches a dominant, highbridged nose, doubles into a nostril, curves into the mouth (with two large triangular teeth set in the upper jaw), juts out into the bottom lip, then runs down to form the front of the long, pointed beard. A second, strong, line springs from the top of the ear and runs down to define the

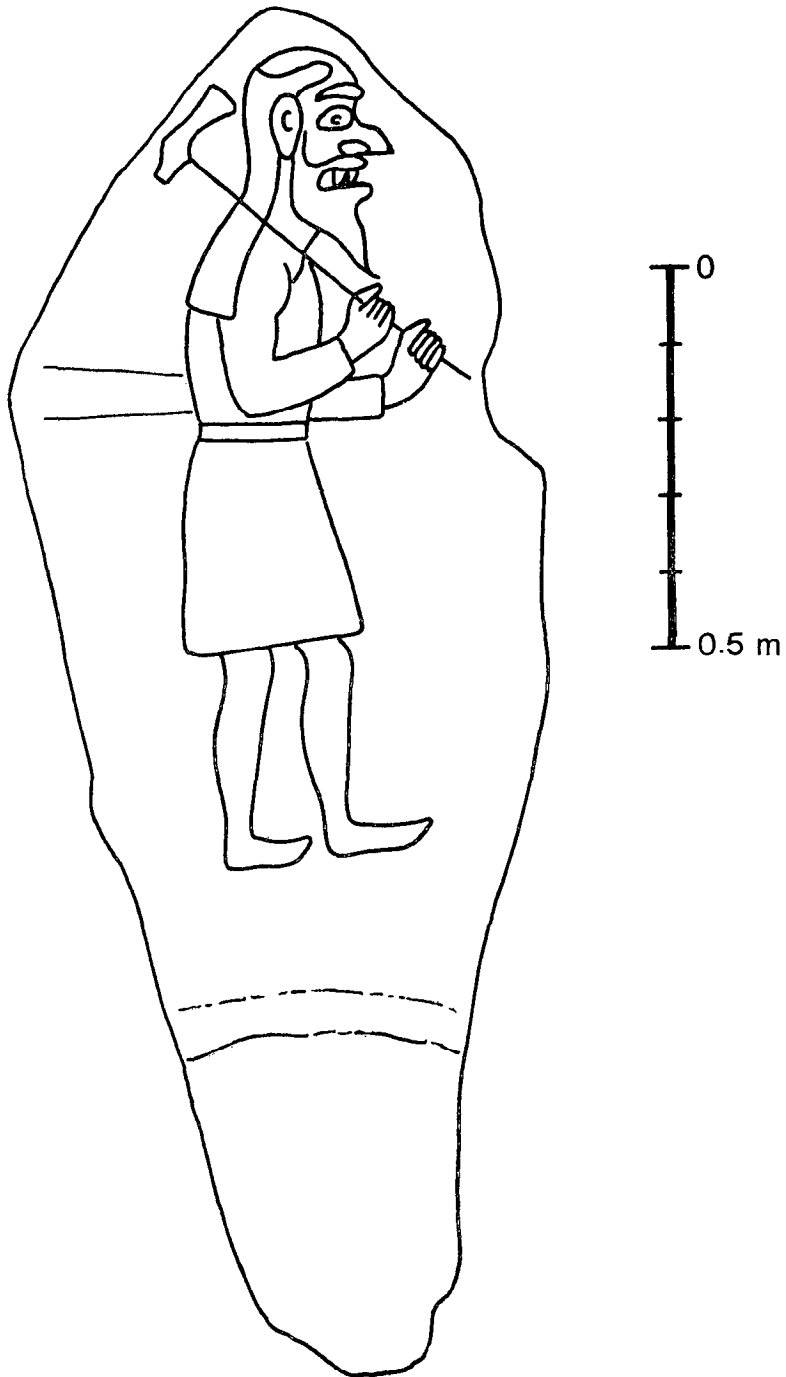


FIG 2 Incised Pictish figure from Barflat, Rhynie

underside of the beard, continuing out on its own to end the beard just above the right thumb. A third line runs back from the top of the eyebrow, outlining the skull and drops down the back to the area of the shoulder blades. From there it returns through two right angles and runs up and over the shoulder defining the back of the ear and looping to the front of the skull, above the eyebrow; it then turns back to finish on the upper rear curve of the skull. The feature so outlined appears to be a form of headdress. The only details not defined by these three lines are the eye (an oval with a small inner curve for a pupil), an inner detail of the ear, and the top of the beard (an L-shaped line running from between the ear and eye to the nostril).

As described, the design is very clear and has been executed with exceptional confidence and precision which lends the figure considerable impact. The surface of the stone appears to have been prepared for this carving by being smoothed or pounded to a slightly concave plane, some 20 mm lower than the rougher area which runs up the stone for c 0.45 m from the base. This process of surface preparation is further suggested by the two horizontal and parallel lines which lie behind the figure. These do not seem to relate to the figure composition, are shallower and broader than the lines of the figure, and appear to have been part of a carving never completed or largely ground away by preparation of the surface for the later depiction. The lower line has been the more truncated into a broad and very shallow depression just behind the right elbow of the figure.

This new Barflat stone (henceforth referred to as Rhynie 7, following Allen's catalogue (1903b)), presents several features which are not found in combination on any other stone in the range of Pictish sculpture. These features include the portrayal of a single human figure on the whole prepared surface of a stone; its (almost caricatured) vivid physical details, and the high level of technical accomplishment represented by the finely incised line.

Close parallels for the physical appearance of the Rhynie man amongst Pictish stones are limited to two examples. The incised figure on the reverse of the Golspie, Sutherland, cross slab (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 50, fig 48B) demonstrates the same profiled view outlining a face with a prominent nose, pointed beard, hair or headdress, a belted tunic, pointed shoes or leggings, and fairly well-defined hands brandishing a battle axe and a knife (fig 3d). The two warring figures to the left of the cross on the Glamis No 2, Angus, stone (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 223, fig 234A) are shown in profile in semi-relief, with similar large noses and pointed beards, hair or headdresses over the shoulders, short, apparently unbelted tunics, pointed shoes or leggings, and battle axes similar to the Golspie example (fig 3c). These two stones offer the closest comparisons of dress, physical characteristics and accoutrements, but differ considerably from the Rhynie figure in their relationships to their stones. The Golspie and Glamis men are both part of larger designs on Class II (cross) slabs: in the case of the Golspie stone, a collection of animal and object symbols; in that of Glamis, the flanking panel to the cross itself. They must therefore differ in intent from the depiction of the Rhynie man, even though they may be derived from a common repertoire of human representation.

There are two stones, however, presenting single figures occupying the whole of the available field, which should be discussed at this stage. The first stone was found in a field on the S side of Rhynie, is listed as Rhynie No 3 by Allen (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 182) and now stands on the village green in Rhynie (fig 1). It is too worn to give any more evidence of detail than the earlier descriptions afford (Logan 1829, 55-6, pl 5, 1; Stuart 1856, 5, pl 7, 2). These both show (fig 3f) an incised figure, presumed male, with a prominent nose, standing in profile, looking to the left, and dressed in a long coat or tunic. There are pointed shoes or leggings, some form of headdress or cap, and possibly a beard. In one hand he carries a stick, ending in a ball or disc, while from his neck hangs a similar ball or disc. Logan's illustration suggests that the stick is in fact carried in the



FIG 3 Pictish figures: a, Strathmartine; b, Rossie; c, Glamis; d, Golspie; e, Balblair; f(i), Rhyne No 3 (after Logan); f(ii), Rhyne No 3 (after Stuart); g, Kinneddar, Drainie; h, Burghead; i, St. Mark's Gospel: Initium, Book of Kells; j, Rhyne 7. a-f to scale with j

right hand (fig 3f(i)) while his interpretation of the figure as a warrior with spear and shield better explains such details as the rectangular quality of the left arm, vaguely shown in Stuart's plate (fig 3f(ii)) and not explicable as anything other than a strange sleeve if his 'plummet' is held in the left hand. The 'plummet' is better interpreted as the butt of a spear (cf Thomas 1963, 51, fig 4),

held in the right hand. Pictish shields are generally portrayed as round (eg Meigle No 6 or Inch-brayock No 1 (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 302, fig 315B, 254, fig 264B)) but the square shields of the Birsay, Orkney, warriors must be noted in this context (Cruden 1964, 6, pl 7).

The second stone, from Strathmartine, Angus (Stuart 1856, 44, pl 138) offers the closest parallel for the posture of the new Rhynie man (fig 3a). Unfortunately, it was lost before Stuart's time and his illustration derives from an earlier uncorroborated sketch. The figure differs in a number of respects from Rhynie 7: it is sculpted in relief, on what appears from the illustration to be a prepared slab rather than a stone with a single smoothed surface as at Rhynie. It is described as being 'beast headed' and as carrying a 'Russian cross' (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 266). As the beast head is not clearly shown in the illustration, later defacing could be argued especially as the association of a beast-headed man with a cross would seem unlikely. The cross, if the illustration can be trusted on this point, is not in fact the Russian with remnant toe-board (Child & Colles 1971, 18), but the double-armed cross of bishops and patriarchs, which was consequently one of the symbols of St Peter (Geldart 1899, 104, 178). The present writers have been unable to establish a date at which this version of the cross could have been first used in Britain, but its currency in the Christian world could date from any time after the legendary finding of the true cross with superscription intact by St Helena in AD 326. It is already appearing on Byzantine coins by the 7th century (Talbot Rice 1968, fig 22). In Britain the Chi Rho symbol appears as early as the 4th century and in its looped cross insular form from the 5th century (Thomas 1971, 100), while the Tau cross attributed to St Anthony is part of the design on the Nigg cross slab (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 76, fig 72). There remains the possibility that the Strathmartine 'cross' is merely a badly executed battle axe and that a figure resembling the Rossie, Perthshire (*ibid*, 307, fig 322) bird-headed, axe-wielding man is intended (fig 3b).

One further single figure representation has been described and illustrated, the strange incised figure on a cupmarked stone from Balblair, Inverness (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 95, 517, figs 97 & 566). It appears to represent a warrior (fig 3e) with a helmet similar to those on the right of the Aberlemno No 2 battle stone (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 209, fig 227B). It displays legging-covered limbs and a tunic with edging and detail similar to the Golspie example. Such a tunic, worn with pointed shoes or leggings, appears on the fragment from Canna, Inverness (*ibid*, 109, fig 112). It would seem therefore that in general appearance the Rhynie 7 man is in keeping with depictions of the Pictish warrior/hunter. A knee-length tunic and some form of pointed foot-covering are the norm. This is borne out not just by the examples on foot already listed, but by the large numbers of mounted Picts from the Class II and III stones. In some of these, eg Meigle No 3 (*ibid*, 299, fig 312B), however, actual shoes are depicted. A beard and prominent nose, features so skilfully treated on Rhynie 7, are the facial norm. They also pervade human depiction throughout the span of Classes II and III on stones such as Meigle No 4 (*ibid*, 300, fig 313B), and the fragment from Burghead (*ibid*, 138, fig 139A) which demonstrates the same flowing line of nose, beard and mouth as seen on the Rhynie 7 man (fig 3h). A similar flowing line describes profiles in the Book of Kells, for example on the initial page of the Gospel of St Mark (Henry 1974, pl 49). Here the elements are being used as part of an intricately developed style where the line flows into the total design of the page. The saw teeth of the Rhynie man have become the fangs of the biting beast (fig 3i). In the Arrest of Christ (Henry 1974, pl 45) the moustaches interrupt the single line flowing from ear, to lips, to beard tip; but the similarity in the treatment of the hands of the man on the left is noticeable.

On Rhynie 7 the detailed depiction of the hands and face support the view that the hair or headdress is accurately shown. In other examples, such as the Golspie man, the hair is carefully tapered over the shoulders: as the Rhynie sculptor was obviously quite capable of producing the

line he intended, it must be assumed that some kind of headdress or more elaborately dressed hair was required. There exists no other example of a battle axe hafted upon such a thin shaft as that shown on the Rhynie stone. Again, it seems difficult to believe that the sculptor would not have produced the double line indicative of a thicker shaft such as at Glamis No 2 if such a shaft was intended. The portrayal of thumbs jutting out beyond the shaft, as mentioned above, is an accurate statement of their position if clutching a narrow handle: compare them with the hand clasping the thick spear shaft on the fragment from Kinneddar, Drainie, Moray (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 145, fig 150) (fig 3g). Spearshafts are indicated by a single incised line on the Aberlemno No 2 battle scene (*ibid*, 210, fig 227B), but these are used as part of a combination of relief and incision which adds depth to the scene depicted. The probable spearshaft of the Rhynie No 3 man is shown as a single incised line, again with the jutting thumb, suggesting a possible localised style for weapon depiction. In this connection it should be noted also that a battle axe may have been lying on the ground behind him, the only visible remnant of which is a single incised line, presumably of the shaft. A number of explanations could be given for this treatment of the Rhynie battle axe: narrow shafts could have been the norm in this area, or the axe itself merely ceremonial and a lightweight shaft all that was necessary to support it, or even that artistic convention allowed the representation of a heavy weapon carried on an apparently light shaft.

SYMBOL STONE

This stone was reported by Mr Gavin Alston on 20 April 1978 and examined by one of the writers (IAGS) on 25 April. It had been picked up from the surface of the same ploughed field in the area SSE of the Craw Stane (fig 1) at approximately NJ 497 262.

THE STONE (fig 4; pl 12c)

This stone is a fragment of a larger block of fine grained pink granite which has been broken and squared-off subsequent to the carving of the symbols. It is 0.43 m long, 0.39 m wide and 0.16 m thick and bears the outline of a beast, surmounting a comb and a (now truncated) S-shaped figure, all incised in a broad shallow line c 10 mm wide. The symbols have been pecked-out and the bases of the lines smoothed off. The lines are of uneven depth; eg the line denoting the mouth of the beast is very shallow whereas the S-shaped figure is deeply incised. The slab has been broken through the mid-point of the S-shaped figure, just beneath the comb. The line at right angles to the S-shaped figure is much broader than the other lines, and may have been made when the stone was being subsequently reshaped. The beast has individual, back-turned, forepaws, scrolls at the forejoints and narrow hindquarters. Its plume has been truncated by the dressing of the stone. The comb symbol represents a single-sided comb with reflexly-curved back, while the S-shaped figure has a slightly concave end, but no internal elaboration.

The beast symbol is one of the four most popular symbols in the repertoire of Pictish art (Allen & Anderson 1903a, 108). The technique of incision places this stone in Allen's Class I while the unusual scrollwork suggests that it is later rather than earlier in the sequence. This later placing is underlined by the stubby snout, and the looped tail and paws. However, the beast does demonstrate some of the greyhound quality seen earlier in the sequence (Henderson 1958, 51). Class I stones with beasts include Rhynie No 1 (Craw Stane) (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 182-3, fig 197) and Rhynie No 4 (Logan 1829, 55, pl 4, 2), although neither provides particularly close parallels, being on a larger scale. More similar, in its fleeting posture, the treatment of the head and in the scroll joints, although rather larger in size, is the beast on the stone at Crichtie,

Aberdeenshire (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 160-1, fig 169). Stones incised with a beast, a mirror and a comb and one other symbol are Rhynie No 4 (Logan 1829, 55, pl 4, 2); Fyvie No 1, Aberdeenshire (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 165, fig 174); and Tullich, Aberdeenshire (*ibid*, 187, fig 202). The additional symbol is either a crescent and V-rod or a double disc and Z-rod. However the combination has little significance beyond confirming Allen and Anderson's observation that 'the four symbols which are most common are found most frequently in combination' (1903a, 127). The writers know of no other combination of a beast and an S-shaped figure (*ibid*, 118-21); however, the Mortlach churchyard, Banffshire, stone with incised beast and (?) dragonsque brooch symbol (Simpson 1925, 274, fig 1; Thomas 1963, 51) may be relevant here. The S-shaped figure is not a common symbol. It is not found on Class II stones and has been recorded previously on only three

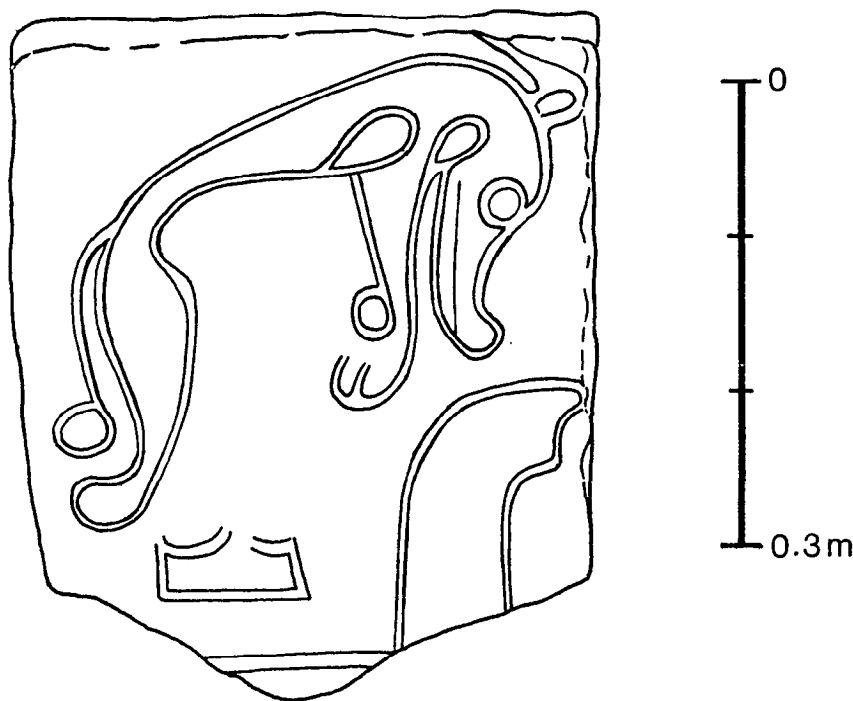


FIG 4 Symbol stone from Barflat, Rhynie

stones: Kintradwell, Sutherland Nos 1 and 2 (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 43-4, figs 40 & 41) and Drimmies, Aberdeenshire (*ibid*, 162-3, fig 171). It occurs at the Doo Cave, East Wemyss, Fife (*ibid*, 373, fig 389) and on the Parkhill, Aberdeenshire, silver chain (*ibid*, 199). The three depictions on stones are of internally embellished symbols; the Barflat example is altogether simpler. On two of the other three stones (Kintradwell No 2 and Drimmies) the S-shaped figure is associated with a mirror symbol. As no symbol stone is known which has a comb unaccompanied by a mirror, the existence of the latter symbol on the missing lower portion of the Barflat stone may be assumed. The style of the comb is distinctive and finds close parallel at Rhynie No 5 (*ibid*, 183-4, fig 198), Daviot (Mounie), Aberdeenshire (*ibid*, 161-2, fig 170) and Aberlemno No 1 (*ibid*, 205 fig 221). These combs are very similar in the elaboration of their backs and in having no individually carved teeth. They are all associated with mirrors as well as with other symbols and have been briefly discussed by Calder (1947).

In summary, this new incised symbol stone (Rhynie 8), which associates a possibly later form of a popular symbol, a rare but simply-executed symbol and a distinctive comb is perhaps best paralleled in the Rhynie No 5 stone.

DISCUSSION

In the above review of the major comparisons for the new Rhynie stones, certain similarities of technique and depiction have been demonstrated with other stones from Rhynie. Henderson noted the existing five symbol stones when suggesting the importance of Rhynie as a disseminating area for the Class I stones (1958, 54). With the addition of Rhynie 8 there are now six symbol stones which between them portray a total of seven symbols, four of them repeated three times: the beast, the crescent and V-rod, the double disc and Z-rod, and the mirror, the latter having appeared a possible fourth time with the Rhynie 8 comb. The other three symbols; the fish, the beast's head and the S-shaped figure, appear just once. Consequently, the Rhynie stones show the only occurrence on a Class I stone of the beast's head in its 'seal or otter' form (Thomas 1961, 48) and one of only four occurrences of the S-shaped figure or 'tied cloth' (Thomas 1963, 57). The Rhynie crescents are all undecorated with no infilling, which matches the lack of decoration in the S-shaped figure and the absence of detail in the combs. There is the possibility that the undecorated crescents are early rather than late in the development of that symbol (Thomas 1961, 42). The simple form of crescent and V-rod appears as a feature of Pictish cave art, as in the Sculptor's Cave, Covesea, Moray (Allen and Anderson 1903b, 130 fig 135). Dr. Henderson has drawn our attention to the manner in which the new stones emphasise the link between Rhynic, cave representations, and metalwork. The new S-symbol of Rhynie 8 has parallels on a terminal ring of a silver chain and in the Fife caves (*ibid*, 199, 373, fig 389). The head of the beast and the vertically-orientated double disc and Z-rod on Rhynie No 5 are paralleled on the Norrie's Law silver plaques (*ibid*, 368, fig 387) and in the Doo Cave, Fife (*ibid*, 373, fig 389). The caves also display some human representation, for example the pin man holding a knob-ended pole in the Court-Cave (*ibid*, 370, fig 388), which provides a further link with the Rhynie group.

Whether the figure stones can rightly be viewed as part of a group which includes the symbol stones is uncertain. Such evidence as exists suggests that a close chronological association of figures of Rhynie 7 type and incised symbols is not impossible. The Glamis figures appear at an early stage in low relief development (Henderson 1967, 128) on a slab whose reverse bears incised symbols. The incised Golspie figure is associated with symbols in low relief but the stone as a whole can be placed late in the sequence (I Henderson and R B K Stevenson pers comm). There is in the illustrations of the Rhynie No 3 stone (Logan 1829, pl 5, 1; Stuart 1856, pl 7, 2) a suggestion of a remnant symbol (not now visible) showing as three or more arcs below the feet of the man, which could support the possibility of contemporaneity of figure and non-figure representations.

Other features facilitate the viewing of the symbol and figure stones as one group. The use of pure incision to define the Rhynie figures should, by definition, place them in a Class I context and, although the Rhynie 7 figure is incised on a prepared surface, the boulder has not been dressed to the full rectangular shape of the later cross slabs. The preparation of the surface may have been to erase an earlier depiction: Stevenson has noted two other examples of such a palimpsest, also in Aberdeenshire (1959, 36). A Class I bracket is emphasised by the solitary quality of the figures which appear to walk alone across their stones in the same way as the single

animal symbols of Class I. They are not part of a scene such as Golspie, are not associated with any overt Christian symbolism in the form of the cross and in all ways are in the mode of the single statement of Class I and not part of the basically Class II development which uses human representation to augment an obviously Christian message. However, it is possible to interpret the Rhynie 7 man as a derivation from an established legendary scene (R B K Stevenson pers comm). The forward-pointing axe and ferocious expression suggest someone faced with an adversary, and could be derived from a pattern such as the left hand fighter on the Glamis stone. Henderson has discussed in detail the reworking of Christian iconography on the later stones (1967, 144-57).

To view the two figure stones as an integral part of the Rhynie group raises questions of the meaning of the symbols and the modification of that meaning by their association with human representation. The interpretation of the symbol stones as personal monuments militates against a concurrent existence of symbol and figure stones, for, if the symbols were employed to represent individuals, the use of figures would be unnecessary. However it is possible that the depictions do not represent individuals but are themselves symbols. This hypothesis is to some extent upheld by the evidence of human representation from the Class II stones where horsemen and archers appear in stereotyped forms: for horsemen compare Balluderon (Allen & Anderson 1903b, 216, fig 229), Gask (*ibid*, 290, fig 307) and Rossie (*ibid*, 307, fig 322B); and for archers compare Shandwick (*ibid*, 71, fig 69), Glenferness (*ibid*, 116, fig 120) and St Vigeans No 1 (*ibid*, 236, fig 250B). In this sense, the incised horseman on the Dunkeld slab (*ibid*, 284, fig 302) could also be seen as a symbol. It is also possible that in the Rhynie area the available symbols did not express all the required statements and that there was a need for the more direct language of human representation.

If the symbol stones have a territorial rather than a personal and funerary significance, the figure stones could by contrast be of funerary importance. However, the ubiquity of closely similar symbols makes it difficult to see them as territorial markers of local significance and suggests some more widespread meaning for them. Henderson has suggested that if they were funerary some degree of clustering should be expected (1971, 66). The Rhynie group demonstrates such a clustering, one which also displays the not altogether reliable association with an early churchyard (fig 1) (Macdonald & Laing 1973, 142). A further alternative is that the figure carving represents a transitional phase, when the symbols themselves had already lost some of their original meaning and strength of impact and were approaching the secondary role which they appear to fulfil when associated with the Christian cross on Class II stones. The similar figures on the Golspie and Glamis stones, which both demonstrate combinations of incision and low relief, could support this and, if the cross on the Strathmartine stone is to be believed, its figure sculpture could provide an alternative form of Christian message from that of cross slabs in the Class II period.

The absence of symbol stones in Argyll has been used to provide a *terminus ante quem non* for the beginning of Class I stones in the later 5th century when this area was effectively lost to the Pictish tribes after the successful incursions of the Scots (Henderson 1971, 53). As the earlier Ninianic mission apparently did not result in the permanent conversion of the whole of Pictdom (Henderson 1967, 68-72), the effective christianisation of the Picts would have taken place after the Columban mission towards the end of the sixth century (*ibid*, 74-6). A period of roughly a century therefore remains in which, if the Class I stones were pre-Christian (that is in the sense of being pre- an established church in Pictland), they could have been erected. This limited span of time would fit well with the apparent sudden erection of a very specific form of stone monument, whose uniformity of style has itself suggested erection over a brief period (Henderson 1971,

66). It seems unlikely that if the Pictish symbol stones were erected by an already converted society, the Christian symbol of the cross would not have been displayed on them from the outset. It seems more likely that the Class I stones were erected in a pre-Christian milieu, and that Class II developed under the influence of conversion. The main argument against this is the later dating suggested by analysis of some of the most common symbols, notably the crescent and Pictish beast, and of the animal symbols (Henderson 1967, 115–27; Stevenson 1955, 101, 112; 1971, 66–70). Thomas, in his work on the origins of the animal representations, has placed the beginnings of Class I symbols in the 5th century. He has demonstrated that, scanty though they are, remnants exist which point to the existence of a fund of imagery in the Romano/Celtic world which could have supplied a Pictish art style and that there is no need to draw later parallels from non-Pictish sources to account for the Class I repertoire (Thomas 1961, 49–53: cf Clapham 1934). The Rhynie-metalwork link outlined above could support an early date for the start of the tradition of symbol stone carving. A 6th-century date has been argued for the concealment of the Norrie's Law hoard (Thomas 1963, 42–5; Fowler 1963, 128–9). However, Stevenson has recently reiterated the manuscript (8th century) links (1976, 248). In other areas which escaped complete Roman domination, development of 5th- and 6th-century art styles from Iron Age traditions is suggested. In Ireland, Henry has attempted to make a case for an absence of a hiatus between late La Tène objects and metalwork which appears in the 4th century and continues into the 5th and 6th centuries (1965, 9). In Scandinavia there appears to be little break between the art of the late Iron Age and the animal art of Salin Style I (Wilson & Klindt-Jensen 1966, 28–30). Underlining the argument for an early dating for the Class I symbols is the theory of the declining symbol (Henderson 1967, 112–15, fig 18). If one accepts this theory, and the chronological distinction inherent in it, it is difficult to believe in a reverse of this degeneration; but it is just this which is required if one is to believe that the traffic in animal design went from the manuscripts of the 7th and 8th centuries to the stones. On stylistic grounds the animals of the Pictish Class I stones, 'most of them vigorous and well-drawn' (Stevenson 1971, 68), must be the type designs, and the beasts of Durrow and Echternacht the stiffer, more ornamental copies, further removed from the original sources, in the same way as the symbols of the Class II stones are the devolved copies of those of Class I. The choice still remains unresolved between accepting the primacy of the manuscripts (*ibid*, 67) or accepting the argument that they show a later, decorative use in a different medium of themes and designs first elaborated on other materials (Henderson 1967, 136). Some clearer idea as to whether or not the Class I stones are non-Christian seems a necessary preliminary to chronological decisions.

In conclusion, Rhynie 7 and 8 provide two new examples of Pictish stone carving, both part of Allen and Anderson's Class I series, which, added to the six known stones from this area, form an unusual group. The late survival, relative to other areas, of Class I stones in Aberdeenshire has been argued (Stevenson 1955, 125), and aspects of the Rhynie 8 beast would suggest it is late in the sequence of that symbol. However, certain aspects of the beast, the lack of detail on the comb and the S-shaped figure itself, are all unusual, possibly of local significance, as they are reflected in other stones in the Rhynie group. The Rhynie 7 man finds the most close parallels in the stones from Golspie and Glamis, in a lost stone from Strathmartine and in elements of human depiction in the Kells manuscript. If the influences which formed the figure are seen as deriving from these parallels then the Rhynie man would be late in the sequence of Pictish Art (8th/9th centuries). It is also possible to see him as their precursor, exhibiting, like the symbols, an essentially pagan imagery, whose style was developed in later, basically Christian, iconography. If pre-Christian, these distinctive stones from Rhynie could be as early as the 5th or 6th centuries.

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At present the two newly discovered stones are at Barflat standing.

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Incised Pictish figure from Barflat, Rhynie (scale totals 1 m)



a Barflat figure: detail of hands



b Barflat figure: detail of head



c Symbol stone from Barflat, Rhynie (scale totals 0.2 m)