

## A silver pendant cross from Dumbarton Castle

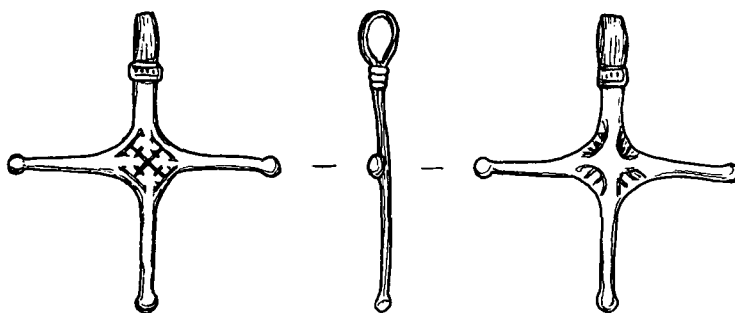
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### ABSTRACT

*Describes a silver pendant cross, dating to the late 13th or 14th century, found at Dumbarton Castle.*

A silver pendant cross was found during the excavations undertaken at Dumbarton Castle, Strathclyde, in 1974 and 1975 by Professor Leslie Alcock. It is an equal-armed silver cross (39 × 36 mm) with suspension loop and knobs on the terminals of the arms. The central area on the front is engraved with a pattern which can either be read as four tightly packed quatrefoils or as a saltire pattern. On the back a cross is reserved against four hatched lunettes. Although found in Cutting D on the site, it was unfortunately unstratified. Coins dating from the reign of Edward I were recovered from the area as well as Romano-British and Dark Age pottery and glass.

A similar silver pendant cross (National Museums of Scotland, reg no KO 31) was found in a purse with other jewellery and coins in the wall of an old house in Dumfries (Callender 1924, 160–2). The arms are knobbed and the crossing is expanded into a disc with nielloed decoration – on the front the letters AFLO, the initial letters in Latin characters of a Hebrew inscription meaning ‘Thou art mighty for ever, O Lord’. The coins indicate a likely date of deposition c 1324 × 1335 (Metcalf 1977, no 43). There is a copper alloy pendant cross with knobbed terminals in North Berwick Museum, unfortunately unprovenanced. Callender (1924, 163) also drew attention to an incomplete jet cross from a crannog in Loch Rutton, Kirkcudbright, which, allowing for differences caused by material, is remarkably similar.



ILLUS 1 Silver pendant cross from Dumbarton Castle, scale 1:1

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Both the Dumbarton and Dumfries crosses have collars or flanges beneath their suspension loops, like those found on the pins of ring brooches from Scotland and elsewhere. These are dated on stylistic grounds and coin evidence to the late 13th and 14th centuries. With the Dumfries cross were found several broken pieces of a silver plaited chain with a length, when complete, of about 250 mm, just right for suspending the cross at the neck. A bronze cross, probably of earlier date, with a chain only 200 mm long is said to have been found in a short cist burial at the old churchyard at Kingoldrum in Angus (Chalmers 1854, 191). It is now in the National Museums of Scotland (reg no FC 151–2).

The Dumbarton Castle cross is now in the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow (reg no A.1982.66).

#### REFERENCES

- Callender, J G 1924 'Fourteenth-Century Brooches and Other Ornaments in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 58 (1923–4), 160–84.
- Chalmers, P 1854 'Notice of the Discovery of a Curious Bronze Cross and Chain in a Stone Cist at Kingoldrum, Forfarshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 1 (1851–4), 191.
- Metcalf, D M 1977 'The Evidence of Scottish Coin Hoards for Monetary History, 1100–1600' in D M Metcalf (ed) *Coinage in Medieval Scotland* (1100–1600), Oxford, 1–59. (= *BAR Brit Ser*, 45).