Proc Soc Antiq Scot 141 (2011), 159–205

The iconography of the Papil Stone: sculptural and literary comparisons with a Pictish motif*

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ABSTRACT

The axe-carrying bird-men and the remaining iconography of the cross-slab from Papil, West Burra, Shetland, are described and analysed. Special emphasis is placed on examining the Papil bird-men first with Irish and Pictish examples of the Temptation of St Antony and second with detailed descriptions of weapon-carrying bird-men and axe-carrying human figures in Pictish sculpture, concluding that the Papil bird-men belong with the latter. This motif is compared with descriptions of battlefield demons in early Irish literature, namely, Morrígan, Bodb and Macha. The Papil cross-slab is suggested to date to the early 9th century, based on technique and comparative iconographic evidence, and is thus contemporary with related Pictish examples. This motif is shown to represent a common ideal of mythological war-like creatures in Pictish tradition, paralleled by written descriptions of Irish battlefield demons, thus suggesting shared perceptions of similar mythological figures in the Insular world. A further connection between Ireland, Irish ecclesiastical foundations in the Hebrides, Shetland and southern Pictland is also discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The cross-slab known as the Papil Stone (illus 1 & 2) was discovered in 1887 by Gilbert Goudie (1881) in the churchyard of St Laurence's Church, Papil, West Burra, Shetland (NGR HU 3698 3141). Today the stone is housed in the National Museum of Scotland (NMS IB.46) in Edinburgh, and a replica has been erected in St Laurence's churchyard.

The Papil Stone, a unique early medieval cross-slab, and its iconography has received considerable attention. Many different dates for the cross-slab have been proposed and the scholarship has been divided on whether or not the Papil Stone belongs with Irish or Pictish monumental art. In many instances this has conditioned the suggested interpretations of the monument's iconography. In previous studies, various icons from this cross-slab have been compared individually with similar examples in Britain and Ireland, especially the bird-men which occupy the lower portion of the slab. However, the Papil Stone cannot be examined in isolation. The iconography, shape and carving technique of this cross-slab and its historical contexts must be taken into consideration. The hybrid figures and their function on an overtly Christian monument have always posed a special problem: their relationship with the cross scene above them is not immediately obvious and their parallels with early Christian literature are

* This paper was awarded the RBK Stevenson Award

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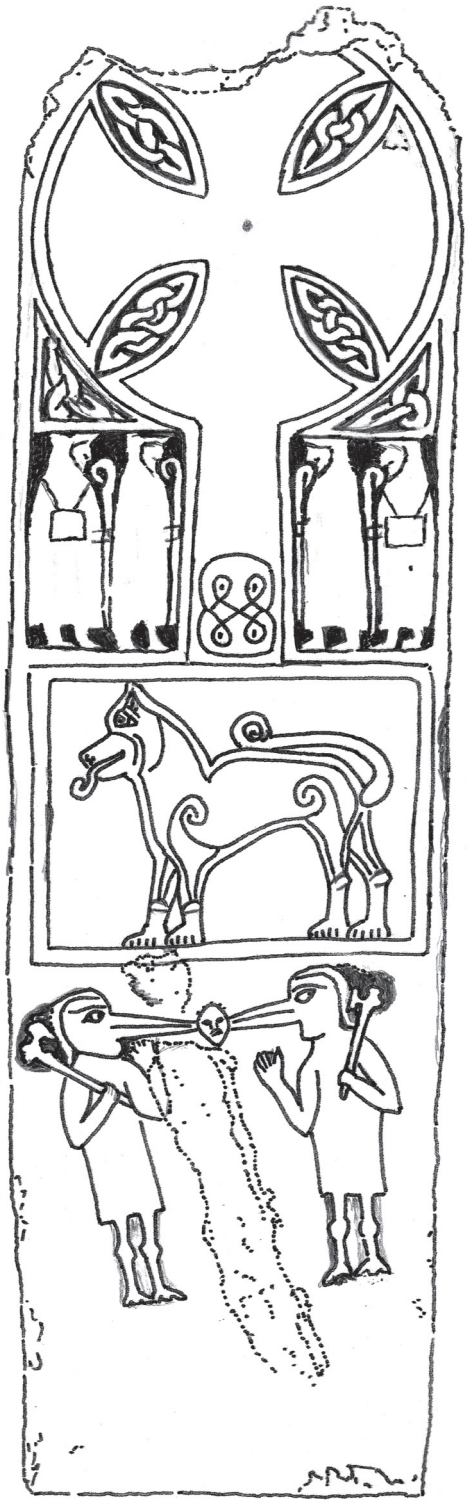
slight. They have commonly been regarded as a misrepresentation of the Temptation of St Antony, but this theory is debatable and needs to be compared and contrasted within the wider framework of this motif in Irish and Pictish art. Examples of axe-brandishing human and beast-headed figures are, however, found in Pictish sculpture, and are comparable with the imagery on the Papil Stone. Furthermore, the bird-men motif on the Papil Stone has striking parallels with contemporary battlefield demons in early Irish literature, which has not previously been considered in detail and can be the key to uncovering the ideology behind this motif.

THE CONTEXT: ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH, WEST BURRA, PAPIL, SHETLAND

The site of St Laurence's Church was a major early medieval monastery, and it was possibly the principal monastery for southern Shetland (Thomas 1971: 37, 153). The surviving early medieval sculpture work from the site (of which the Papil Stone is just one) indicates that it was an early Christian community, and continued in occupation through the age of Viking settlement, the later medieval period, and into the modern era (Fisher 2002: 53). The present, now roofless, church was built in 1814. The older church was located to the north and west of the present church, and St Laurence's Church possibly had a medieval round tower, which was still visible in the 18th century (Sibbald 1711: 26). It was likely to have been a 12th-century steeple kirk, a type which once dominated the landscapes of Shetland and Orkney (Scott & Ritchie 2009: 4).

In addition to the Papil Stone, the site has produced a significant number of early

ILLUS 1 Papil Stone © National Museums of Scotland



ILLUS 3 Map of sites mentioned in Shetland

sculpture and numerous slab shrine fragments, including one complete panel. The front of this shrine panel (illus 4), often referred to as the Monks' Stone (SM ARC6634), has close parallels with the Papil Stone. It depicts four ecclesiastics on foot and one on horseback, above a spiral design, in procession towards

ILLUS 2 Papil Stone. Drawing by Katharina Streit

ILLUS 4 Monks' Stone. © Shetland Museum

a free-standing cross in the left of the panel. The ecclesiastics have long, hooded cloaks and the final one in the procession has a book satchel over his shoulder. The majority of the design is carved in relief, with some elements raised more than others (Moar & Stewart 1944: 92). A considerable number of shrine fragments have been recovered from the site, especially posts (eight in total), three of which belonged to the same stone shrine (Moar & Stewart 1944: 93–4; Thomas 1971: 153–4; Watt & Tait 1996: 92; Scott & Ritchie 2009: 18–25). A fragmentary cross-slab with an incised expansional cross has also been discovered at Papil (Moar & Stewart 1944: 92–3; Scott & Ritchie 2009: 8, 30, illus 59). This later type of cross-slab (*c* 9th through 11th century) points to a stylistic connection between Iona, Western Scotland and Ireland (Lionard & Henry 1960–1: 128–36, 150; Fisher 2001: 45, illus A3, B68, C69, D; 130, illus B69 and 22, illus A). In 1951, a fragment with a runic inscription dating to the 11th century was discovered near the church (Thomas 1973: 31; Scott & Ritchie 2009: 34). There was undoubtedly a connection between the early ecclesiastical sites on Papil and St Ninian's Isle, just south of Papil, where numerous shrine posts, similar to the examples from Papil, have been found (for which see Thomas 1973: 8–44).

The place-name indicates that Papil was a Christian community when the Norsemen arrived. The place-name Papil is derived from Old Norse **Papa(r)býli* (Ahronson 2007: 13). Old Norse *papar* (sometimes *papa*/*papæ*) means 'priests', and *býl* is derived from *ból* 'resting place (of animals)' or 'farm' (Jakobsen 1936: 26, 172–3; Crawford 1987: 112; Ahronson 2007: 13–14). *Papar* place-names are concentrated in areas of the densest Norse settlement, and are primarily found in Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and the North Hebrides, with possible examples in Cumberland and the Isle of Man (Crawford 1987: 165). The distribution of *papar* names suggests that they were early churches with an Irish, Pictish or mixed background pre-existing Viking settlement (Macdonald 1977: 109). Old Norse *papar* is usually thought to be a borrowing from Old Irish *pápa*, itself derived from Latin *papa* (MacDonald 2002: 15). Kruse (2005: 150) suggested that *papar* may have been a loan word from Pictish, which is a strong possibility as the distribution of *papar*-names in Scotland are in areas that were Pictish or Pictish-speaking during the early period of Norse settlement.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPIL STONE

The cross-slab is carved in incision and partial relief on one face. The slab is rectangular and was originally rounded at the top. The top portion has suffered some damage, and a small piece has broken away: otherwise, the cross-slab is complete. The slab is fine-grained red sandstone, and is 205cm high and 49cm in width, tapering to 44cm at the base. The thickness of the slab varies between 3.8cm and 6.4cm (ECMS 1:11).

The rounded top of the slab would have emphasised the circular cross-head. The cross-head is a circular framed cross-of-

arcs, formed by the play of compasses inside a circle (Lionard & Henry 1961: 110). A compass was used to design the cross. The compass lines are not deeply incised where they would overlap in the centre of the cross (forming a square), but instead are conjoined with the meeting points of the arcs, with the result being an uninterrupted centre. Faint traces of the intersection of the arcs can be seen, but these were not deeply incised. The compass point in the centre, which is incised more deeply, and lower central arm of the cross are still visible. The cross-head is plain, except for the small point in the centre. The cross-head is surrounded by a double circular frame, except where it is joined to the staff, and the decorated arm-pits of the cross. This double-incised frame extends around the arms of the cross and the shaft. The arms of the cross are undecorated with expanded ends, skilfully filling the contour of the circular frame. Between the arms of the cross are lentoid shapes filled with interlace decorations, carved in low relief. The interlace in the top two lentoids mirror one another, as do the two lentoids in the lower arm-pits. The interlace design in the top lentoids is a circular ring with a figure-of-eight ring (ECMS 2: no 795), and the bottom lentoids have a 'ring with a figure-of-eight ring, and a distorted oval ring, all interlaced' (ECMS 2: no 796). Beneath the cross-head in each of the framed spandrels is a triquetra knot carved in low relief (ECMS 2: no 802). The cross-shaft is plain, except for the bottom which has an incised interlace design (ECMS 2: no 551). The cross-shaft is connected to the rectangular panel beneath, and the entire design is a two-dimensional representation of a free-standing cross on a pseudo-base (Laing 1993: 29; Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 523).

The pseudo-base occupies one-third of the size of the overall cross (Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 523) and is bordered by a rectangular frame of double-incised lines, like the cross-shaft and cross-head above. From the inner of the two borders, this panel is 19cm high and 40cm wide. Part of the slab surface in the lower register had pre-existing damage, but this did not hinder the design: the lines which form the pseudo-base are incised over this damage at the bottom of the panel. A highly stylised animal (probably a lion) is incised into this rectangular panel. It faces left, and its tail stretches over its back and ends in a spiral. The tongue of the lion protrudes from its mouth and curves upwards. The length of the lion (from tongue to tail) is 35cm. The head is highlighted by a rounded incised line, and the eye is almond-shaped with a circular iris. Above the eye are two incised lines beneath the pointed ear, which may represent lashes. The main body of the lion is decorated with internal scrolls and contour lines, which end at the knees.

Beneath the spandrels, to each side of the cross-shaft, are two pairs of ecclesiastics shown in profile facing the shaft. The clerical figures are 24cm high and 8cm wide each. They are carved in low relief, and each of these four figures is wearing a long, hooded, peaked cloak and holds a hooked staff or a crosier. The exterior ecclesiastics wear book satchels, carved in incision, suspended around their necks and over their shoulders.

Beneath the pseudo-base on the Papil Stone, two peculiar figures face one another on the left and right of the stone (illus 5). They have human heads and bird beaks. The bird-headed figure on the left is 37cm in height and the right figure 36cm. The width of their bodies is 7cm and their beaks are 10cm long. Apart from the beaks, they have human hair, and human-like facial features, including incised eyebrows. Their faces are slightly different: the eye of the left figure is almond shaped with an incised circular iris and the eye of the right figure is more rounded, the

ILLUS 5 Detail of the Papil bird-men. © National Museums of Scotland

face is thinner and the chin longer than the left figure's. They have human arms and hands. They have bird legs, carved in low relief, which are thin and spindly with emphasised, rounded knees: their feet are talons. They are clothed in unbelted tunics, and each grips an axe (carved in partial relief) over the right and left shoulder respectively. The axe handles are short, and the depictions of the axe-heads indicate that they are T-shaped axes, a type characterised by a thin shank or cheek (the section between the blade and the eye where the head is attached to the shaft) and a protruding butt (Museum 1967: 58). Their left and right arms are extended from the elbows upwards towards their beaks, with their hands opened. Between the ends of their beaks is a small human head. The human head is incised, and has two almond-shaped eyes, an incised nose with a curved line beneath it, which may be a moustache. Beneath the nose is a small incised line, probably representing the mouth. These bird-men and the head are carved around a damaged section of the stone which has also affected the lower border of the pseudo-base above. The left arm of the left bird-man has been incised over the damaged part of the stone and therefore the damaged face did not completely hinder the design (Birkhan 1999: 280). The right bird-man is positioned slightly higher than the left, and this may have been done to avoid the damaged face as much as possible.

THE BRESSAY CROSS-SLAB

The iconography of the cross-slab from Bressay, Culbinsburgh, Shetland (HU 521 423) is thematically linked with the Papil Stone, thus providing the rare opportunity for comparison between closely related monuments (illus 6). They have a number of

ILLUS 6 Bressay cross-slab (*front*). © National Museums of Scotland

ILLUS 6 Bressay cross-slab (*reverse*). © National Museums of Scotland

similarities but also notable differences. The Bressay cross-slab is nearly a meter shorter than the Papil Stone, being 115cm tall and between 30 to 40cm wide and 5cm thick (Forsyth 1996: 119). The style and technique of the Bressay slab is considerably different from the Papil Stone: it is carved on both faces in low relief. Stylistically, the Bressay cross-slab is later than the Papil Stone, and this is further supported by the Gaelic-Norse ogham inscription carved along the edge of the stone (Forsyth 1996: 117–38; Scott & Ritchie 2009: 28). The Bressay cross-slab has a number of late features. It is rectangular and does not have the rounded top like the Papil Stone, though the top of the cross-slab has been shaped around a frame of two monsters with a human body suspended between their mouths. These types of framing beasts are found on southern Pictish stones which Stevenson (1981: 285) dates to the first half of the 9th century. A similar example, used as an internal framing device around relief spirals, is found on the recumbent monument Meigle no 11 (ECMS 2: 333; Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 554, no 46). Like the Papil Stone, on the front of the Bressay slab is a circular cross-head, but it is carved in interlace. The lentoid-shaped arms of the cross are filled with figure-of-eight decoration (ECMS 2: nos 795 and 797; Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 520), whereas this decoration fills the arm-pits of the Papil cross-head. The centre of the cross is a circular panel (Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 520) filled with a three-chord plait interlace design (ECMS 2: no 787): this is not found on the Papil Stone, but is comparable to the cross at Raasay (Fisher 2001: 103). The space between the arms on the front Bressay cross-head are filled with interlace (ECMS 2: nos 806, 807, 808), and the edges of the arms have a looping strand (Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 530). Under the cross-head on the right is a triquetra knot, seen in both spandrels of the Papil Stone (ECMS 2: no 802). Beneath the circular cross-head is a rider on horseback (which is not paralleled on the Papil Stone), facing right and shown in profile, above a small panel of interlace. On each side of the rider are two larger profile clerics with hooked crosiers and book satchels, who face the rider on horseback. Adjacent to the face of the left cleric is a simple incised cross (Forsyth 1996: 120). The area in which this cross is carved is emphasised in relief, which might suggest this represents a simple cross-marked stone. Beneath the small interlace pattern is a large beast, probably a lion, shown in profile facing left. Its tail curves over its back and ends in a spiral, and it has a protruding tongue. Though this beast does not have internal scrolls, it still reflects the lion-panel of the Papil Stone. Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 534) has pointed out that a very weathered four-legged beast, probably a hound, is incised on the lion's shoulder and neck. This very rare motif is also found on the cross-slab from Kilduncan, Fife (Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 534), but it is not present on the lion of the Papil Stone. Below this motif is a right-facing four-legged beast shown in profile.

On the reverse of this slab is another interlaced cross-of-arcs (ECMS 1: no 794) encompassed on the top, bottom and right side in simple interlace. Beneath this is an outlined rectangular panel framing two four-legged beasts. The beasts face one another as mirror images; their tails curl over their backs and they oppose one another with open jaws. Beneath this is an outlined panel of two cowled clerics shown in profile, facing one another, with crosiers and satchels over their necks and shoulders.

It has long been recognised that the Bressay cross-slab is related to the Papil Stone, but the Bressay slab has often been described as 'inferior', 'clumsy' and 'unimpressive' in comparison (ECMS 2: 9; Stevenson 1955: 128; Stevenson 1981: 284–5). Importantly,

the shared iconographic themes of the Bressay cross-slab imply this monument was based on the Papil Stone: Papil was probably still standing and provided a medium for iconographic inspiration at a later date. Though the front face of the Bressay slab is based on the decorative themes of the Papil Stone, there are noteworthy differences. Though the circular cross-head, the four clerics (two on the front and two on the reverse) and the lion from the Papil Stone are also depicted on Bressay, the bird-men are conspicuously absent. When the later Bressay monument was erected, the bird-men motif was not included.

COMPARISONS WITH THE PAPIL BIRD-MEN

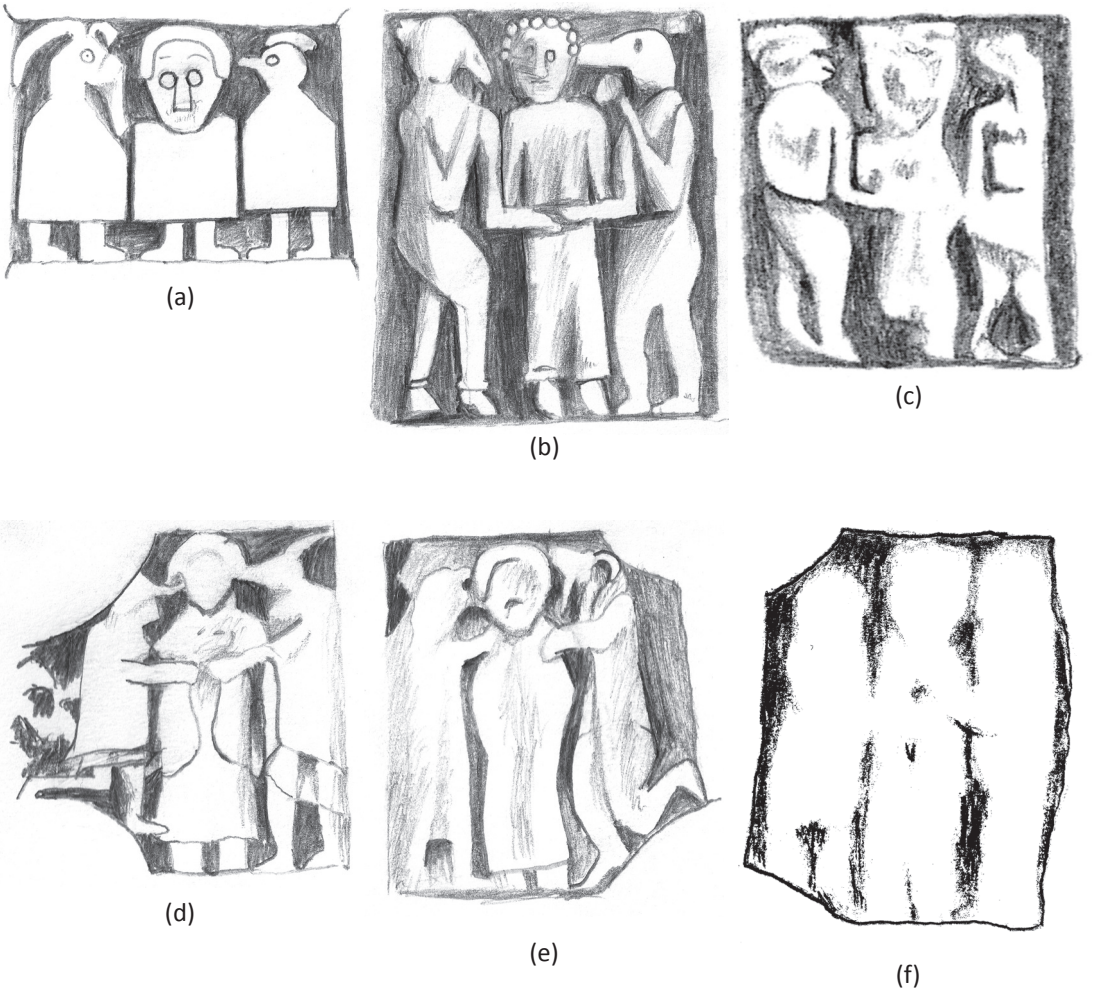
The bird-men are by far the most unusual scene on the Papil Stone. It has been thought that these figures were a later addition because they are not exactly in line with the cross-scene above them and they were carved around a damaged part of the slab (Moar & Stewart 1944: 96; Curle 1982: 98–9). This theory can be discredited, however, and the bird-men must be contemporary with the remainder of the slab. The technique (incision with low relief) is the same as the ecclesiastical figures beneath the cross-head, and the artisan apparently worked around and with the damaged part of the stone. It has been presumed that the 'body' of the human head suspended between the bird-men's beaks is now missing because of the damage to the stone in this area (Curle 1982: 99; Henderson 1996: 20). The left bird-man's arm, however, has been incised into the damaged face and since there is no body to the human head also incised onto the damaged part of the stone we must assume that there never was a human body in this scene. Furthermore, this damage extends to the lower portion of the frame around the lion panel, and here, as with the bird-men, the incised line was continued over the damaged part of the stone to complete the border of the panel. The damage to the stone surface must pre-date the carving of the figures, and therefore the bird-men were positioned in such a way as to avoid this part of the surface, in as far as possible, while still trying to keep the alignment with the cross above. The iconography of the Papil Stone must have been carved at the same time and therefore the bird-men motif was included in its iconographic programme.

The Papil Stone came from an important early Christian site, and the dominant cross on the slab indicates that the Papil Stone and its iconography were to be interpreted within a Christian context. The Papil bird-men, however, are not obviously Christian. Their presence on this stone, in close association with the cross, demonstrates that they were acceptable and could be understood within Christian ideology, but they have no immediate or apparent identification with biblical or hagiographical narratives.

THE TEMPTATION OF ST ANTONY IN IRISH AND PICTISH SCULPTURE

A common interpretation of the Papil bird-men is that they are a distorted representation of the Temptation of St Antony, a scene from the *Life of St Antony* in which Antony was tempted by women disguised as birds who whispered into his ear (Kingsley Porter 1929: 25–38; Curle 1939–40: 78). This was, in the words of Radford (1962: 173), 'a favourite scene on the Irish crosses, where it is usually pictured in a more realistic manner'.

The Temptation of St Antony is found on six, possibly seven, Irish high crosses (illus 7).



ILLUS 7 Depictions of The Temptation of St Antony on Irish high-crosses and a Pictish cross-slab. Drawings by R M A Marshall. The Temptation of St Antony may also be represented on the damaged panel of the north face of the cross at Armagh (Harbison 1994: 23): (a) Moone, Co. Kildare (north face); (b) Castledermot, Co. Kildare (South Cross: west face); (c) Castledermot, Co. Kildare (North Cross: west face); (d) Kells, Co. Meath (Market Cross: north face, east arm); (e) Monasterboice, Co. Louth (Tall Cross: east face); (f) Ullard, Co. Kilkenny (west face, south arm); (g) Kettins, Coupar Angus

ILLUS 8 Castledermot, Co. Kildare (South Cross): High-cross panel depicting The Temptation of St Antony. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

ILLUS 9 Monsaterboice, Co. Louth (Tall Cross): Cross panel depicting The Temptation of St Antony. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

ILLUS 10 Moone, Co. Kildare: Cross panel depicting The Temptation of St Antony. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

ILLUS 11 Kettins, Coupar Angus: Pictish cross-slab, the depicting The Temptation of St Antony on right side of the slab, second panel from the bottom. © Crown Copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk

The Irish high crosses with this motif also have scenes of Saints Paul and Antony breaking bread in the desert, from the *Life of St Paul,* Chapters 10 through 11. With the exception of Monasterboice and Ullard, they also depict the Old Testament story of Daniel in the Lions' Den (Daniel 6:16). This juxtaposition of imagery from the Old Testament and the *Lives of Saints Paul and Antony*, in the words of Peter Harbison (1992 v 1: 303) suggests

'a parallelism between the two figures being aided in their bestial predicament by their God, whom they both trusted and served'. The scenes of Saints Paul and Antony, as well as the images of Daniel, confirm that this motif represents the Temptation of Antony.

In every example of the Temptation of St Antony on the Irish high crosses, the demons on either side of Antony are always depicted with human bodies, generally robed or wearing tunics, with animal heads. Kingsley Porter (1929: 35–6) has observed that at least one of the two beast-headed figures in this motif generally has the head of a goat, whereas the other has a different head, either a bird, swine or human-like head. On the North and South Crosses at Castledermot (illus 7b, c; illus 8) the figures on the left of St Antony have long snouts and horns, whereas the ones on the right have bird-like heads. On the cross at Moone (illus 7a, illus 10) the demons and their features are very clear. The demon on St Antony's right has a distinctive bird-head, whereas the one on the left might be a goat, for it has horns and an extension from its snout which may represent a beard (Kingsley Porter 1929: 35). This motif is likely represented on the Pictish cross-slab from Kettins (illus 7g and illus 11), near Coupar Angus, which portrays a central frontal-facing robed figure flanked by two profile robed figures with animal heads (ECMS 3: 224; Curle 1939–40: 79; Harbison 1992 v 1: 303, 325; Henderson 1996: 20).

The Temptation of St Antony motif is relatively consistent: a front-facing central figure flanked by two creatures shown in profile with human bodies and animal heads, whose snouts or beaks point towards the ears of the central figure. In comparison with the Papil Stone, there are some parallels between the Temptation of St Antony and the bird-men (Curle 1939–40: fig 7). The Papil bird-men are shown with the head positioned between their beaks exactly where the ears of the human head would naturally be; this is very reminiscent of the Temptation of Antony on the Moone cross, the other Irish high crosses and the Kettins cross-slab. There is, however, a problem with this interpretation. First, the bird-men on the Papil Stone carry axes, which are not depicted on any of the Irish motifs or the Kettins cross-slab. Second and most importantly, there is strong evidence that there never was a human body attached to the head between the beaks of the Papil bird-men. The absence of the human body undermines the potential association of the Papil imagery with the Temptation of St Antony.

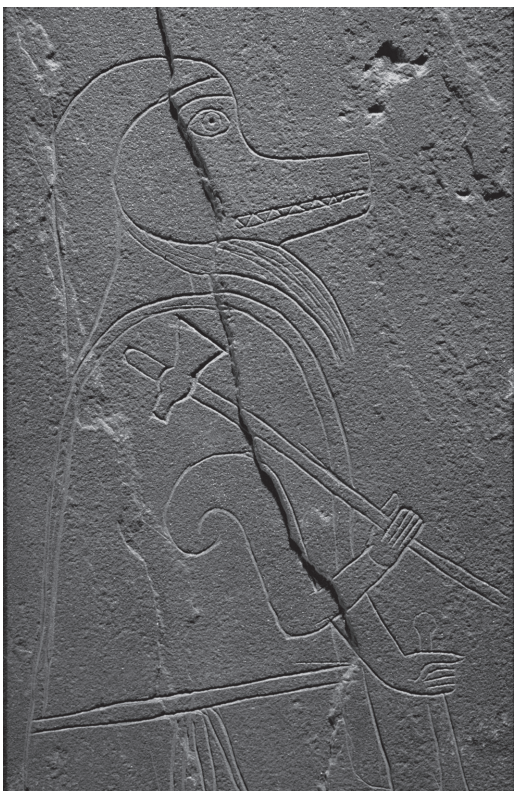
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PICTISH WEAPON- OR AXE-CARRYING, BEAST-HEADED AND OGRE-LIKE HUMAN MOTIF

The Papil bird-men have a stronger connection with axe- and weapon-carrying hybrid and monstrous human-like figures in Pictish sculpture (Lamb 1974: 86). There are 10 similar examples in the corpus of Pictish sculpture, three of which, it should be emphasised, have bird-features. These unusual figures have received considerable attention and comparisons (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 215, fig 3; Turner 1994: 321, illus 3). They occur as single figures or as single figures associated with an animal or beast, and also as paired figures like the Papil bird-men. They must have had a long currency in Pictish art, for they are found on a variety of monumental media, ranging from simple incised stone boulders to panelled motifs on elaborate cross-slabs and even on a sculpted shrine panel. The Papil bird-men must be compared and contrasted with similar figures in mainland Pictish sculpture to highlight the similarities, differences and trends in the representation of this motif.

SINGLE BEAST-HEADED OR AXE-BRANDISHING FIGURES

Mail, Cunningsburgh, Shetland (HU 4324 2792)

The geographically closest example of an axe-wielding figure to the Papil bird-men is found on a fragment discovered at Mail in 1992 (illus 12), commonly known as the Mail Stone (Scott & Ritchie 2009: 12, no 6). Because this stone is incomplete a date is difficult to ascertain, though a date in the late 7th or early 8th century is plausible (Turner 1994: 324). The fragment is fine-grained old red sandstone, and is smooth on one face but has planes running from the bottom of the other, and it is on this face that the figure has been carved (Turner 1994: 317). As Val Turner (1994: 317) states: 'This is curious, for it interferes with the visual impact of the figure.' The Mail figure is carved in incision and was apparently scratched lightly and free-handed onto the stone before being incised more deeply. The fragment itself is 60.5cm high by 4.2cm wide and around 3.4cm thick, and the figure is 44cm high (Turner 1994: 317, 319). Turner (1994: 317) has suggested that this fragment originally belonged to the top part of a cross-slab because the lower portion has a 'ragged stepped fracture'.



ILLUS 12 The Mail Stone. © Shetland Museum

The figure on the Mail fragment is shown in profile and faces right. The head is particularly unusual and has frequently been interpreted as a head-dress or mask (Laing 1993: 31; Turner 1994: 319), further supported by the fact that no ear is visible. The figure has a long snout with 15 pointed, triangular teeth. It has an oval-shaped eye, and both the iris and the pupil are incised. The face has an eyebrow which is represented by a single incised line. What may be a beard extends from the rear of the jaw and flows forward along the contours of the upper chest (Turner 1994: 319; AP: 123). An alternative explanation is that this feature portrays hair emerging from a mask (Turner 1994: 319–20). Only the front half of the neck is visible, the back being covered by what may be hair or part of a mask. The body of the figure is certainly human. It is wearing a long-sleeved tunic, the cuff-line being visible on the right wrist. The tunic is belted at the waist. The upper half of the body is very broad, and has a double-outline at the back which continues from the waist to the shoulder and down the front of the skirt. Turner (1994: 320) suggests this feature is a sash. The skirt is decorated with a tripod-pattern of double-lines which begin at the belt and expand and end at the hem of the skirt, which is decorated with a step-pattern (Turner 1994: 320). Ritchie (2005: 37) proposes that this tripod pattern may represent extra material sewn

into the skirt. The legs and feet are human, and the figure is probably wearing leggings and pointed footwear. The feet and arms are disproportionally small compared with the remainder of the body. The right shoulder is 'set low down on the body' (Turner 1994: 320) and ends in a scroll design. The right arm is flexed upwards from the elbow, and in its right hand the figure holds a deeply incised axe, which rests over its right shoulder. Though the axe is carved neatly between the thumb and fingers, the lines of the shaft cut across the backs of the fingers, suggesting the axe was incised before the hand and the arm (Turner 1994: 320). The first half of the axe shaft is thinner than the upper half. The axe-head is wedge shaped, suggesting it is a 'bearded axe' (Museum 1967: 60, fig 3). In its left hand the figure holds a club-like weapon: the left hand is clenched, and the thumb does not grip the implement. The club extends downwards, and ends parallel with the figure's knees. A thin line may finish the head of this implement, suggesting a blunt end was intended, but this is difficult to discern (Turner 1994: 320).

Balblair (Kilmorack) (NH 509 451)

Originally from Kilmorack, Invernesshire, this 140cm high by 70cm wide dioritic block is carved in incision on one face. A number of cupmarks are visible on the stone (Fraser 2008: 80, no 106.1), suggesting it is a reused prehistoric monument. Curle (1939–40: 73) dates this stone to the 7th century. A figure of a man (about 50cm high by 31cm wide) is shown in profile facing left. The facial features are difficult to discern. It might have a sharp, pointed nose, beneath which an incised line is drawn across the head and down to what might be the right arm. Anderson (ECMS 3: 96) describes the head as 'most rudely drawn and looks more like that of a bird than a man'. Henderson (1996: 17) suggests it has a bird head, and therefore this pointed feature may represent a beak. Extending from the top of the head are two small incised lines, and it has been suggested that this figure is portrayed wearing a helmet or a mask (ECMS 3: 96; Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 216; RCAHMS 1999: 26, no 90; Fraser 2008: 80, no 106.1). The figure wears a knee-length belted tunic, and the skirt is decorated with two incised lines ending at a plain hem. This is very similar to the Mail and Golspie (discussed below) figures. Extending downwards from what must be the right hand is a club-like implement, carved in a single continuous incised line; it is smaller at the top than at the bottom (ECMS 3: 96) and extends to the figure's feet. The legs and feet of the figure are human and it has two incised lines across the knees, which may represent boots.

Rhynie (no 7), Barflat (NJ 4976 2636)

Rhynie no 7 was discovered in 1978 (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 211; Fraser 2008: 40, no 43.7). This gabbro slab is 178cm high with a maximum width of around 70cm, being 39cm thick at the base and 13cm thick at the top (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 211). The stone is carved in incision on one face, and the stone has been shaped where the figure was carved (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 214). The figure, the only image on the stone, is shown in profile facing right. It is about 103cm tall (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 211). The head is human, though certain elements of this formidable man suggest non-human qualities. The mouth is open, revealing two pointed, triangular teeth which extend from the top jaw. The high-bridged nose is particularly large and pointed at the end: the lower portion of the nose is flat and has a large nostril. The eyebrow is large and lenticular in shape and extends to the edge of the face. The figure has an oval eye with a small incised pupil. The ear is large, but well defined: it is carved in a continuous line and is oval-shaped. The figure has a moustache and a long pointed beard

which extends down to the chest. The man has a receding hairline, and is bald behind the ear with the exception of one extension of hair which is above the ear and over the eyebrow. The hair is long and extends mid-way down the back. The neck is represented by a single incised line which continues towards the right shoulder. The man wears a sleeved tunic, the cuffs of which are visible on both the right and left wrists. The tunic is belted at the waist and the skirt extends to just above the knees. The figure probably wears leggings and pointed footwear. In both hands it holds the shaft of an axe-hammer: the shaft extends over the right shoulder and the axe-head is parallel with the back of the figure's head and neck. The shaft of the axe-hammer is long and represented by a single, thin incised line.

It has been suggested that this stone could date from as early as the 5th century to as late as the 9th (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 221), though a strong case can be made for dating this stone to the early 7th century based on the type of axe depicted. The axe-hammer (Laing & Laing 1984: 282) with a long, thin shaft held by the man on Rhynie no 7 is practically identical to an iron axe discovered at the Sutton Hoo burial, dated from context to the early 7th century (Bruce-Mitford 1983 v 3: 837–43, fig 597; Henderson 1996: 16–17). The Sutton Hoo axe was suggested to have a ceremonial function as its long iron haft would have made it considerably difficult to use as a tool (Wilson 1976: 257), but Bruce-Mitford's (1983 v 3: 842) later evaluation strongly suggests it was a weapon. The Sutton Hoo axe-hammer has one additional feature not present on the Rhynie no 7 axe, and that is a ring on the bottom of the shaft, and when complete it would have been 78cm in length (Bruce-Mitford 1983 v 3: 840). The type of axe-head on the Sutton Hoo example is unknown in Anglo-Saxon grave finds (Bruce-Mitford 1983 v 3: 842), and, in comparison with the axe on Rhynie no 7, it is not improbable that the Sutton Hoo axe was a Pictish import. Current archaeological excavation at Rhynie has revealed a fortified settlement dating from 400 to 900 AD, and the finds strongly suggest that Rhynie was an important Pictish socio-political centre (Current Arch 2012: 8–9). In comparison with the Sutton Hoo axe, Rhynie no 7 may therefore be contemporary and date to the early 7th century.

Rhynie (no 3) (found at NJ 4985 2702 now at NJ 4980 2715)

This nearly rectangular whinstone block has the figure of a man carved on one face. The monument is 90cm high by 55cm wide and 31cm thick. The figure, though now badly weathered, would have taken up the majority of the height on the monument. The man is carved in incision and shown in profile facing left. The facial features, upper and lower body down to the legs are now no longer visible. Antiquarian drawings show this figure wearing a cloak that flowed over the back ending around mid-thigh (RCAHMS 1999: 7, ABD 501/1). The man carried a rectangular shield, the lower portion of which is still visible. In the right hand the figure carries an implement (presumably a spear) with a thin shaft and a large, knobbed butt. Another implement appears to rest on the shoulder of the man, and it also had a thin shaft and a round, knobbed butt, and it was smaller than the spear held in the right hand. The lower portion of the legs is still visible, and the figure had leggings and pointed footwear, identical to the man on Rhynie no 7. A thin line extending from the right foot and crossing over the left leg is visible. Both a drawing made by James Logan (1829: 56, pl 5 fig 1) and James Skene (*c* 1832–4) (see RCAHMS 1999: 7, ABD 501/1) indicate this feature was an axe with the head tilted upwards and the shaft (most of which is still visible) crossing

over the left leg of the figure and ending near the ankle of the right. By the middle of the 19th century this portion of the monument appears to have been damaged, as Stuart's (1856 v 1: pl 7) drawing does not show an axe-head here, but instead extensive damage to the surface. Stuart's illustration does, however, reveal more of the facial features of this figure which are comparable with Logan and Skene's drawings. The figure has a large nose, a thick neck, and a chiselled jaw. The mouth is a thin incised line and another line across the centre of the face is visible in the antiquarian sketches. Stuart's (1856 v 1: pl 7) drawing almost conveys the impression that the figure is wearing a helmet, but all features of the head are now lost.

All 19th-century illustrations of this stone show a curved feature below the figure, but this is now buried (RCAHMS 1999: 18; Fraser 2008: 38, no 43.3). This curved feature in Logan's drawing (1829: 56, pl 5 fig 1) is made of five curved lines, and in Skene's sketch, four: this portion of the stone is more crudely drawn in Stuart's (1856 v 1: pl 7) illustration and shows only about three lines. This curved feature may have been the Pictish arch or horseshoe symbol (Mack 2007: 167).

Collessie, Fife (Newton of Collessie) (NO 29271 13244)

This monument is considered here because it provides a comparative example of a single warrior figure. The stone is without doubt early (Mack 2007: 163) and Lines (1993: 30) suggests a 5th-century date is possible. The Collessie monument is an irregular sandstone pillar, and is 274cm high and measures 213cm in girth at the base (RCAHMS 1933: 57, no 117). It is carved in incision on one face of the stone. The figure is a man, and it is 113.5cm high and 27cm wide at the top portion (Lines 1989: 17). The man is carved in profile and faces left. He has a large nose and a lentoid eye with dotted pupil. The eyebrow is a single incised line. His chin is protruding and he does not have a beard or moustache. There are two spiral scrolls on the back of the head: whether or not these represent hair is uncertain. The man appears to be entirely naked, as no clothing lines are visible. The right arm is extended down towards his waist, and in his right hand the man holds a spear. The spear is nearly the height of the figure: the shaft is carved in a single, thin incised line, with the diamond-shaped spear at the top. The bottom of the spear has a very large, round butt. In the left hand the figure holds a rectangular shield with a circular boss in the centre. The shield covers the area of the man's waist. The legs are also unclothed, and the feet may be uncovered, though they conform to the style of legs and feet in Pictish sculpture. To the lower right of the figure (about 10cm from the figure) is a plain horseshoe or arch symbol (Lines 1989: 17; RCAHMS 1999: 25, no 81; Mack 2007: 163; Fraser 2008: 70, no 83). When this stone was re-examined in 1993, a second symbol was discovered beneath the horseshoe/arch symbol, and was identified as a 'Pictish beast' symbol facing right 'with conventional spirals and scrolls' (Lines 1993: 30, fig 8).

Strathmartine no 7 (NO 374 361)

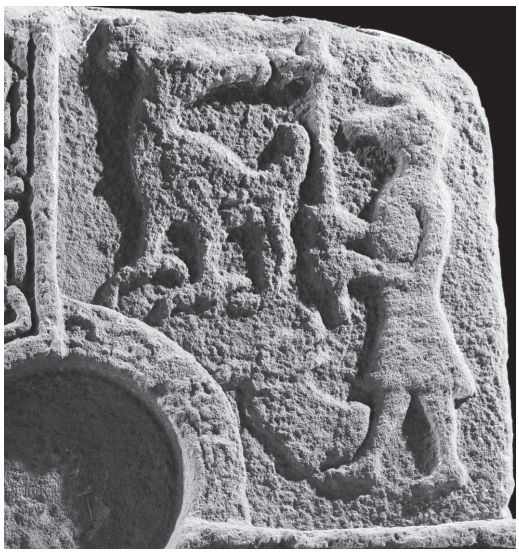
This stone was discovered in the 18th century, but was destroyed or lost before the mid-19th century, though Stuart (1856 v 1: 38, pl 78) preserves an earlier sketch. The dimensions of the stone and carvings are unknown, though from the sketch it appears to have been sculpted in relief on a prepared slab (Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 216). The drawing shows a figure in profile facing right. The head is defaced, though what is visible suggests it had a long snout, because it is too long to have been a human face. There is also a large hump in the middle of the top line of the face.

It wears a tunic, which is long (perhaps knee length), and has human legs and feet. Over its right shoulder it holds what appears to be a double-armed cross, which has been described as the Russian cross (ECMS 3: 266). Ian and Alexandra Shepherd (1980: 216) have suggested that this cross is not the Russian cross, but instead may be the double-armed cross of bishops and patriarchs, and a symbol of St Peter. The shaft of this implement is held in its left and right hands and they are positioned in the same manner as on Rhynie no 7. It is difficult to discern the trustworthiness of the image and the extent of any damage to the stone when this sketch was made. The lowest arm of this 'cross' rests on the back of the shoulders and the neck of the figure, and in comparison with other axe-wielding figures, it is tempting to suggest that this may have been a fragment of hair (assuming this is a relief figure), which would have once extended from the head and flowed down the shoulders of the figure. If this were the case it might suggest that the implement the figure was holding over its shoulder was an axe-hammer (Henderson 1996: 17, n 44). In the absence of the actual stone, however, this cannot be proven.

SINGLE FIGURES CONFRONTING AN ANIMAL OR MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURE

Rossie Priory (NO 291 307 now at NO 2915 3080)

This fine and wonderfully decorated cross-slab was discovered in the old burial-ground of Rossie before 1867, and is now housed in a private mortuary chapel (ECMS 3: 306; Fraser 2008: 130, no 191). Curle (1939–40: 89) dated this monument to the 8th century, though Laing (2000: 112) suggests this stone dates to the 9th century. This old red sandstone cross-slab is 167cm high, 116cm in width at the base and up to 30cm in thickness. It is carved in relief on both faces, and each face has a cross.



ILLUS 13 Rossie Priory cross-slab: reverse, top right corner.

On the front are a hunting scene, a crescent and V-rod and 'Pictish beast' symbols, a two-headed beast, as well as an angel and a man holding two birds by the neck. On the reverse, the panels around the cross are decorated with hybrid creatures (see Henderson 1996: 33–5). Above the right arm of the cross on the reverse is a figure with a bird-head and a human body, brandishing an axe against a bird-like creature (illus 13). The panel is about 36cm high by 32cm wide. The figure is shown in profile facing left. It stands upright and has a bird-head with a beak, and the face has no human characteristics. In the centre of its head is a large, round incised eye. An extension from its forehead might be a curved horn. The body is human: it has a bulging chest, wears a knee-length belted tunic and has human legs and feet. The arms are flexed at the elbows and with both hands it holds an axe with a very long shaft in front of itself. The type of axe-head depicted is a 'bearded axe' or wedge shaped head (Museum 1967: 60, fig 3). The

head of the axe is pointed towards the head of the bird-like creature in front of the bird-man (Henderson 1996: 19). This creature is shown in profile with its head turned around to face the bird-man; it has a plume on the top of its head, and the tail feathers are curved upwards and downwards like the bird on St Vigeans no 8 (ECMS 2: 269, 307). Its feet are taloned or 'ball and claw', like the feet of the human-headed quadruped in the panel above the right arm of the cross and similar to the other fantastic beasts on this cross-slab. Beneath this bird-creature and against the right foot of the bird-man is an animal head, which looks very similar to the Pictish 'beast head' symbol, and perhaps represents a severed head (Henderson 1996: 35; AP: 81).

Golspie, Sutherland (NC 837 002)

This elaborate sandstone cross-slab, originally from the churchyard of Craigton, was moved to the Golspie railway station in 1840 and then to the Dunrobin Museum in 1868 (ECMS 3: 48; Fraser 2008: 98, no 140). Both Stevenson (1955: 116) and Laing (2000: 110) date this stone to the 9th century. This sandstone cross-slab is 183cm high by 85cm wide at the bottom and 70cm wide at the top and 15cm thick. The cross-face is carved in relief and the edges are decorated with a spiral design also carved in relief, whereas the reverse face with the symbols is carved in incision (ECMS 3: 48). Along the upper edge and right side of the reverse face is an ogham inscription (Fraser 2008: 98, no 140). From the top of the reverse face is a rectangle symbol and a 'Pictish beast' symbol, which take up most of the width of the slab; beneath these is a man (about 80cm high) holding an axe against an animal, beneath which is a fish symbol, a flower symbol, a crescent and V-rod and a double-disc symbol. The bottom of the face is decorated with two intertwining sea-serpents that bite each other's tails. The man in the centre-left is shown in profile. The figure has hair that begins at the forehead, continues over the head and down the nape of the neck. The man's nose is quite large. His mouth is shut, but the lips are large and defined by a continuous line. The eye is oval with circular iris and pupil. The figure has a long, pointed beard which extends down to his chest. He is wearing a long-sleeved, knee-length belted tunic. An incised line beneath the neck and above the shoulders may represent a collar-line of the tunic, though it is more likely to represent the neck (Ritchie 2005: 36). The figure is shown with his right arm extended, with the sleeve of the tunic blousing outwards. The top and skirt of the tunic are decorated by two continuous incised lines, which end at the hem at the bottom of the tunic: the hem is broad and well defined, but undecorated. Ritchie (2005: 37) suggest this design may indicate the man was wearing a leather tunic. The man has human legs and feet, and is probably wearing leggings and pointed footwear. The right foot of the figure is planted firmly, and the left leg is extended over the top of the double-disc symbol and adjacent to the flower symbol. In his right hand the figure clenches an axe. The axe is held in front of an animal, which is possibly a lion or a wolf. Incised lines extending from its paws may represent claws. In the figure's left hand he clenches a knife, and this is shown correctly with the thumb holding the handle and the fingers over the handle. The knife blade is short and is held directly above the head of the fish. The type of axe held by the Golspie man is a T-shaped axe with a very short handle, but the shank is long and thin and the blade very broad and thin: it is a variation of the type held by the Papil bird-men, but considerably different. This type of axe-head is attested in Danish graves dating from the 10th through 11th centuries (Pederson 1997: 127, fig 3). It was primarily a carpenters' tool (Museum 1967: 57, fig 12

no 3; Laing & Laing 1984: 202; Aitchison 2003: 65), and this very same type of axe is represented in a wood-working scene on the Bayeaux Tapestry, which provides evidence of context and use.

PAIRED BEAST-HEADED OR HUMAN WEAPON- AND AXE-CARRYING FIGURES

Hunter's Hill, Glamis, Angus (Glamis no 1) (NO 3937 4654)

The most striking parallel with the Papil bird-men in mainland Pictish sculpture is the cross-slab at Hunter's Hill. This red sandstone cross-slab is 150cm high by 72cm wide and 14cm thick. It is shaped only on the cross side of the slab; the reverse is undressed and has three incised Pictish symbols, an animal (possibly a lion), a serpent and portion of a mirror symbol (ECMS 3: 221; RCAHMS 1999: 21; Laing 2001: 233). On the bottom left of the cross-face is a triple-ring symbol and a flower symbol. On either side of the cross-shaft are animals carved in relief, and above the left arm of the cross is an angel (comparable with the angel on the Eassie Cross), and in the top right, now fragmented panel, is an axe-carrying figure with bird features (illus 14). This figure is shown in profile and carved in relief: it comprises the majority of the panel and is about 40cm high and 25cm wide. There were once two figures in this scene, though the right one is now fragmented. The complete figure has a human head with a bird beak (which is slightly opened). It has human hair beginning on the forehead and extending to the area of the shoulders, like Papil. It has an oval-shaped eye. The figure has a human body, and wears a knee-length belted tunic. It has human legs and feet. Its left foot is positioned slightly higher than the right, giving a tilted impression. The right arm is flexed at the elbow, and in its right hand it holds a T-shaped

ILLUS 14 Hunter's Hill, Glamis, Angus, cross-slab: front of slab, top right corner. © Courtesy of RCAHMS (B C Clayton Collection). Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk

axe which rests over its shoulder, similar to the axes depicted on the Papil bird-men. The hands are presumably human, though the fingers are difficult to discern because of weathering to the surface. In its left hand it brandishes some type of weapon against the other, now fragmented, figure. The second figure was smaller in stature and also wore a knee-length tunic and had human legs and feet – this much is visible – but the head is now missing. This damage to the stone must have occurred after the 18th century. When the earliest record of the stone was written (Gordon 1726: 163) it must have been complete, and an engraving made by Peter Mazell in 1789 for the work of Rev Charles Cordiner shows the stone without this damage (Cordiner 1788: pl 1, fig 3). Though this is a credulous and unreliable engraving, if there is any kernel of truth to Mazell's image, we can

guess that the figure now lost on the Hunter's Hill stone was originally smaller than the one on the left, and that it also had an animal head. Alexander Gordon (1726: 163) noted that these two figures held axes in their hands 'the very same Kind of Axes as on the other Stone' in Glamis (ie the cross-slab at Glamis Manse) discussed below. Gordon (1726: 163) says that these figures had swine heads. Mazell's image also portrays these figures to have swine-like heads, though examination proves the left figure has a bird-head (indicated by the prominent beak). Laing (2001: 233) has dated this stone to the 9th century, but suggests a 10th-century date is plausible.

Glamis Manse, Angus (Glamis no 2) (NO 3858 4686)

This well-known cross-slab is 276cm high by 150cm wide and 24cm in width and pedimented at the top (Laing 2001: 233). Stevenson (1955: 113) dated the Glamis cross-slab to the second half of the 8th century, though Laing (2000: 95–7; 2001: 230–1) makes a strong case for dating this stone to the 9th century. On the reverse of the slab, three Pictish symbols are incised near the centre: a serpent, fish and mirror symbol and on the front of the slab, to the left of the cross-shaft, is an animal head and triple-ring symbol. The top of the pediment above the cross, though badly defaced, is outlined by a pair of beasts' heads with what appears to be a human head between their jaws (ECMS 3: 222; Curle 1939–40: 83). The cross is carved in low relief. To the left of the cross-shaft, two men are depicted in hand-to-hand combat with axes, and above the cross-arm, in the top right panel, is a centaur brandishing two axes, one in each hand. Both are carved in low relief.

The combat scene on the Glamis cross-slab is an interesting comparison with the Papil bird-men. This motif (about 81cm high by 47cm wide) depicts human figures in combat with axe-hammers (T-shaped). They are of equal size. They both wear unbelted tunics that extend to the mid-thigh, similar to the Papil bird-men. They have human legs and feet like the figure on Hunter's Hill. Their hair is long and runs to just below the shoulder. They have human faces, though their noses are large and bulbous. Both men have pointed beards. The eye of the left figure is visible, and it is lenticular in shape. He holds an axe (with a short shaft and a T-shaped axe-head) in his right hand: his arm is flexed at the elbow and the axe is held over his shoulder. His left arm is also flexed before him, but the man on the right grasps this arm around the wrist. The man on the right holds his axe (the same type as his opponent's) in the right hand, with the arm positioned as if he is about to strike the other figure with the axe, and the weapon is positioned slightly higher above and in front of the head of the man on the left. The man on the left is shown thrusting forward with his legs, whereas the one on the right appears to be holding his ground, with his right leg and foot straightened and the left leg slightly bent.

The centaur in the top panel also brandishes a T-shaped axe in each hand. The centaur is about 50cm high by 43.5cm wide, and is carved in low relief. On the cross-slab from Meigle no 2 (AP: 134, fig 194), beneath a scene of Daniel in the Lion's den, is a similar centaur brandishing two T-shaped axe-hammers in each hand, and behind him is a long branch. This is similarly paralleled on the Aberlemno no 3 cross-slab (Fraser 2008: 48, no 51.3), which has a centaur holding a T-shaped axe with a branch trailing behind.

Murthly, Perthshire, panel fragment (NO 093 392)

This panel fragment (illus 15) was originally part of a box shrine or a church furnishing

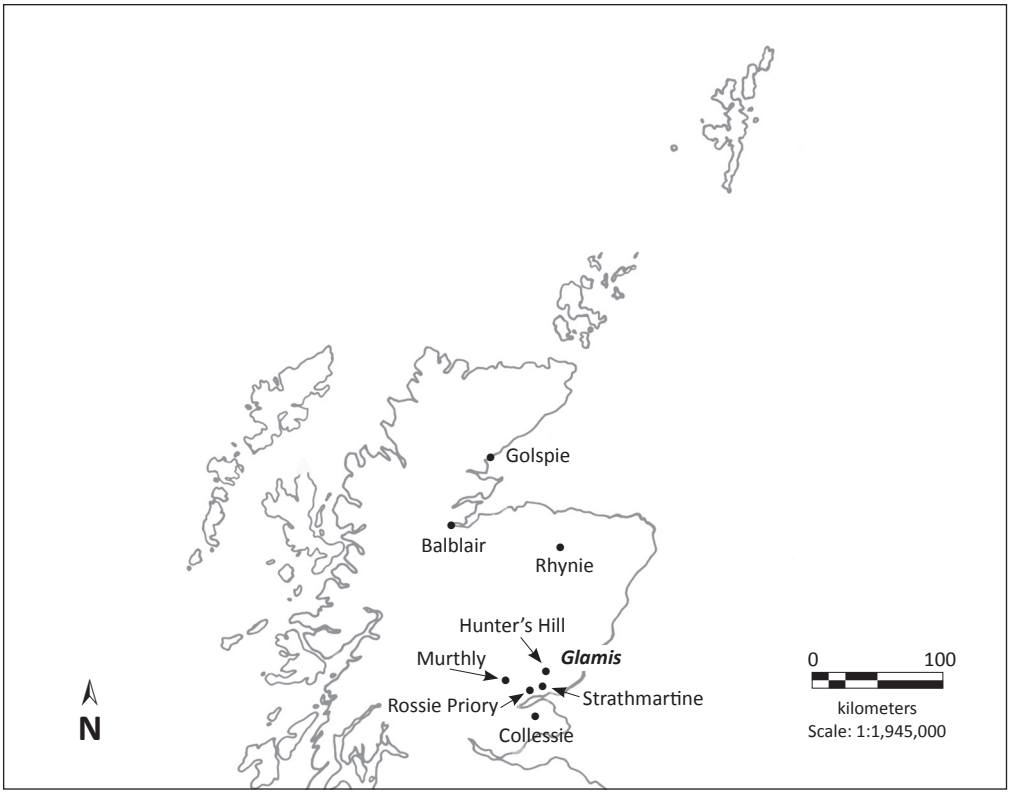
ILLUS 15 Murthly, Perthshire, shrine panel fragment. © National Museums of Scotland

(AP: 124; Hall 2005: 303), and it is possible that the Murthly panel and the nearby panel fragment from Pittensorn were both part of the same monument (Hall 2005: 299). Based on comparisons with the *Book of Kells*, the shrine panel probably dates to the early 9th century (Hall 2005: 293, 300–1). Fantastic animals, hybrid creatures and the pursuit of a man by a monster, possibly a lion (AP: 155) comprise the imagery of this panel. The fragment is made of pink sandstone and is 57.5cm high by 101.5cm wide and 10.5cm thick (Hall 2005: 296). It is sculpted in relief on one side only: the top edge is enclosed in moulding, and the roughly dressed bottom suggests that it was set into the ground (Hall 2005: 296).

Two beast-headed figures in combat on the left of this panel are of particular interest. The figure on the left has a bird-head and the opponent on the right has a dog-like head. These figures are shown in profile and carved in relief, and this motif is about 32cm high by 30cm wide. The left figure has a bird head: there is no human hair or human facial features such as an eyebrow. It has a long beak, the lower half of which is straight whereas the upper part of the beak is curved at the top. It has a lenticular eye. Its neck is large and extends onto a human body. The figure wears a long-sleeved tunic (the cuff of the sleeve is visible on the left arm). Weathering obscures whether or not the tunic is belted, but the lower portion extends to the knees and is decorated with two double-incised lines around the sides of the skirt and the lower hem. It has human legs and feet. The right arm is flexed upwards at the elbow, and in the right hand it holds a sword over its shoulder. The left arm is extended outwards and in the hand it grasps a shield shown in profile. The shield is curved and has an extended, pointed boss in the centre. The sword and the profile shield and the pointed boss are very similar to the shields of the Pictish warriors on the Aberlemno no 2 (see illus 18) cross-slab (Fraser 2008: 47, no 51.2).

The figure on the right has an animal-like head and a human body. It faces left, and kneels in a crouching position, with its left leg bent at the knee and its right foot flat, as if it is about to spring forward. Its head is larger than

the bird-head of its opponent. It has a dog-like snout with three incised lines on the top jaw. The mouth is open. The eye is large and circular. From the top of its head extends what is probably intended to represent hair, which flows over the shoulders and back and ends in a spiral about mid-back. The chest of the dog-headed man is very broad. In his left hand he holds a circular shield (shown from the front). The shield has a central boss, with two smaller circular bosses extending vertically from the central boss. The rim of the shield has higher relief. The shields of both Murthly figures are comparable to a description from the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* of 'curved shields with scalloped rims' (O'Rahilly 2003: 1, ln 18–19, trans 125; 99, ln 3264, trans 212). The right arm is extended downwards behind the right thigh (the hand is not visible), and in its right hand it holds a sword. The top part of the sword extends upwards and is visible from the knee. The impression conveyed is that the dog-headed man is about to thrust his sword upwards at the bird-headed man. The clothing of the dog-headed man is uncertain, but he wears a belt at the waist. The feet appear as if they are wearing pointed footwear. The bird-headed man, standing upright, takes up the height of the panel, but the dog-headed man, in a crouching position, is set slightly higher than its bird-headed opponent so that their eyes are parallel.



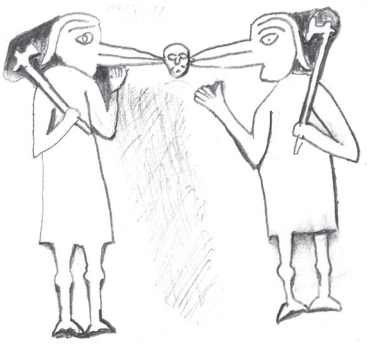
Illus 16 Map of mainland Pictish monuments with weapon-carrying, beast-headed or monstrous human figures mentioned in text

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION OF THE PAPIL BIRD-MEN AND PICTISH FIGURES

Comparison suggests the Papil bird-men have considerably more in common with the Pictish weapon-bearing, beast-headed and formidable human figures than they do with the Temptation of St Antony, and therefore, they belong to this motif (illus 17). There are, however, some notable differences between the Papil bird-men and the other examples from the Pictish corpus. The Papil bird-men have bird legs and talons: this trait is not paralleled on any of the other examples, all of which clearly have human legs and feet. The Papil bird-men also have a human head between their beaks. This may imply that they are devouring the human head. A comparable representation of a man being eaten can be seen on the recumbent from Meigle, Perthshire, no 26, where two beasts are in the process of eating a human, and only his head and one leg remain (AP: 155, illus 223). Images of a human head between the open mouths of monsters are found on Pictish sculpture, though most often this motif forms the framing decoration of recumbent slabs and the pedimented tops of cross-slabs. The reverse of the cross-slab from Dunfallandy, Perthshire, for example, is framed on both sides by two raised sea beasts: at the top of the stone their mouths are open with protruding tongues extending to the centre of the slab, between which is a solitary human head (ECMS 2: 288; Fraser 2008: 122, no 181; AP: 76, illus 77). The now badly defaced pedimented top of the Glamis Manse cross-slab was also framed by a pair of beasts, with what appears to be a human head positioned between their jaws (ECMS 3: 222; Curle 1939–40: 83). Other examples of framing-monsters with no human head between the mouths include: Aberlemno no 2, Cossans and St Madoes (Fraser 2008: 47, no 51.2; 51, no 56; 133, no 192). This framing design is common in early Insular manuscripts (eg the *Book of Kells* folio 2 v), which are a likely source of inspiration for this fashion on sculpture. Though there is some semblance between the framing motif on stones such as Dunfallandy and the human head between the beaks of the Papil bird-men, there is an obvious contrast: the Papil bird-men do not form a frame and are located on the bottom of the slab. This suggests that their interpretation is different from the symbolism of the framing-beast.

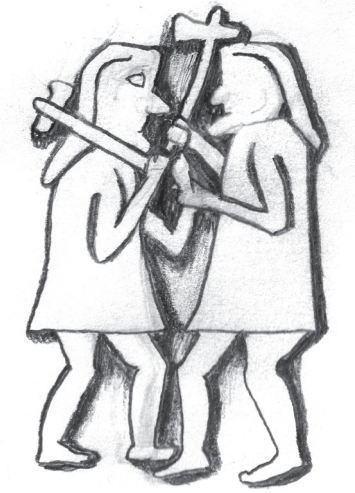
There is considerable variation between single and paired figures. It is noticeable that the bird-headed figures (with the possible exception of the now badly defaced Balblair figure) do not occur as singular examples, but as pairs carved in relief or partial relief on later planned and carefully executed monuments. The solitary figures on earlier monuments, namely, Rhynie no 7, Rhynie no 3, Collessie, Balblair and possibly the Mail fragment, have no opponents and are carved in incision on less prepared slabs. This suggests there was a development of this motif in Pictish sculpture. As sculptured monuments became more elaborate, the axe-wielding figure came to be associated with a counterpart, the same hybrid creature, an identical human figure or a mythological beast. Though human figures and beast-headed figures may have had a different symbolism, the standardisation in their appearance suggests variations on a shared theme. The interpretation of the solitary figures on early monuments may have been different to the later paired examples in combat with real or mythological creatures, but their aggressive stances and weapons strongly suggests they represent an early stage in the development of this motif.

It is equally possible that the axe-carrying beast-headed and ogre-like human figures represent a Pictish symbol. This was first suggested by George and Isabel Henderson (AP: 81, 124). Indeed, the close association



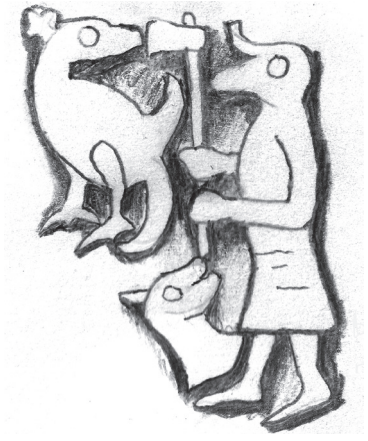
(a) Papil, Shetland (*c* 37cm × 7cm, beaks 10cm)

(b) Hunters Hill, Glamis (*c* 40cm × 25cm)



(c) Glamis Manse (*c* 81cm × 47cm)

(d) Murthly, Perthshire, shrine panel (*c* 32cm × 30cm)



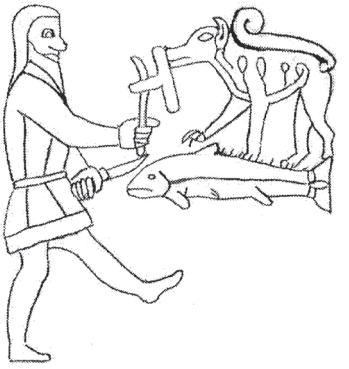
(e) Rossie Priory (*c* 36 cm × 32cm)

(f) Strathmartine, Angus

ILLUS 17 Comparative drawing of beast-headed or ogre-like figures. Drawings by R M A Marshall. Measurements approximate based on photographs, given to the nearest 5cm

(g) Mail, Shetland (44cm high)

(h) Balblair, Highland (*c* 50cm × 31cm)



(i) Golspie, Sutherland (*c* 80cm × 68cm)

(j) Rhynie no 7, Aberdeenshire (103cm high)

(k) Rhynie (no 3)

(l) Collessie, Fife (113.5cm × 27cm)

ILLUS 17 Comparative drawing of beast-headed or ogre-like figures. Drawings by R M A Marshall. Measurements approximate based on photographs, given to the nearest 5cm

between this motif and other Pictish symbols on mainland Pictish monuments adds considerable weight to this identification. On Rhynie no 7 the man is the only carving on the stone: the same is true of Balblair, suggesting these figures may have been symbolic in their own right. On both Collessie and Rhynie no 3 is an arch or horseshoe symbol, which may indicate a symbol pair. However, as this motif developed, from simple incised figures on undressed slabs to relief carvings on cross-slabs, it looks less like a Pictish symbol in the strictest sense and more like the representation of a mythological scene, which could and surely did convey a particular interpretation or symbolism. Of particular note is the occurrence of a lion or similar beast on Pictish monuments which also include this Pictish motif in their repertoire. A lion-like animal, along with a serpent and mirror symbol, is incised on the reverse face of the cross-slab from Hunter's Hill. On the Golspie Stone the formidable man confronts an animal that has similar internal decoration and a tail like the lion of the Papil Stone. On the Murthly shrine panel a large beast, possibly a lion (AP: 155), pursues a human. In medieval art the lion is the symbolic representation of the evangelist Mark: the evangelists are frequently represented by their symbols or are closely associated with them. The lion of the Papil Stone has often been seen as a symbolic representation of the evangelist (Curle 1982: 98; Laing 1993: 30). Contrary to this, the lion has been argued to be a later Pictish symbol (Mack 1997: 18; AP: 156). Though the Papil lion might represent the evangelist Mark, the presence of the bird-men on the cross-slab could have imbued multiple interpretations for the lion in the panel above. The combination of axe and weapon-wielding beast-headed figures and lion-like beasts provides further thematic parallels between the Papil Stone and the related monuments in Pictland.

The impression conveyed by the paired figures is a combat scene between mythological hybrid creatures or men. Though the Papil bird-men are not obviously in conflict with one another, the other paired examples are clearly fighting. The surviving figure from Hunter's Hill attacks the smaller fragmented figure with a weapon. The hybrid figures on the Murthly panel fight one another with swords and shields. The Glamis men fight hand-to-hand with axes. The figure on the Rossie cross-slab brandishes an axe against a bird-like creature. Though the Golspie man is not fighting a beast-headed opponent, the axe is positioned against an animal.

The head and facial characteristics of the beast-headed and formidable man motif strongly suggest shared prototypes and variations in the representation of this motif (see Table 1). The closest mainland Pictish examples to the Papil bird-men are figures with beaks which occur on Hunter's Hill, Rossie Priory and the left figure on the Murthly panel. Despite the beaks, they are not exact equivalents and reveal considerable variation on this theme. The Papil bird-men have bird beaks and human hair, which is only paralleled on Hunter's Hill. The masculine hairstyle of the Papil bird men is remarkably similar to the warriors in combat on the Glamis cross-slab. There is a notable contrast between facial features of bird-headed and monstrous human figures in the Pictish corpus. The sinister creature from Mail has a long snout with pointed teeth; similarly the man on Rhynie no 7 has pointed teeth. A uniform characteristic of the human figures is a large nose, such as on Rhynie no 7, Golspie and the Glamis figures. Though now badly weathered, it is uncertain whether the Balblair figure has a long pointed nose or a beak (Henderson 1996: 17).

It is difficult to ascertain whether or not the facial features of these figures are intended to portray them as hybrid creatures or humans

TABLE 1
Comparison of the head and facial features of the paired and single Pictish figures. A * indicates this feature is found on both figures in a paired motif. Where features are uncertain, this is indicated by a question mark

	Monument name	*Beak*	*Human hair*	*Beard*	*Large nose*	*Pointed teeth*
Paired Figures	Papil	X*	X *			
	Hunter's Hill	X (left figure)	X (left figure)			
	Glamis Manse		X *	X	X	
	Murthly	X (left figure)	X (right figure)			
Single Figures	Rossie Priory	X				
	Golspie		X	X	X	
	Mail		X (?)	X (?)		X
	Rhynie no 7		X	X	X	X
	Rhynie no 3		X	?	?	
	Collessie		?		X	
	Balblair	X?	?	?	X ?	
	Strathmartine no 7		?	?	?	

wearing masks and elaborate head-gear, the latter often being the favoured interpretation (ECMS 3: 96; Shepherd & Shepherd 1980: 216; Laing 1993: 30; Turner 1994: 319; RCAHMS 1999: 26, no 90). Indeed, human ears are not visible on the figures with beaks, yet the Papil and Hunter's Hill bird-men have human hair and incised eyebrows. Likewise, an ear is not visible on the Mail figure, and the long incised strands protruding beneath the face might represent hair flowing from underneath a mask. It would be difficult, however, to explain the human head between the beaks of the Papil bird-men if they are masks. Though the head of the man on Rhynie no 7 is large, an ear is visible and the beard and hair are incised in continuous lines, suggesting the face (including the pointed teeth), is not a mask. This implies that this motif is intended to represented monstrous human or hybrid creatures.

There is uniformity and only slight variation in the bodies and clothing of these figures (Table 2). Those with unbelted tunics are the Papil bird-men and the Glamis warriors, otherwise most wear belted knee-length tunics. The two exceptions include the man on Rhynie no 3 and the figure on the Collessie Stone, who does not appear to be clothed at all. The tunics of the Hunter's Hill and Rossie Priory figures are undecorated, and the axe-man on Rhynie no 7 also wears a plain, belted tunic. The tunic of the bird-headed man on the Murthly shrine panel is

TABLE 2
Comparison of the body shapes and clothing of Pictish figures. A * indicates this detail or characteristic is found on both figures in a paired motif. Where features are uncertain, this is indicated by a question mark

	Monument name	*Tunic: unbelted*	*Tunic: belted*	*Tunic: decorated*	*Broad chest*	*Human legs and feet*
Paired Figures	Papil	X				
	Hunter's Hill		X *		X	X
	Glamis Manse	X				X
	Murthly		X (left figure)	X	X *	X
Single Figures	Rossie Priory		X		X	X
	Golspie		X	X	X	X
	Mail		X	X	X	X
	Rhynie no 7		X		X	X
	Rhynie no 3		?			X
	Collessie					X
	Balblair		X	X	X	X
	Strathmartine no 7		?		X	X

decorated with two incised lines around the skirt. The Mail, Golspie and Balblair figures reveal remarkable standardisation in tunic design. A similar pattern is depicted on the long tunics of the three warriors on the Brough of Birsay stone (Fraser 2008: 114, no 166). Based on the tunics of these figures and the inflexible impression they provide, they may represent clothing made from leather or felt, though Ritchie (2005: 37) rightly points out that this 'may be an artistic device to remind the viewer of the special role of these figures'.

Other shared traits are depictions of the legs, feet and the chest (Table 2). With the exception of the Papil bird-men, Rhynie no 3 and Collessie, these figures have a broad or barrel-shaped chest. In addition, every figure has human legs and feet, with the single exception of the Papil bird-men. Laing (1993: 30) suggested that the legs of the Papil-bird men are possibly bird leggings, but this interpretation may be doubtful if they are intended to represent hybrid creatures.

These figures are not only linked by their appearances, but also by their weapons (Table 3). The axe is the most common though there is variation in the type. Figures carrying only axes include: Papil, Glamis (the warriors and the centaur), Rhynie no 7, Rossie Priory and, possibly, Strathmartine. There is differentiation in their stances and how they hold the weapons. Figures with axes resting on

TABLE 3
Comparison of the weapon types carried by both paired and single Pictish figures. A * indicates both figures are shown with the same weapon. The shapes of shields are specified. Where features are uncertain, this is indicated by a question mark

	Monument name	*Axe*	*Shield*	*Sword*	*Club*	*Other*
Paired Figures	Papil	X*				
	Hunter's Hill	X *				X (uncertain)
	Glamis Manse	X *				
	Murthly		X * (round)	X*		
Single Figures	Rossie Priory	X				
	Golspie	X				X (knife)
	Mail	X			X	
	Rhynie no 7	X				
	Rhynie no 3	X (?)	X (rectangular)			
	Collessie		X (rectangular)			
	Balblair				X	
	Strathmartine no 7	X (?)				

their shoulders include: Papil, Hunter's Hill, Mail, Rhynie no 7 and, possibly, Strathmartine. The bird-man on Rossie Priory holds the axe before him in both hands. Figures shown with an axe and a different weapon – other than a shield – include Mail and Golspie. The Mail and Balblair figures are especially similar, not only in the decoration of their tunics and peculiar heads, but they both carry club-like implements in their left hands. The Collessie man carries a rectangular shield in the left hand and a long spear with a knobbed butt in the right: the stance and weaponry is similar to the badly weathered stone from Rhynie no 3. It is clear that a weapon, primarily an axe, was an essential element in the construction of this motif.

On early stones with a solitary warrior figure, such as Rhynie no 7, the figure was the focus of the monument. On later cross-slabs with other iconography this motif is given prominent positions on each respective monument. Therefore, they must have been an important design in the overall decorative and symbolic programme. The Papil bird-men are one of the most outstanding elements of the cross-slab: they are the largest upright figures and they are considerably larger than the pairs of ecclesiastics. On the Rossie Priory and Hunter's Hill cross-slabs, these motifs are located above the right arm of the cross, in the top panel. On the reverse of the Golspie cross-slab, the Golspie man is the second-largest carving amongst the symbols. Their inclusion

and prominence on cross-slabs and a shrine panel indicates that, whatever their meaning, they were acceptable motifs in an essentially Christian ornamental programme.

The interpretation of these figures is especially difficult. No obvious comparison can be drawn between early Christian texts and this motif in Pictish sculpture. A large number of figures represented in Pictish cross-slab programmes are drawn from Biblical or hagiographic narrative and are generally identifiable (see AP: 129–52). There are, however, a small number of scenes on Pictish monuments which have no parallels with early Christian literature, and it is most likely that these motifs represent stories extracted from a common, native Pictish tradition. The Papil bird-men and related figures have an air of mythology about them, and their otherworldly nature has become increasingly acceptable (Henderson 1996: 19–20; Aitchison 2003: 65; Ritchie 2005: 36–7). It has also been suggested that some figures in combat scenes represent ritual associated with Pictish myth (Hall 2005: 305; Ritchie 2005: 36). The standardisation of this motif, from southern Pictland to Shetland, strongly suggests that these figures represent special characters or scenes in Pictish mythology, and their Pictishness is confirmed because there are no sculptural equivalents outside Pictish regions. In the absence of documentary Pictish evidence, however, we can only compare the Papil bird-men and related weapon-carrying figures with literary evidence that is both contemporary, geographically and culturally close to Pictland.

COMPARISON OF THE PAPIL BIRD-MEN WITH BATTLEFIELD DEMONS OF EARLY IRISH LITERATURE

The Papil bird-men have striking parallels in particular with the characteristics of the early medieval Irish supernatural battlefield demons known as the *Morrígan*, *Bodb* or *Macha*. The name *Morrígan* means 'Spectre Queen' or 'Queen of Death' (McCone 1987: 141, 152) and *Bodb* means 'hooded crow'. The potential connection between the Pictish figures and Irish battlefield demons was first suggested by Paul Wagner (2002: 60) but only briefly discussed and not substantiated, and this association requires considerable elaboration and comparison. In early Irish literature these demons are very prominent and depicted as having clearly defined character traits (for which see: Carey 1982–3; Le Roux & Guyonvarc'h 1983; Clark 1987; Herbert 1996; Borsje 2007; Egeler 2008–9: 157–62; Egeler 2009: 323–5; Egeler 2011: 116–72). These demons are closely associated with the mythology of warfare: the *Morrígan* and *Bodb* is the 'goddess of battle'. These demons oscillate between animal form and human: in human guise they are portrayed as a woman, whereas in animal appearance they often take the shape of a crow or raven. They are not single demons, but form a triple entity who feed on severed human heads.

In *Echtra Nerai* (Meyer 1889: §§13–18) and the *Táin Bó Regamna* (Corthals 1987), the *Morrígan* is portrayed as a warmonger who brings about the *táin* 'cattle raid' in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* – the greatest conflict in early Irish literature. In the tale *Cath Maige Tuired* (Gray 1982: §§83–5) the *Morrígan* is able to both exhort a warrior to greater prowess in battle (§83) and to deprive another warrior of his strength (§85). In *Reicne Fothaid Canainne* (Meyer 1910: stanza 42), she lures warriors to their doom and laughs about the ensuing slaughter. In *Tochmarc Emire* (Thurneysen 1921: 669; van Hamel 1933: §50) she is called *bandé in chatha* 'goddess of battle' and she also participates in the fight against the Fomore in *Cath Maige Tuired* (Gray 1982: § 70; Gulermovich Epstein 1998:

86f). Where she is attested in early literature, she normally takes the form of a woman or a bird, as in the *Táin bó Regamna* (Corthals 1987: §§2–5; Herbert 1996: 145) where she first appears as a red woman in a demonic chariot, but then changes her shape into that of a black bird. As a bird, she takes the shape of a hooded crow, one of the native carrion birds of Ireland (Hennessy 1870: 33–5; Gulermovich Epstein 1998: 308–10), and is frequently called *bélderg* 'red-mouthed'. How she comes to be known as 'red-mouthed' is best illustrated by a gloss from O'Mulconry's early Irish glossary (Stokes 1900: no 813), in a section dated by Mac Neill (1932: 113, 116, 119) to the Old Irish period (ie before 900 AD):

> Machae .i. badb. nó así an tres Morrígan, unde mesrad Machæ .i. cendæ doine iarna n-airlech.
>
> *Macha, ie Bodb (or: a hooded crow). Or she is one of the three Morrígans, whence (the phrase)* mesrad Machæ *'the mast of Macha', ie the heads of men after they have been slaughtered.*

In this early entry two important points about the nature of these demons are made clear. First, the heads of the decapitated warriors are the *mesrad* of the battlefield demons. *Mesrad* generally denotes 'mast', ie 'tree-fruit' or nuts such as acorns used as food for animals: pigs, for example, were commonly fed and fattened on acorns (Kelly 2000: 83). The above entry thus explains how the mouths of these demons are reddened: they feed on the severed heads of the slain warriors and redden their beaks in the blood of their corpses. In the tale *Tochmarc Ferbe* (Windisch 1897: 669) warriors are correspondingly told that they have fed the *Bodb* by means of their weapons. These demons feed on the dead, particularly on their severed heads. As a second important point, this glossary entry illustrates that the *Morrígan* was not perceived as a single figure, but as a triple-entity. The few examples quoted so far have used three different names for members of this class of battlefield demons (ie *Morrígan*, *Bodb* or *Macha*). These names are largely, if not entirely, interchangeable in early Irish literature: in the glossary entry quoted above they are explicitly equated. In some instances the *Morrígan* is used as a personal name but it can also be a generic term. This glossary entry attests the use of *Morrígan* as a general term denoting an entire group of battlefield demons. There is not only the one *Morrígan*, but there are also the three *Morrígans*, and they all feed on the heads of the slain.

The Irish battlefield demons, the *Morrígan*, the *Bodb* and *Macha*, are figures closely associated with war, they change their appearances between women and crows, they are not single figures and they are portrayed as feeding on severed human heads. Most of these traits are reflected in the Papil bird-men. The bird-men are depicted with axes resting on their shoulders, and therefore they have aggressive or warlike affinities like the *Morrígan* and the *Bodb*. They are hybrid beings composed of human and bird features, and they appear to be holding, or perhaps even devouring, the human head between the ends of their beaks (Birkhan 1999: 37). Their bird-like characteristics have been equated with the heron (AP: 156), but these features equally resemble a raven or a crow, and thus correspond to the descriptions of the bird-form of Irish battlefield demons. Furthermore, there are two of them on the stone, so they are not singular creatures. Thus, almost every aspect of the Papil bird-men corresponds to the traits of the battlefield demons of early Irish literature. This is all the more remarkable as the Papil Stone and the earliest of the Irish texts describing these battlefield demons are probably roughly contemporary. Such a close thematic correspondence in combination with a similar date might suggest a direct

connection between this motif on the Papil Stone and the battlefield demons of early Irish literature: both seem to share common elements of an early Insular mythological imagery of war.

Despite the close similarities between the Papil bird-men and descriptions of the battlefield demons of early Irish literature, there are some cautions that should be heeded with this identification. First, the battlefield demons of early Irish literature are demonstrably always female, even if they are in bird-form. The images on the Papil Stone, despite their bird beaks, legs and feet, have a distinctive male hairstyle which is commonly depicted on Pictish sculpture-work, and their unbelted tunics suggests parallels with other male figures in Pictish sculpture, notably the warriors on the Glamis cross-slab. The figure on the Hunter's Hill stone also has a knee-length belted tunic, a common style of men's clothing. The same is true of the image from Rossie Priory. The connection between the Papil bird-men with parallels in Pictish sculpture is strong, and therefore their masculinity is confirmed. Though the Papil bird-men are not obviously in combat with one another, the images from Hunter's Hill and Rossie priory, as well as Murthly, clearly depict these figures in combat with their beast-headed or imaginary animal opponents, and this is not paralleled in the early Irish literary depictions of the *Morrígan*/*Bodb*-type demons, who interfere in warfare, but only occasionally take an active part themselves. However, this could be a conflation of imagery, for if the sculptor of the Papil Stone did wish to represent the Irish *Morrígan*, he certainly based his design on a Pictish motif. In any case, it seems more likely that the Papil bird-men are not a representation of an Irish type of supernatural figures, but rather a native Pictish concept with close parallels to the mythology of neighbouring Ireland.

POSSIBLE INTERPRETATIONS FOR THE PAPIL BIRD-MEN AND RELATED PICTISH FIGURES

The Irish material provides comparative evidence of the perceptions of otherworldly figures associated with warfare, heroic behaviour in battle, death, ravens and crows

Illus 18 Aberlemno cross-slab battle scene: close-up of carrion bird. © Crown copyright: RCAHMS. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk

and an ambiguous position between human and bird-shape. This might be important, given the notable parallels which the Papil bird-men exhibit with the descriptions of the *Morrígan* and the *Bodb*, though if this demon is to be found in Pictish iconography the *Bodb* ('hooded crow') is likely represented on the battle scene of the Aberlemno cross-slab, where in the lower portion a raven or crow pecks at the head of a slain warrior (illus 18).

On earlier monuments where this motif (a singular figure) is the focus it may represent a Pictish pre-Christian mythological figure. The development of this motif in relief and its inclusion on later cross-slabs and a shrine fragment indicate that its symbolism and interpretation could be incorporated into a Christian theme. Because it has been thought that the Papil bird-men are a misrepresentation of the Temptation of St Antony, it has been suggested that they represent evil demons and serve as a warning to viewers to avoid sin and temptation (Henderson 1996: 20). The beast-headed Pictish figures are comparable with sculptured representations of the Temptation of St Antony insofar as they have animal heads, which might be a standard early Insular representation of demons in general; however, since they cannot be derived from the Temptation of St Antony they are unlikely to represent the sin of temptation. Another suggestion is that the Papil bird-men and related beast-headed figures on later monuments, juxtaposed with Christian iconography and other fabulous beasts, are a traditional Pictish motif that has been recast in a Christian context to represent demons, hell and the torture of the human soul (AP: 156; Scott & Ritchie 2009: 4). It is more likely, however, considering the remarkable standardisation and prominent positions on Christian monuments, that this motif has a deeper, more specific meaning. The symbolism behind this motif could have been comparable or even a poignant message compatible with Christian ideology.

Though myth is generally not represented on Irish Christian monuments, parallels do exist with Norse cross-slabs, some of which incorporate scenes from pre-Christian mythology (Bailey 2000). Though the relationship between scenes from Norse mythology and the Christian cross is not always discernible, a scene on Thorwald's cross-slab at Kirk Andreas, Isle of Man, provides a comparative example. On this cross-slab, beneath the right arm of the cross on the front face, is a man, identified as Odin, shown with a spear and a raven on his shoulder: he is attacked by the Fenris wolf (Kermode 1904: 33; Cubbon 1971: 32). This is a scene of *Ragnarök*, the pre-Christian Norse equivalent of the end of the world or Judgement Day. Though pagan imagery may seem peculiar on a Christian cross-slab, this scene is thematically compatible with the Christian cross (DuBois 1999: 150). The overall programme represents the triumph of Christianity over death on Judgement Day, the latter being represented by a similar event in Norse mythology that would have been recognised as such by contemporaries. This Pictish motif may represent just such a concept, a mythological event comparable with Christian doctrine, perhaps an otherworldly struggle between hybrid axe-men that had a comparable interpretation with Christian belief. Without Pictish documentary evidence to confirm this, it is difficult to theorise the meaning of this motif. The human head between the beaks of the Papil bird-men, the severed animal-head beneath the feet of the bird-man on Rossie Priory and the combat scene on Hunter's Hill and the Murthly shrine panel suggests this motif represents violence on a mythological level. If this motif is related in some way to the Irish battlefield demons, they might, at the most

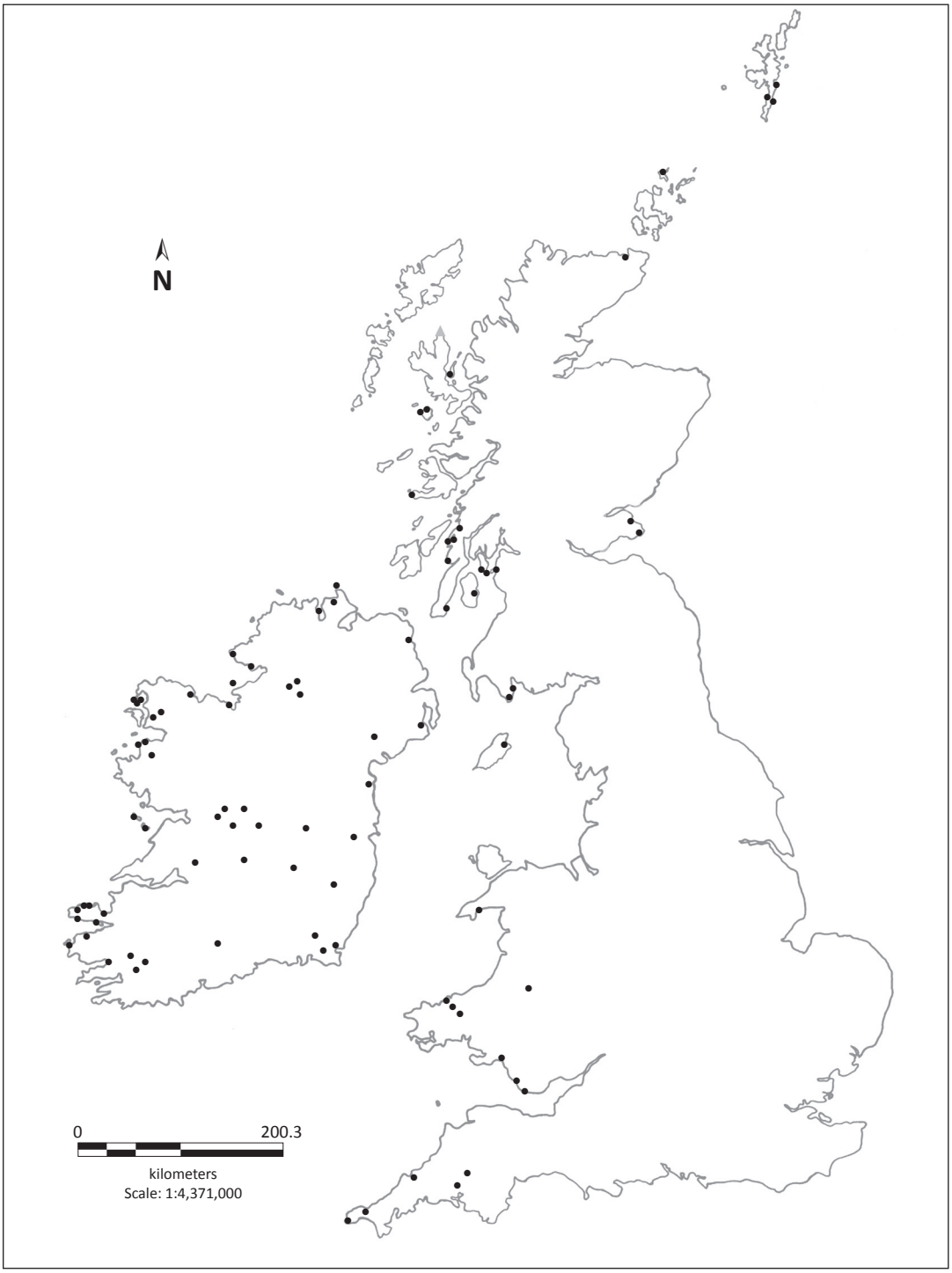
basic level, signify otherworldly aggressive, warlike figures that are potentially death-related. These interpretations are comparable with the Papil Stone programme: the bird-men on the bottom could represent a Pictish legendary conflict that brings about doom and death and moving up, the lion, the cross and the clerical figures may indicate that through faith in Christ death can be overcome and lead to life eternal.

THE DATE OF THE PAPIL STONE

The date of the Papil Stone is controversial, and indeed ascertaining a date is problematic because the iconography of the stone itself suggests a variety of cultural influences. In comparison with the lion panel and the lion in the *Book of Durrow*, Cecil Curle (1939–40: 78) proposed a late 7th-century date for the Papil Stone. Robert Stevenson (1955: 115) argued that the lion contradicts the 7th-century date proposed by Curle, and later, Stevenson (1981: 284) suggested a date towards the end of the 8th century. This date was supported by Charles Thomas (1973: 29) and Lamb (1974: 86). Based on the type of axes the bird-men carry, Lloyd Laing (1993: 35) suggests the stone dates to the 9th century, and in a later article (Laing 2000: 95–7) dates this monument to the Viking period. In a recent article, Ross Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 548, 555 n 55) suggests both Papil and Bressay date to the 11th century (*c* 1000 AD) based on comparisons with the Kilduncan cross-slab in Fife. More recently, Ian Scott and Anna Ritchie (2009: 4) suggest the Papil Stone dates to the early 10th century (*c* 900 AD). Over the past 70 years, scholarly opinion on the date of the Papil Stone has fluctuated considerably. A reappraisal of the dating is needed to compare the Papil bird-men and the development of this motif in Pictish sculpture.

The rounded top of the slab and the carving technique indicate the Papil Stone was likely erected in a transitional period when monuments began to be carefully shaped and when relief first makes an appearance. The curved top of the Papil Stone, though now fragmentary, is less common on Pictish cross-slabs (straight or pedimented tops being the most frequent) though two cross-slabs at Meigle, for example, have rounded tops (Fraser 2008: 129, no 189.3; 131, no 189.6). The carving technique of the Papil Stone is incision with low relief. A close comparison can be drawn with the Pictish slab from Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Fraser 2008: 114, no 166). This fragment bears from the top, a Pictish mirror-case, crescent and V-rod, 'Pictish beast' and eagle symbols – all carved in incision with deeper incision around the legs of the 'beast'. Beneath the symbols are three profile warriors facing right, carved in incision and surrounded by low relief. This is the same technique used on the Papil Stone around the clerical figures and the legs and axes of the bird-men. This correspondence in technique was noted by Stevenson (1981: 284). Curle (1939–40: 75) dated Birsay and the transition from incision to relief to the mid-7th century, but this was later reappraised by Stevenson (1955: 115;1981: 284) to the end of the 8th century, and is an accepted date and further supported by the decoration on the Pictish symbols (Laing 2000: 110). An additional element seen on the Papil Stone is the introduction of panelling. The ecclesiastics and the lion are neatly carved in a panelled programme, whereas the bird-men are not.

The Papil cross-head, as previously discussed, is a double circular framed cross-of-arcs. The origin of the cross-of-arcs is believed to lie in the Chi-Rho (Lionard & Henry 1961: 111; Swift 1997: 70–83; Trench-Jellicoe 1998: 501). There was considerable variation in the design and ornamentation



Illus 19 Map of crosses-of-arcs including: circular framed crosses-of-arcs, Chi-Rho based crosses, hexafoil and flabellum crosses

of compass-drawn framed crosses in Insular sculpture. This category of cross-type includes corrupt Chi-Rho crosses, marigold or hexafoil crosses and flabellum (a liturgical fan) designs (Lionard & Henry 1961 Group II; Higgins 1987 Group V). They are widespread, ranging from south-west Ireland, Shetland, south and west Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales and Cornwall, though a majority are found in Ireland (illus 19). Concentrations of circular cross-heads are often found at pre-Viking Age sites, and a high proportion of these sites 'have easy access to the sea' (Edwards 2007: 302). The distribution of crosses-of-arcs in Ireland is primarily coastal though this type also occurs at inland centres (Harbison 1991: 192–3, fig 81). The coastal distribution of crosses-of-arcs can be followed from Ireland to Whithorn, the Hebrides and as far north as Orkney and Shetland (Harbison 1991: 192): this pattern is also reflected on the Isle of Man, Wales and Cornwall. The migration of the cross-of-arcs was probably facilitated by sea travel. The relationship between Ireland and this cross type in the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland and elsewhere was likely the Irish *peregrini*.

Centres in Ireland with the greatest concentration of circular framed crosses-of-arcs are at Gallen Priory, Inis Cealtra and Clonmacnoise (Lionard & Henry 1961: 110; Higgins 1987 pt 1: 62). Monuments with cross-of-arcs are also widely found on the Dingle Peninsula and along the coasts of Co. Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Donegal (Harbison 1991: 192–3, fig 81). An early example in Wales, dated to the late 7th or early 8th century, is found at Capel Colman, a church dedicated to an Irish Saint (Edwards 2007: 300–3, no 1 P 8). Similar crosses dated to the 8th and 9th centuries are found at two nearby sites, Clydai and St Dogmaels (Edwards 2007: 319–21, no 3 P 15; 463–70, no 2 P 11, no 3 P 112, no 7 P 116). The greatest concentration of crosses-of-arcs and disc-headed crosses in south-western Scotland is at Whithorn and Kirkmadrine in Dumfries and Galloway. Crosses-of-arcs, hexafoil crosses and disc-headed monuments with expanded arm crosses based on the design of the cross-of-arcs are also found at many early ecclesiastical sites in western Scotland (Fisher 2001: 27, 58). In the Hebrides, crosses-of-arcs occur at: Inchmarnock, Bute (Fisher 2001: 77, illus D3), Kilbride, Lamlash, Arran (Fisher 2001: 65), and at A'Chill, Canna (Fisher 2001: 97, no 9). A Pictish symbol stone with a Chi-Rho cross in a square frame is found on Raasay (Fisher 2001: 103). The cross-of-arcs design is also attested at Iona: an early grave-marker bears a Chi-Rho cross (Fisher 2001: 128, no 22), and comparable with the Papil example, is an arciform cross above a triquetra knot (Fisher 2001: 42, illus 17Ga, 131 no 77), the type of interlace decoration found in the spandrels beneath the Papil cross-head. Crosses-of-arcs are rarely found in northern and eastern Scotland. At Skinnet, Caithness, is a large stone with a single circular framed cross-of-arcs with expanded terminals decorated with interlace (AP 2004: 161–2, illus 233). A Chi-Rho cross, known as the Skeith Stone, was discovered at Kilrenny, Fife (Trench-Jellicoe 1998) and an elaborate cross-of-arcs decorated with interlace is also found on the cross-slab from Kilduncan, Fife, beneath which is a triquetra knot (Trench-Jellicoe 2005: 510, illus 3, illus 16).

Two crosses-of-arcs are known from Orkney. St Boniface's Church on the island of Papa Westray, Orkney (a *papar* place-name), has produced two crosses-of-arcs: one is an incised cross-of-arcs in a single circular frame surmounted by a small linear cross with crescent terminals and the other a circular cross-of-arcs carved in relief beneath an equal armed cross (Fisher 2002:

49). In Shetland there are three sculptural examples (including Papil and Bressay). The Bressay cross-slab has a cross-of-arcs on the front and reverse. On the front, the Bressay cross-of-arcs has a looped strand around the edge of the arm-pits, most closely paralleled on the Kilduncan cross-slab, a rare feature thoroughly discussed by Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 530). In 2008, a fragment was discovered in the graveyard of Mail, Shetland, with a double-disc and Z-rod symbol, the double-discs both being internally decorated with a cross-of-arcs (Ritchie 2008).

Peter Harbison (1986: 54; 1991: 191–5) has shown that crosses-of-arcs in Ireland are commonly found at pilgrimage sites, on both maritime and inland pilgrimage routes. In certain examples, crosses-of-arcs are accompanied by a figure holding a staff, such as at Ballyvourney, Co. Cork (Henry 1965: pl 50), which is reminiscent of the Papil Stone clerical figures. Indeed, the numerous shrine post fragments recovered from the Papil site not only point to Papil being an important ecclesiastical centre, but they also suggest it was potentially a pilgrimage site. This may be reflected on the Papil Stone itself, in the iconography of the clerical figures facing the shaft of a circular framed cross. The ecclesiastical figures have parallels in early sculpture from both Pictland and Dálriada. Clerics with satchels are found on the cross-slab from St Madoes, Perthshire, St Vigeans no 7 and on the later monument from Elgin. The presence of clerical figures represents a gradual change from secular to religious depictions, emphasising the role of the church (for which see AP: 153–7). A consistent feature of profile clerics in procession is that the last figure in a row wears a satchel. This is attested on the Papil Stone, the Papil shrine panel (ie the Monks' Stone) and also on the cross-slab at St Vigeans no 7 (AP: 153, illus 221). In contrast, the pairs of ecclesiastics on the front and reverse of the Bressay cross-slab all have satchels and hooked staffs, suggesting a later development of this design. Inspiration for the Papil Stone clerical figures may have come from Ireland, and the iconography of an early cross-slab at Cardonagh on the Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal is of particular interest. The west face of the Cardonagh stele cross has a disc-headed top around a circular framed flabellum cross-head. On either side of the cross-shaft is a clerical figure facing the cross, and each hold a hooked staff or crozier in the right hand and a satchel is suspended over their shoulder. The close parallels between the Cardonagh stele and the Papil Stone was recognised by Curle (1939–40: 79) and also Harbison (1986: 54, 76, pls 4.5a and b), the latter dating the Cardonagh stele to the first half of the 9th century. A further point of interest is that Cardonagh is located on the north coast of Donegal, not too far across the sea from Iona and the Hebrides (Harbison 1991: 197). The cross-of-arcs and the clerical figures on the Papil Stone indicate a close cultural link with Ireland and Irish ecclesiastical foundations in the Hebrides.

The Papil cross-of-arcs and the lion have frequently been compared with examples in the *Book of Durrow*, probably a Columban work, dated to the late 7th or early 8th century (Henderson 1987: 55; Meehan 1995: 22). The central cross on folio 85 verso is an elaborate framed cross-of-arcs. The cross arms are made with two double lines: at the expanded ends of the arms they are worked into an interlace pattern and the lentoid shaped arm-pits are decorated with opposing step and flowing branching patterns. Also of note is the circular framed central cross with plain arms and undecorated arm-pits on folio 192 verso.

Crosses-of-arcs occur in early metalwork. The treasure hoard discovered on nearby

St Ninian's Isle and dated to about 800 AD (Wilson 1973: 147–8) is a tour de force comparable with the Papil Stone.[1] The exterior design of Silver Bowl no 1 is a multiple cruciform design, made by incised lines surrounded by punched dots (Wilson 1973: pt 1, 47; pt 2, pl 17; AP: 109, fig 156). The ornamentation consists of two central circles, partially overlain by four circles, thus producing a quatrefoil effect (AP: 109): the four outer circles overlap, forming a cross-of-arcs over the central circles. The base of Silver Bowl no 3 is a marigold pattern, composed of six lentoids (Wilson 1973: pt 1, 51; pt 2, pl 19). Equal-armed crosses in circular frames form the bases of four other bowls in this hoard, namely, no 2, no 4, no 5 and no 6 (Wilson 1973: pt 2, pls 20–2; AP: illus 150–5). Four punched triquetra knots decorate the arm-pits of the linear cross on Bowl no 4. The sculptural similarities indicate a link between Papil and St Ninian's Isle, and the shared designs of both the metalwork of the St Ninian's Isle hoard and the monuments from Papil may indicate an early school of artisans in Shetland who relied on a pool of common designs.

A precise dating for crosses-of-arcs is highly problematic. In Ireland, crosses-of-arcs seemed to have flourished stylistically from the 7th to 9th centuries (Higgins 1987 pt 1: 174), but the fashion remained in use as late as the 10th century and in some instances into the 12th (Lionard & Henry 1961: 112). In Wales, early crosses-of-arcs have been dated from the 7th to 9th centuries, though the style continued to be used into the 11th and 12th century, with an example at Merthyr Mawr dating to the 13th or 14th century (Redknap & Lewis 2007: 549–50). It is difficult to extract dating evidence for the Papil Stone based on the cross-head alone, though the prevalence of this type in Ireland and western Scotland in the early Middle Ages strongly suggests Irish influence. This is further supported by the clerical figures on the Papil Stone in comparison with the Cardonagh stele. The Papil cross-head itself is not exclusively diagnostic, but an argument can be made for a date from the 7th to 9th centuries when this design was most prevalent.

In her dating analysis, Curle (1939–40: 78) drew attention to the similarities between the lion in the *Book of Durrow* (folio 191 verso), which prefaces the Gospel of St John, and the Papil Stone lion. There are some key differences, however, between the elaborate lion in the *Book of Durrow* and the Papil Stone that need to be taken into consideration. The lion of *Durrow* faces right, whereas the Papil lion faces left. The *Durrow* lion has a broader face and three pointed teeth in the lower jaw, and the tongue, though protruding, is straight rather than curled in a spiral. The tail of the *Durrow* lion is also considerably longer than the Papil lion, extending all the way to the back of the neck then curving backwards halfway down the back before ending in a spiral. In contrast, the tail of the Papil lion only extends midway down the back and ends in a spiral. Nevertheless, in comparison with the lions in other early Insular gospel books, such as the *Echternach Gospels* (folio 75 verso), the lion in the *Book of Durrow* is the closest illuminated equivalent to the Papil Stone lion. Though the *Durrow* lion is considerably more elaborate, coloured and decorated, traits they have in common include: an outlined snout, an outlined head and internal scrolls. The Papil and *Durrow* scrolls are different, the Papil scrolls forming complete spirals (Stevenson 1993: 17, fig 2.2; 20) and the *Durrow* scrolls ending in smaller curves. Of particular interest are the knees. On both the Papil and *Durrow* lions all four knees are emphasised by two thin lines. An even closer parallel is that the back right and left leg are slightly bent, giving the impression of movement. In both instances,

where the knee is bent, the back of the leg is curved and the back of the knee is angled. This is not paralleled in other early illuminated examples of lions, but is comparable with other cloven animals, such as the calf in the *Trier Gospels* (folio 1 verso), and in Pictish sculpture, for example: the Burghead bulls and the boar from Knocknagael, Inverness (RCAHMS 1999: 34, no 153; 30, no 126). Though scholarly opinion does not place the Papil Stone as early as the *Book of Durrow*, it is not inconceivable that the *Book of Durrow* or a similar text was an inspirational aid (Curle 1939–40: 78).

The axes carried by the Papil bird-men would appear, at first glance, to be the most diagnostic dating evidence, but this is complicated. Laing (2000: 93–7) discussed representations of the axe in Pictish sculpture as a diagnostic tool, and pointed out that hand-to-hand combat with axes is a feature of the Viking period. Laing (2001: 232) later altered his opinion on the diagnostic qualities of the axe on the Glamis manse cross-slab. Axes were in use in Britain and Ireland long before the Viking invasions and settlements,[2] and unfortunately, most of the axes in this motif, with the possible exception of Rhynie no 7, provide no dating evidence. Furthermore, none of the axes in this motif appear to have curved edges, a trait of battle-axes. Evidence that the Picts used axes in warfare is slight (Laing & Laing 1984: 282; Aitchison 2003: 64–5). In Pictish sculpture, axes are only associated with mythological or hybrid creatures, notably only figures in this motif and centaurs (Aitchison 2003: 65).

Part of the difficulty in dating the Papil Stone is because the iconography is multicultural. The cross-head and the ecclesiastical figures point to a strong connection with Ireland and early Irish ecclesiastical foundations in the Hebrides, the lion is comparable with Pictish sculptural and Irish illuminated designs, whereas the bird-men motif affirms a Pictish link. There is a strong possibility that the monastic community of Papil was a mixed community of both Irish and Pictish clerics, and this might explain the Papil Stone programme. I cannot agree with Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 548, 555 n 55) that both the Papil and Bressay cross-slab date to the early 11th century. Though they share a similar iconographic programme, the technique and style are completely different. The Papil Stone has been shown to be a transitional monument, the technique and overall layout pointing to a developmental period in Insular sculpture. The cross-of-arcs, though a popular design, was prominent from the 7th through 9th centuries in Ireland and western Scotland, suggesting the Papil Stone is likely to have been erected during this period.

All the evidence taken together, the Papil Stone can be dated to the early 9th century, perhaps immediately prior to the Norse settlement of Shetland. This is further supported by the absence of any Norse influence on the stone. Furthermore, the Papil bird-men are closely paralleled with this motif in later Pictish sculpture, notably Hunter's Hill, Glamis, Rossie Priory and the Murthly shrine panel, all of which have been dated to the 9th century. This indicates that this motif was popular and widespread in Pictish regions during this period, and the Papil Stone reflects this fashion.

The distribution of the weapon-wielding beast-headed and formidable man motif is confined to the Pictish regions of Scotland (see illus 16). A concentration occurs on monuments in Angus and Perthshire, namely Hunter's Hill, Glamis, Rossie Priory, Strathmartine and Murthly. Trench-Jellicoe (1999: 615–16) has identified an Aberlemno sculptural school to which the monuments Menmuir 1, Kirriemuir 1, Monifieth 2, Woodwray and Aberlemno 2 and 3 are assigned. To this this school, Laing

(2001: 236) also assigns the monuments at Eassie, Rossie Priory, Glamis and Hunter's Hill, three of which bear this motif. Aberlmeno 3 also has a centaur brandishing two T-shaped axes, like the centaur on Glamis. Trench-Jellicoe (1999) suggested this school was founded in the 9th century by an Iona community who resettled in Angus. A further connection between the Papil and Bressay cross-slabs and the Kilduncan cross-slab in Fife was thoroughly discussed by Trench-Jellicoe (2005). The similar iconography of the Bressay and Kilduncan cross-slabs are remarkable, though Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 542) suggests 'it is improbable' that the motifs on Kilduncan were directly derived from a monument as far away as Shetland, but suggests that they may have shared a common source. A connection between, Ireland, western Scotland, Shetland and southern Pictland is, however, not improbable. The close correlation between the Papil bird-men on this motif on the Pictish mainland may not only be due to shared perceptions of this motif in Pictish culture, but contact and exchange of ideas. This implies the existence of a complex network between religious communities in Ireland, western Scotland, Shetland and southern Pictland. A connection between Ireland and Irish ecclesiastical communities in the Hebrides and the Papil Stone in the 9th century is discernible from the cross-head, and a further link between Iona and western Scotland with the southern Pictish monuments is a strong possibility. The community of Papil may have had close ties with monastic communities in southern Pictland in the 8th and 9th centuries. This may account for this inclusion of this motif on the monuments. Lying behind this connection is a further association with Irish religious communities, very possibly the Columban *familia*, which may also explain the Irish influence on these monuments in Shetland and southern Pictland. Though Trench-Jellicoe (2005: 542) was reluctant to see the inspiration for the Kilduncan cross-slab being derived from as far away as Bressay, if a close connection between monastic communities in Shetland and southern Pictland existed as early as the 8th and 9th centuries, it is not impossible that this link continued into the 10th and 11th centuries, and this may be supported by the close parallels between the Bressay and Kilduncan cross-slabs.

CONCLUSIONS

The iconography of the Papil Stone is both exceptional and perplexing, and provides the opportunity to closely examine the relationship between monuments locally and in a broader Irish and Pictish context. The Papil bird-men are most unlikely to represent the Temptation of St Antony, but instead belong to the Pictish motif of weapon-wielding beast-headed or monstrous men. Though this motif cannot be identified with the Irish *Morrígan* and *Bodb*, the close parallels between them suggests a common early Insular perception of aggressive otherworldly figures. The widespread distribution of this stereotyped motif throughout Pictish regions indicates that it probably had a specific symbolism, perhaps the Pictish concept of an otherworldly struggle. Though the mythology behind this motif may have originated in the pre-Christian period, its symbolism and significance lived on to be included in the programmes of Christian monuments, which may indicate that their interpretation was thematically related to Christian symbolism and ideology. The iconography of the Papil Stone points to connections with both Ireland and Pictland, and the date offered not only indicates that the Papil iconography reflects contemporary

themes, but also implies the existence of a complicated network between ecclesiastical communities in Ireland, western Scotland, Shetland and southern Pictland in which ideas were shared and exchanged. This motif is not attested in later sculpture of the 10th and 11th centuries, indicating that with the decline of the Picts this motif and its significance was lost. Most importantly, the Papil bird-men and related figures in Pictish sculpture provide the rare opportunity to examine and speculate about the beliefs and mythology of the Picts through their visual culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research originated when Matthias Egeler presented me with a comparison of the Papil Stone and descriptions of the *Morrígan* and *Bodb* demons. I am indebted to him for drawing my attention to this monument and also for his contributions. I am especially grateful to Richard M A Marshall and Katharina Streit for drawing images of these monuments and motifs. Their assistance and artistic talents have greatly enhanced this research. I owe a very special thanks to Richard M A Marshall for painstakingly producing many of the illustrations used in this work and also for his support in helping me acquire images. I am very grateful to Tony Roche of the National Monuments, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in Dublin, the Shetland Museum, RCAHMS and the National Museum of Scotland for assisting with images used in this article. I would also like to thank Martin Goldberg, the National Museums of Scotland curator of Early Historic and Viking Collections.

APPENDIX 1

Another comparison between the Papil bird men and early Irish literature is the term *énchendach*,[3] later *éncheannaigh*, meaning 'bird covering, feather mantle' (DIL 1983: 126). The primary meaning of the term may have been something along the lines of 'bird-cap' (DIL 1983: 126) or 'bird-head-dress' (Knott 1975: 121), which fits both the formation of the word and its use in some of the texts. Most of the attestations of the term stem from Irish translations of Classical literature where it is used to describe the attributes of Mercury, the messenger of the gods with winged sandals, and the means of escape used by Daedalus and Icarus, who left Crete by self-made wings (Meyer 1903: 240, ln 15). For example, Mercury's *encennach* in *Togail Troi* (Stokes 1881: 7, 65, ln 288), *oenchendaich* in *Togail na Tebe* (Calder 1922: 36–7, ln 586) and *enceandaigh* in *Imtheachta Æniasa* (Calder 1907: 48–9, ln 766–7) are consistently defined as 'bird gear' enabling Mercury to 'go over land and sea'. In Irish translations of Classical texts, an *énchendach* enables the wearer to fly.

Considerably older and more relevant in the current context, however, are the two passages in the tale *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, in which the *énchendach* makes its earliest appearance. Thurneysen (1921: 627) dated this text as an 11th-century compilation of 9th-century material. In *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (Knott 1975: §7), a beautiful woman is kept in a house without a door, but with only a window and a skylight; one day a 'bird' flies through the skylight, leaves his *énchendach* on the floor of the house and impregnates her. The removal of the *énchendach* implies a transformation into a man, or vice versa, into a bird. This is confirmed by the second episode (Knott 1975: §13) when the son, Conaire, thus conceived, had grown up and came across a flock of particularly splendid birds. He pursued them to the sea and attacked them, and casting off their *énchendcha*, they turned into men and threatened him with spears and swords.

It has been suggested that the *énchendach* 'bird cap' was 'possibly a mask worn in totemistic ceremonies' (DIL 1983: 126; Wagner 2002: 60), but there is no evidence in the literature for such a practice, and the identification of the Papil bird-men and other bird-headed figures in Pictish sculpture as representing bird-headed priests (Wagner 2002: 60) is dismissible. In comparison with the use of an *énchendach* as a means of transformation in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, some analogy can be drawn with the Papil Stone. In the context of the Papil bird-men and related Pictish figures, this bird-transformation by means of an *énchendach* may be of certain interest insofar as the Papil bird-men are identified as male by their hairstyle and tunics but have bird facial features and legs. If *énchendach* does imply a 'bird cap', 'bird-head-gear' or 'bird mask', then this might be

relevant as it is difficult to discern whether the Pictish figures are hybrid creatures or whether they represent human figures wearing masks. While this parallel to the Papil bird-men certainly has to be noted, it remains open to question how significant it really is: *énchendach* is a fairly obscure term, which outside *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, predominantly appears in much later translations of Classical texts. This does not preclude the possibility that the *énchendach* in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* constitutes an ancient Insular-Celtic archaism of wearing bird masks, but this remains impossible to prove and seems rather unlikely. Furthermore, there are no specific parallels between the Papil bird-men and any of the wearers of the *énchendach* in Irish literature. Wearing an *énchendach* in Irish literature allows the wearer to be completely transformed into a bird, whereas the Papil bird-men and related Pictish figures have the forms of both birds and men.

APPENDIX 2

Comparisons between the bird-headed Pictish motif and early Norse literature are slight. In the *Gylfaginning*, Odin possesses two ravens named *Huginn* ('Thought') and *Muninn* ('Memory'), which fly out at day-break around the world and return to Odin in the evening and sit on his shoulders and say into his ears all the tidings they saw and heard (Faulkes 1982: 33). This is possibly represented on the Norse cross-slab at Kirklevington, North Yorkshire (Bailey 1980: 203, pl 57; Lang 2001: 399, 404) where two ravens sit on each shoulder with their beaks pointing towards the ears of a frontal-facing man. The absence of a human body attached to the head between the beaks of the Papil bird-men, however, precludes any association with the Norse evidence.

It is also tempting to compare the Irish *énchendach* with the *hamr* of Old Norse mythology, which appears to be a bird-skin used to bring about the transformation of its wearer into a bird to allow him or her to fly (von See 1997: 532–4; von See 2000: 122). However, the parallels are too general to allow any clear argument for a borrowing from Irish *énchendach* or vice versa. Nor would it be possible to make a strong case that the Papil bird-men have been influenced by the Old Norse *hamr*, on the same grounds as why no clear connection between the *énchendach* and the Papil bird-men can be established. The limited parallels between them lack any distinctive features.

ABBREVIATIONS

AP = Henderson, G and Henderson, I 2004
DIL = Quin, E G 1983
ECMS = Allen, J R and Anderson, J 1903

NOTES

1 A further similarity between the Papil Stone and the St Ninian's Isle hoard may be found on the internal mount of Bowl no 6. On each corner of the triangular mount is a small, gilded, human head (Youngs 1989: pl 97; AP: 111, fig 160). Wilson (1973: 54) describes these as 'human masks'. The presence of a small human head at a point is typical of Insular brooches (AP: 111), but the design of these heads is comparable, and practically identical to the human head positioned between the beaks of the Papil bird-men. It is difficult to deduce a relationship based on the similarity of a tiny human head, but it is not impossible to imagine that the same artistic school in Shetland was responsible for both the Papil Stone and the St Ninian's Isle treasure.

2 The Frankish fransisca, or throwing axe, for example, was adopted and widely used by Germanic warriors and several early examples have been found in England (Underwood 2001: 35–7) dating from the 5th to 6th century (Siddorn 2003: 100). The T-shaped axe, like many of the examples in the Pictish axe-wielding motif, is not specifically of the Viking type and remained in use until the 14th century (Laing 2000: 94, n 54). In Scotland, axes have been recovered from Dunollie, Argyll and dated from the 7th to 10th centuries (Alcock & Alcock 1987: 141). Axe-heads have also been recovered from archaeological excavation at Dunadd, Argyll (Craw 1930: 118 fig 5, 119). In 1818, when the ramparts of the fortress at Burghead were levelled, so many axe-heads and spear-heads were recovered that they were given to tourists passing by (Young 1890–1: 445).

3 Wagner (2002: 60) also suggested a potential connection between the bird-headed figures in Pictish sculpture with the *énchendach*, though he associates this term with the name of the hag in the tale *Tochmarc Emire*. In this tale, the hag who makes a short appearance in an attempt to murder the hero Cú Chulainn, is named *Eis Énchend*. The name of this hag is indeed repeatedly given as (*Ess*) *Énchenn* 'bird head' in many modern texts

(eg Stokes 1908: 127, n 1); however, this form is philologically problematic and presupposes a certain amount of emendation of the preserved texts. In *Tochmarc Emire* (van Hamel 1933: §75) the name is in the genitive case as *Ésse Énchinde*, a form which cannot be reconciled with a postulated nominative *Énchenn* as long as normal grammatical rules are applied. In the second occurrence of the name (Van Hamel 1933: §77) there seems to be manuscript evidence (Bodleian Rawlinson B 502) for a reading of the name in the nominative as *Éis Énchend* (Meyer 1890: 450, lns 105–6; 452, lns 139–40), but two manuscripts give the variation *encinndi*/*enchinne*, including the oldest manuscript of the text, Royal Irish Academy D. 4.2 (Van Hamel 1933: 17). The form as *Éis Enchinne* is also the name of the hag in the later *Oileamhain Con Culainn* (Stokes 1908: §§32, 56), a modernised version of *Tochmarc Emire* (Ó hUiginn 2002: 43). This name can readily be dismissed in this context, for the forms cannot be easily reconciled to mean *én chenn* 'bird head' or *énchendach*, and it therefore bears no relation to the Papil bird-men comparison.

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This paper is published with the aid of a grant from Shetland Amenities Trust