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INSCRIPTIONS OF PICTLAND

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Inscriptions of Pictland: Summary.

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The inscriptions in Roman letters from Pictland are included as an appendix

Abbreviated References.

- AFM** The Irish Annals of the Four Masters.
- Ant. J.** The Antiquaries' Journal.
- APP.** Thames and Hudson's 'Ancient Peoples and Places' series,
ed. Glyn Daniel.
- Arch. Cambr.** Archaeologia Cambrensis.
- Arch. J.** Archaeological Journal.
- Arch. Scot.** Archaeologia Scotica.
- ATig.** The Irish Annals of Tigernach.
- AU.** The Irish Annals of Ulster.
- Aur.** "Auricept na nÉces: the Scholars' Primer" ed. G. Calder
from **BB**; specifically, the Ogham tract in it.
- BB.** The Book of Ballymote.
- Brash** 'the Ogham Inscribed Monuments of the Gaedhil' by Richard
Rolt Brash (ed. G. M. Atkinson, 1879).
- Chron. Mann.** The Chronicle of Man and the Isles, ed. P. A. Minch, 1860.
- CIIC.** Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum, by R. A. S.
Macalister (1945, 1949): where only a number follows
this reference, it is the number of the inscription in
the work; otherwise volume and page reference are given.
- CPB.** Corpus Poeticum Boreale, edd. Vigfusson and Powell.
- CPNS.** W. J. Watson, 'History of the Celtic Place-names of
Scotland' (1926).
- Diack** F. C. Diack, 'The Inscriptions of Pictland' (1944).
- ECMS.** J. R. Allen and J. Anderson, 'the Early Christian
Monuments of Scotland'. Usually followed simply by a
number, which indicates illustration number in part III;
otherwise part and page reference is given.

- EIHM T. F. O'Rahilly, 'Early Irish History and Mythology'.
- Ferguson Sir Samuel Ferguson, 'Ogham Inscriptions in Ireland, Wales and Scotland' (1887).
- Goudie Sir Gilbert Goudie, 'the Celtic and Scandinavian Antiquities of Shetland' (1904).
- JRSAL Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.
- Kermode P. M. C. Kermode, 'Manx Crosses' (1907).
- Lex. Etym. J. Vendryes, 'Lexique Etymologique de l'Irlandais ancien'.
- LHEB. K. H. Jackson, 'Language and History in Early Britain'.
- LL The Book of Leinster.
- LJ. The Book of the Dun Cow.
- Macalister R. A. S. Macalister, 'The Inscriptions and Language of the Picts', in "Essays and Studies presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill", ed. J. Ryan, 1940. Quoted by Macalister's number of the inscription, or by page reference.
- Moore George Moore, 'Ancient Pillar-Stones of Scotland' (1865).
- Nicholson E. W. B. Nicholson, 'the Vernacular Inscriptions of the Ancient Kingdom of Alban' (1896).
- NTS. Norsk tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap.
- PBA. Proceedings of the British Academy.
- Phil. Quart. Philological Quarterly.
- 'Picts' Isabel Henderson, 'the Picts' (APP. 1967).
- EKL The Pictish King-Lists.
- PKM ed. Sir Ifor Williams, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*.
- POAS. Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society.
- PP. ed. F. T. Wainwright, 'the Problem of the Picts' (1955).
- PPS. Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society.
- PRIA. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.
- PSAS. Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.
- R. The inscription in Roman letters on the Newton stone.

- RC. Revue Celtique.
- RCAHM Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments for
Scotland: quoted by county volume.
- Rhys¹ Principal John Rhys, 'the Inscriptions and Language of
the Northern Picts', PSAS. xxvi. 263-351, with
additions and corrections in PSAS. xxvii. 411-412.
Quoted by volume and page reference, and (with
arabic numerals) by Rhys' numbering.
- Rhys² Principal John Rhys, 'A revised account of the
Inscriptions of the Northern Picts', PSAS. xxxii. 324-
398. Quoted by volume and page, and (with Roman
numerals) by Rhys' own numbering.
- RIB. Collingwood and Wright, 'the Roman Inscriptions of Britain'
vol. i, 1965.
- Southesk The Earl of Southesk, 'the Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland',
PSAS. xviii. 180-206.
- SSS. John Stuart, 'The Sculptured Stones of Scotland' (1856,
1867).
- TBC^{1, 2} The earlier and later versions of Tain Bo Cuailnge, the
Early Irish saga.
- TPS. Transactions of the Philological society; specifically
an article by Whitley Stokes in the volume for 1888-90
including a list of Pictish names.
- TYP. ed. Rachel Bromwich, 'Trioedd Ynys Prydein, The Welsh
Triads'.
- Vik. Ant. ed. H. Shetelig, 'Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and
Ireland' (1940-54).
- ZCP. Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie.

Chapter One

General Considerations; Date, Purpose.

"In lapidary inscriptions a man is not upon oath":

Dr. Johnson.

The Ogham inscriptions found in the Dark-Age kingdom of Pictland form a fairly homogeneous group, distinctive in type and context from the Irish ogham inscriptions. It seems fairly clear that the Picts borrowed the Ogham alphabet from the Irish settlers in the West of Scotland (late 5th century onwards), and then used it to write inscriptions in a language unknown to us. That the loan was this way round and not the other way seems likely for the following reasons: first, the Irish inscriptions, where they can be dated, lie mostly in the fifth (or late fourth) to seventh centuries (with outliers ranging from the eighth to nineteenth centuries), whereas the Pictish oghams seem to centre on the eighth to ninth centuries (see below); secondly, the forfeda are agreed to be a later introduction into the Ogham alphabet¹, and the Pictish inscriptions are far more heavily endowed with them than are the Irish ones; thirdly, the relative abundance of Ogham inscriptions in Ireland as opposed to Scotland implies that their home was there; fourthly, in the fourth century (when the Ogham alphabet was probably invented), Ireland had the necessary cultural contacts with Roman civilisation, both through Wales and probably directly by sea as well, to have invented it; such contacts, if they existed in Pictland, were probably considerably less abundant.² It hardly needed proving that the loan was from Irish to

1. Mac White, ZCP. xxviii and refs.

2. Though the Colchester tablet is evidence for some contact: below, p. 11.

Pictish, but it is as well that this should be perfectly clear.

What appears to have happened is that the Picts learned the Ogham alphabet from the Irish, presumably at some time between the fifth and the eighth centuries (this being the latest possible date for the earliest Pictish ogham stones), and then used it for their own purposes, at first to supplement the well-known Pictish symbols (which were arising as a class at about the same time), and later on with Christian crosses and by itself on slabs. The evidence for this will be seen in the course of the introduction.

So few words are at all recognisable when the inscriptions are transliterated that it is tempting to suggest that they are nonsense, or that we are not using the right transliteration key. But what refutes this is the fact that occasionally (and not all that infrequently) there is a recognisable word, usually a name. This means that we must be using the right method of transliteration, and that parts of some of the inscriptions, at least, make some sense. But it does not prove that all the inscriptions make complete sense: it is quite possible that the local Pictish upper classes decided, from knowledge of Irish practice, that Ogham memorials were the desirable thing to have, and had them executed by people who did not bother to provide a completely lucid inscription. But this is rendered less probable by the chattel inscriptions that occur, and also by those inscriptions such as the two from Birsay, which have a decidedly hurried look, reminding one of the **Runic** inscriptions from Maeshowe¹: These are largely the graffiti of adventurers, and examples of translations are: 'Thorný the wounded. Helgi carved', or 'Ingigerð is the most beautiful of the women'. Inscriptions such as these imply

1. B. Dickins, POAS. viii. 27.

a widespread knowledge of runes amongst ordinary people (as opposed to masons and scholars), and this is borne out by the runic inscriptions found on personal belongings. An example of one of these is the steatite spindle-whorl from somewhere in Orkney¹, and further inscriptions are found on swords, brooches and other personal belongings. These are closely comparable with the four Pictish chattel inscriptions: three on knife-handles (Gurness, North Uist and Weeting) and one on a spindle whorl (Buckquoy). The deduction must be that knowledge of Oghams, as of runes and the Roman alphabet, was fairly widespread at some point in Pictish history. This rather implies that the inscriptions would have had to make sense, to satisfy those people who could read them.² There is a fifth chattel inscription as well - the St. Ninian's Isle sword-chape. This is in Roman letters, and is partly a Latin dedication 'in nomine dei summi', and partly two Pictish names, in all probability. This has similar implications for the Roman alphabet, though in this one instance it could have been a cleric's inscription.

But although the alphabet was borrowed from the Irish, it was not used in just the same way as in Ireland. In the first place, a typical Irish ogham inscription is up the side of an otherwise undecorated pillar, which may be roughly-hewn but is not usually carefully dressed. The Pictish inscriptions, on the other hand, are found, as mentioned, generally on the symbol-stones - they are

1. See below, p.15.

2. Ogham inscriptions on chattels do occur, though rarely, in Ireland. As examples there are: the Ballyspellan brooch (CIIC. 27); the Tullycommon sheep's bone (CIIC. 52); the Ennis bead (CIIC. 53); and the hanging-bowl from Kilgulbin East (CIIC. 1086; JRSAL. xcvi. 29). It is notable that these are often later in date than most of the Ogham memorial stones in Ireland.

therefore supplementary to and, as designs, integral with the other decoration (e. g. Brandsbutt, Golspie).

Secondly, the Irish inscriptions follow for the most part set formulae, which one would probably recognise if one were looking at the corpus of material without any previous knowledge. These are of course the well-known X MAQQI Y formula, with its variations and other ones also giving ancestry or tribe.¹ But as far as can be seen there is no such formula in the Pictish inscriptions (which are, of course, a much smaller corpus of material). The Irish loan MEQQ or MAQQ crops up sporadically² but even then it is not always part of a recognisable pattern (though it is difficult to be sure of this).

Thirdly, the Pictish inscriptions are more variable in length than the Irish ones. Altyre, for example, or Golspie, if they do make sense, probably incorporate a fair amount of Pictish grammar, could one but elucidate it. In this respect MacAlister³ had the right idea, though his readings were too subjective for his results to be valid.

The association with symbols is one that might possibly provide some clue as to meaning, but that will have to wait until a full-scale study has been done that tries to find out the meanings of the 'statements' they make (Charles Thomas' attempt⁴ at this, though interesting, and important for showing the value of numerical studies, is not/^{wholly}convincing). At the moment the only observation that might be

1. Mac White, ZCP. xxviii. 296.

2. See below, p. 30.

3. In 'Studies presented to Eoin Mac Neill', ed. J. Ryan.

4. 'The Interpretation of the Pictish Symbols', Arch. J. cxx (1963).

worth making is that the fish-symbol occurs on several of the Ogham stones: (?Burrian, Golspie, Inchyra, Keiss Bay, Latheron; also St. Vigean, the 'Drosten-stone'), and that this forms a fairly high proportion of the stones with the fish-symbol¹, bearing in mind the much lower proportion of ogham inscriptions over the symbol-stones as a whole. Beyond this it does not seem possible to say anything at the moment: the distributions of symbols in relation to oghams appears to be random.

The dating of the inscriptions is of course a very difficult problem, as the internal evidence has to be reconciled with the evidence of art history, and true archaeological evidence is lacking in almost all cases. First, from the letter-forms (which will be dealt with in their own right below). The usual Pictish cross-strokes for vowels are almost always a late feature when they occur (often on datable objects) in Ireland: examples are the Killaloe stone²; the Kilgubbin East bowl³; the nineteenth-century Ahenny inscription apparently continues the tradition.⁴ The forfeda, too, are a late device⁵ - later on the whole than the main run of Irish inscriptions ending in the seventh century (though there are exceptions). These two orthographic facts on their own indicate about eighth-century and later for the Pictish inscriptions.

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1. Four out of sixteen, listed at PSAS. lxxxiv. 206 n.1: the Drosten-stone is not included because the fish is in relief; or five out of seventeen if the dubious Burrian example is allowed.
 2. In runes and oghams, CIIC. 54.
 3. CIIC. 1086.
 4. JRSAL. xcix. 161.
 5. See above.

The use of dots to separate words in Bressay, Cunningsburgh 3 and Lunnasting has very close parallels in runic inscriptions: Kermodé 'Manx Crosses' has many examples, and they are found in runic inscriptions from Scandinavia as well. The use of such a device could have arisen spontaneously in both areas; but the overlap of the two cultures (especially in the Northern Isles) is so great that a borrowing one way or the other is very probable. This means that some of the Ogham inscriptions are probably within the Viking period, and therefore ninth-century or later in date. It is even possible that some of them were erected by Vikings, for there are other associations of Vikings and oghams: primarily the Killaloe stone¹, erected by a Norseman by the name of Thurkrim or TOROQR.. Unfortunately it seems that a photograph of the oghams on this important stone has never been published, for the published illustrations differ widely one from another.² However, it clearly shows a christianised Viking who could carve an inscription in both runes and oghams. Further, less dramatic evidence is found in two stones from the Isle of Man bearing Ogham inscriptions, though coming from a decidedly Norse milieu³: these are the Mal Lunkun cross from Kirk Michael⁴, with a runic inscription and ogham alphabet on one side, and an indecipherable ogham inscription on the other; a stone with half an ogham alphabet, a whole runic alphabet and the runic inscription 'John the Priest cut these runes'.⁵ John the

1. CIIC. 54.

2. The most authoritative seems to be that at CIIC. i p. 58, which differs notably from those at NTS. iv. 397 and PRIA. xxxviii (C) 239 (= NTS. iv. 383).

3. The true Irish ogham inscriptions from Man, CIIC. 500-505, are of course much earlier in date and not considered here.

4. See p. 110 for bibliography.

5. Illustrated at CIIC. i p. 483; PSAS. xlv. 440; Kermodé no. 115, p. 213 and pl. LXIV; also pp. 101-102.

Priest can be dated, for another stone inscribed by him¹ refers to a cleric called MALAKI whose death is noted in Chron. Mann. s. a. 1140 (= 1148): 'Obiit Sanctus Malachias episcopus et legatus Yberniae'. The Mal Lunkun cross, on the other hand, is probably middle-to-late tenth century: this is argued by David Wilson², discussing the dating of the Manx cross-slabs generally. He also makes the point that John the Priest seems to have had distinct antiquarian tendencies³, but this does not alter the fact that we can see the Ogham alphabet being used in Viking contexts from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. Since the Vikings were at this time gradually taking over the Northern Isles until they were far and away the dominant influence there (the place names in both groups are almost entirely Norse in origin⁴), we might not be surprised to find ogham inscriptions within the Viking context there, and just such borrowings as the motif of two dots separating words in an inscription, especially when it is remembered that the ogham alphabet was probably already in use in the islands when the Norsemen first arrived there.

Another source of information for dating the Pictish oghams is the date of the accompanying decoration. This method is subject to the uncertainties of art-history as a definitive study, and is subject to the further weakness that one has to assume contemporaneity of the inscription with the decoration. However, in most cases where there is accompanying decoration it seems extremely

1. Kermode, 'Manx Crosses' no. 114, p. 212 and pl. LXIII.

2. In Saga-Book xviii. 1-18.

3. Cf. H. M. Chadwick, In Memoriam, p. 145, note to fig. 13.

4. Dr. Marwick's ^{Celtic} examples, PSAS. lvii. 257, FOAS. i. 54-55 are not all convincing and of those that are, many are perhaps words borrowed into Lowland Scots, at any rate for place-name purposes.

likely that they are contemporaneous with one another, either because the two form one single composition (e. g. Brandsbutt, Logie Elphinstone), or because provision is made in the arrangement for the inscription (e. g. the beading on Brodie, Golspie and others). A further confirmation is the usual similarity of style in which both inscription and decoration are cut - nearly all stones show this. The Aboyne fragment, however, is an exception to both these tests, and it seems fairly clear that the inscription is considerably later than the cross, and was **most** probably cut after the breakage had taken place (which is significant since the cross **must** be eighth-century at the earliest, being a class II slab if the mirror-symbol is associated with the cross, as seems most likely).

At this point it will probably be useful to give a table listing the inscriptions according to Anderson's classification of the Early Christian Monuments:-

<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>II or III</u>	<u>Not classified</u>
Brandsbutt	Aboyne	Altyre	Abernethy	Auquhollie
Dunadd	Brodie	Bressay	Burrian	Birsay 1, 2
Inchyra	Golspie	Lunnasting	Cunnings-	Buckquoy
Keiss Bay	Latheron		burgh 1	Cunnings-
Logie Elphin- stone	Scoonie		Whiteness	burgh 2, 3 Gurness Newton North Uist St. Ninian's Isle 1, 2, 3 Weeting

The main interest of the table is that it shows roughly equal

distribution within the three classes, as far as can be told from the limits of the material. But it also shows that the incidence of forfeda and unusual forms (bind-oghams, angled vowels etc.) increases as the date becomes later: the Class I inscriptions are notably simple in their lettering, and the full 'Scholastic' Oghams come in mainly at group III (Bressay, Lunnasting).¹

The situation for the inscriptions in Roman letters is somewhat simpler, as the lettering used has often affinities with more datable examples in Northumbria, Ireland and elsewhere. Individual dates are given under the stones concerned, but the classification according to decoration is as follows:

<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>Not classified</u>
Fordoun	Lethnott	Newton
St. Vigean's	Papa Stronsay	St. Ninian's Isle (4)
	Tarbat	

The lettering of those stones in class II differs sharply from those in class III, and this contrast coincides with the use of the vernacular (apparently) in the former stones, and of Latin in the latter group. It appears to be a difference of cultural habit or milieu rather than one of date, for Dr. Stevenson dates the decoration of the Lethnott stone to the first half of the ninth century (while Professor Jackson suggests that the lettering is 'perhaps eighth century', which would strengthen the point), while he puts the St. Vigean's stone at mid-ninth century.²

1. Whether this justifies one in putting the highly ornate Burrian inscription definitively in Class III is dubious: the sample is so small that results cannot be definitive. However, the similarity may be noted.

2. PP. 123.

These two classifications can be used in conjunction with the two more recent discussions on Pictish art¹ to provide seventh to eighth century dates for inscriptions on Class I stones, and mainly eighth to ninth century dates for those on Classes II and III.

Dr. Henderson's use of the style of ogham on Erandsbutt to show that Class I stones were still being erected in the eighth century² is quite justified, as there are virtually no examples of Brandsbutt-type vowels from Ireland before then.³ It is unfortunate that these dates are still very wide and depend in part on the dates provided by art-historians, but from the nature of the material it does not seem possible to be any more exact. However, one may use the framework thus provided to give tentative dates for those stones which were left 'not classified', arriving there by comparison of the styles of oghams in the respective inscriptions.

Auquhollie is, of course, far closer to the Irish oghams than to anything in Pictland, and the lack of forfeda and Irish style of vowels and situation justify Macalister in having made it one of the earliest of the inscriptions. The absence of symbols suggests that it may even date from before the symbols were fully evolved as a system (in about the seventh century or a little earlier, according to Henderson and Stevenson), though it need not.

The two Birsay stones belong, as suggested above, more in a Viking context; the inscriptions are cut by single or repeated strokes

1. Stevenson, PP. chapter V; Henderson, 'Picts', 115-134.

2. 'Picts', 116-117.

3. That these suggested dates are still well away from the tenth century date given by Dr. Wilson for the Kirkmichael cross is probably an indication that the Kirkmichael oghams have nothing to do with the Pictish oghams except for being late in style and incomprehensible.

with a sharp instrument, instead of the pocking-and-smoothing technique used on most of the Class I inscriptions.¹ Similarly one or two details in the lettering suggest a later date for these two² and so, while there are no actual forfeda, the ninth century at least seems appropriate.

The lettering on Buckquoy is on the whole quite similar to that used on the other portable objects (Gurness, North Uist and Weeting), and there are one or two striking correspondences (e.g. the cross placed to one side on Buckquoy, Gurness; the absence of other forfeda). Whether the wide scatter of these objects implies a date in Viking times, when mobility was greatest, is doubtful. Certainly that is the time when one would expect objects from Pictland, especially from Orkney and Shetland, to turn up in such places as the Outer Hebrides and East Anglia; but that Picts could have had contacts with exactly these two areas at earlier dates is shown for the former by, e.g., the stone from Benbecula³ and for the latter by the Roman tablet from Colchester⁴, of a much earlier date. Archaeology is of little use in dating these objects, but where it can help at all it implies a pre-Norse context: Dr. Anna Ritchie says that the Buckquoy whorl is in all probability from a pre-ninth century stratum; the Gurness handle is said by Dr. Stevenson to have been found at a lower level than a ninth-century Viking burial,⁵ and is in any case from a broch, which was presumably

1. See Gordon, PSAS. lxxxviii. 40.

2. See below.

3. ECMS. 114.

4. Rhys, PSAS. xxxii. 326-330; CIIC. 495; Ogam xi. 105; RIB. no. 191.

5. Norfolk Archaeology xxxi. 186; R. Rainbird Clarke, Ant. J. xxxii. 71 sqq.

inhabited in pre-Norse times¹; the same applies to the earth-house in which the North Uist handle occurred², while the Weeting one seems to have had no context at all, being picked up off the ground near a Roman archaeological site (but not having any connexion with it).³ Thus the general trend for these articles seems to be away from the Viking era, and may well be as early as the seventh century (and the absence on the whole of later letter-forms may be compared with this conclusion). It may at this point be noted that the only stones which were in an archaeological context when found are: Birsay I, re-used in building Thorfinn's palace in the eleventh century; Burrian, where the finds seem to be confused and only a date 'seventh to eighth century' can be given for the site; and Inchyra, which (quite apart from its successive uses as a symbol-stone) was apparently re-used as a grave-cover later on.

The only other relevant factor as to date is in the case of Dunadd, where Jackson has rightly pointed out that if the inscription (and associated boar) is Pictish, as seems probable, it ought to date from after Dunadd was abandoned by the Scots (though he also warns against being too dogmatic over this⁴). The last record of the Picts' capturing Dunadd is AU. 736, whereas the ogham seems in type to be one of the earliest (rather like Auguhollie: no forfeda, and vowels, if there are any, as shortish nicks). However, this ogham is unusual anyway, being on the West coast, and an eighth-century date is by no means impossible for an inscription associated with Class I symbols, as

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1. In fact Audrey Henshall, PPS. xvi (1950). 146, would apparently think even the fifth century rather late for some associated finds, though she does not seem dogmatic and would therefore presumably accept a somewhat later date.
 2. Sir Lindsay Scott, PPS. xiv (1948). 75-76; Callander, PSAS lxvi. 56 (fig. 11), 65.
 3. Clarke, Ant. J. xxxii. 71.
 4. Antiquity xxxix. 302.

noted above.

Two of the inscriptions involved in the survey are circular - Buckquoy and Logie Elphinstone. In the former case the obvious reason is that the whorl itself is circular, but in the latter case there is no apparent reason for it, and one is tempted towards obvious explanations such as its having a 'magical significance'. This is not wholly without foundation, as some of the other references to 'wheel-oghams' show. There are two references in *Táin Bó Cuailnge* to ogham inscriptions set on pillar stones as challenges: in both instances the method seems to have been to have a wooden stick, bent into a ring that fitted over the top of a tapering stone and was fastened to itself with a peg. The inscription seems in fact to have been on the fastening peg,¹ and not on the actual ring, as has been generally assumed; but the ring itself obviously had some significance. In the first instance it is done by Cú Chulainn himself, when in order to hold up the advancing armies he leaves a challenge that they are not to proceed until one of them should be found to make a similar ring²; the second example is in Cú Chulainn's Boyhood Deeds: the three sons of Nechtan Scéne have the pillar there as a challenge for adventurers to take up if they wish.³

There are other references to wheel-oghams in the literary

1. "'na menuc ind eda" TBC² from LL, ed. O'Rahilly, L. 459; cf. L. 1070. It has been suggested that menoc may mean 'base-line', and not 'peg'.
2. TBC¹ from LU, edd. Strachan and O'Keefe, ll. 223 ff.; TBC² from LL, ed. O'Rahilly, ll. 456 ff.
3. This seems to be the meaning of "ba coll ngesse do maccaib Nechtan Scéne anísín" in TBC¹, which is far less explicit at this episode than in the previous one: edd. Strachan and O'Keefe, ll. 623 ff.; TBC² explains in much more detail: ed. O'Rahilly, ll. 1069 ff. It might be noted in passing that the shape of the Logie stone would be ideal for slipping a ring over, as it is pointed towards the top and broadens out lower down (see photograph); but the relevance of this must not be stressed.

tradition: three of the alphabets in the Auraicept tract are circular in form¹, though none is of much use in deciphering the Logie stone, except that no. 75 implies that a wheel-ogham should be read clockwise. According to Sir Samuel Ferguson², the reading of wheel-ogham is amongst St. Columba's abilities listed in the Amra Coluim Chille, but in a search through it³ I have not been able to find this.

In actual inscriptions, the only parallel seems to be the cryptic amber bead from Ennis⁴, though it is just possible that the circles which terminate the stem-lines of Glenfahan⁵ and Ardywanig⁶ may be references to the withy bearing a peg, if this was ever a real practice and not just a literary convention.⁷ Rhys⁸ also compares the Silchester ogham stone⁹, which would be an excellent shape to have borne a loop around its middle; but Macalister¹⁰ is very definite that the shape has nothing to do with the inscription on the stone, since it must have preceded the cutting of the inscription.

As mentioned above, the shape of the Buckquoy ogham is of course dictated by its being on a spindle-whorl; but it is interesting that spindle-whorls seem to have been favourite objects for brief

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1. Ed. Calder, one beside ogham no. 24, and nos. 74, called rothogam 'wheel ogham', and 75, called Fege Finn 'Fionn's window'.
 2. 'Ogham Inscriptions', p. 139.
 3. Ed. Stokes, RC. xx.
 4. CIIC. 53.
 5. CIIC. 183.
 6. CIIC. 247.
 7. Cf. also the circle on the face of CIIC. 221 (Dromlusk).
 8. PSAS. xxxii. 358.
 9. CIIC. 496.
 10. CIIC. i p. 475.

inscriptions. In addition to the Buckquoy one, there is a Viking whorl made of Shetland steatite and conical in shape, coming from Stromness in Orkney¹, with runes round its edge which Magnus Olsen reads as *kautr rest runar(k)*, i. e. 'Gautr carved runes' (the final k is to fill up the remaining gap); and another one in Reykjavík museum with runes reading *Thora á mig/frá Hrúna*, i. e. 'Thora owns me, from Hrúni'. There is also the whole series of Gaulish whorls discussed by Whatmough.² The inscriptions on these do not on the whole seem to contain proper names, but rather vague addresses to the object itself, instructing it to perform its work well, or to the owner in terms of endearment, sometimes to spin well. This is interesting, in implying that we should not necessarily look for proper names in the Buckquoy inscription. Finally, there are also spindle whorls with circular decoration resembling ogham inscriptions. One such is from the Broch of Burrian (whence came the Burrian inscription), and is made of red sandstone, little more than half an inch in diameter; its decoration takes the form of a circular line round one side of the whorl, with a few radial lines which could be the letter A if this were an Ogham, but there is no reason to suppose it is. There is also a whorl with radial decoration in the Perth museum.

The final question of general interest is that of the purpose of the ogham inscriptions. This is of course tied up with both the purpose of the symbol stones as a whole, and the purpose of the Irish oghams; both of these have been the subject of some speculation³, but

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1. Exact provenance unknown; published PSAS. xxxii. 321; Vik. Ant. VI. 161-162.
 2. Language xxv. 388, and references.
 3. Henderson, 'Picts', 157-160; C. Thomas, 'The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain', 98.

the general conclusion seems to be that though the symbol-stones were rarely, if ever, carved and set up as headstones to graves, yet they were probably memorials to single people, like the Irish oghams. In this aspect the inscriptions probably help in interpreting the symbols, rather than the other way round, since they probably do in some cases contain the name of an individual, followed by genealogical details, as at St. Ninian's Isle, BESMEQQNANAMMOVEZ.¹

But it is not necessary that all the ogham inscriptions (or all the symbol stones for that matter) had the same function, and it has been postulated that some of the Irish oghams may have served as boundary stones, rather than as memorials to the dead²; it is possible that some of the Pictish stones may have had this purpose (either for the territory of individuals or for that of tribes,³ though the former is more probable in the case of those with ogham inscriptions if these do contain personal names).

Similarly, the Birsay stones seem such casual graffiti that it is hard to believe they were meant to be long-lasting monuments of any kind. A comparison has already been drawn with the runic inscriptions in this respect, and so it is possible that these two inscriptions say no more than 'X was here' or something along those lines. However, they are the only examples among the Pictish corpus which give this impression (except perhaps those on portable objects); all the others have received some care in the carving, presumably with the purpose of making a lasting monument.

1. 'The Picts', p. 159.

2. Plummer, 'On the meaning of the Ogham stones', RG. xl. 387.

3. As Thomas, Archaeological Journal CXX (1964).

Chapter Two

Letter-forms; carving techniques.

It may be of some value to give a detailed account of the various unusual letter-forms found in the Pictish oghams, and the parallels to be found elsewhere. This is because although there are several unique features in the inscriptions, there are also a good many similarities to the Irish inscriptions, implying that the Pictish oghams were created in the common ogham tradition as it continued even after memorial stones ceased to be erected in Ireland, instead of the Picts' having borrowed the ogham alphabet once and for all and then having developed along their own idiosyncratic lines. It also enables comparisons of the different styles within the Pictish corpus to be carried out more easily.

Bind-oghams are one of the most widespread general features which strike one on coming from Irish oghams. It consists in joining the individual scores of a letter with an extra one, linking their tips. The following stones use this excellent device for clarifying inscriptions: Abernethy, Burrian, Cunningsburgh (1) and (2), Inchyra (B), Lunnasting, Whiteness. Thus, Whiteness N is



Of these Abernethy, Cunningsburgh (1) and Whiteness are fragments too small to be of great significance; Burrian and Lunnasting are both long, shallowly scratched inscriptions where virtually all letters are bound; Cunningsburgh (2) is very irregular; Inchyra (B) is unusual, for it is very evenly carved on the whole, yet that part on the side edge is not bound, while the four letters on the end are. In Abernethy, Burrian, Lunnasting, Whiteness the bind-stroke is often curved owing to differing lengths of the letter-strokes; in the case of Lunnasting the bind-stroke is sometimes a continuation of the final stroke of the letter. Parallels from outside Pictland are

found: the alphabet on the face of the Kirkmichael slab¹ is written in them, and so is one T in CIIC. 104 (Coolineagh 1), where the letter-tips extend beyond the bind-stroke (this stone also bears two E-forfeda and an incised cross which recalls that on Lunnasting; MacAlister considered the bind-stroke to be a later addition). CIIC. 193 (Maumanorig), most implausibly explained by MacAlister, may contain a bound L, though this is an obscure inscription.²

The sloping of consonants in the B- and H-groups is so widespread that only Dunadd, Gurness, North Uist, and Weeting do not show this feature (it is interesting that apart from the three knife-handles it is only Dunadd, in the Irish area, that is without this). But amongst those that do show it, there is a great diversity as to how pervasive it is, and how regular the angle is within an inscription. In the following inscriptions all consonants of these two groups are sloped: Abermethy, Altyre, Birsay (1) and (2), Bressay, Burrian, Golspie, Inchyra (B) and (C), Lunnasting, St. Ninian's Isle, Whiteness, while in the remainder only some are at right angles. Newton and Auquhollie are particularly Irish in this, as each of them has only one letter at a slope (a V in both instances), with the others at right angles. Some stones, e.g. Cunningsburgh (2), are amazingly irregular, with strokes at all angles; while in others (e.g. St. Ninian's Isle) the slope is beautifully controlled and even. However, it is only very rarely that the slope varies within one letter: this appears to be so in a T in Inchyra (B), and is one possible explanation (the most likely) for a curious group in Latheron (read as T³); Logie Elphinstone may

1. P. 111.

2. Bind-oghams also occur in the BB. tract on oghams: f. 312 l. 5; f. 313 l. 17.

3. See below, p. 114.

show this feature, depending on which of the many readings one takes.¹

A more common feature is the device of varying the slope within pairs of doubled letters. This seems to be mainly a Pictish characteristic, and is displayed in the following stones: Birsay (1); Bressay; Burrian; Cunningsburgh (2); Latheron; Logie (?); St. Ninian's Isle (?); Scoonie. It probably does help to clarify the situation on occasions, which was presumably its purpose.

As far as the vowels are concerned, the Pictish 'type' may be taken to be the long cross-strokes, extending outwards as far as M-group strokes do on many of the regular inscriptions. These may of course be bound or not (though there are so many other ways of writing vowels that bound examples occur only on Abernethy; Cunningsburgh (1); Inchyra (B) (some only); Lunnasting). It may be taken that all other inscriptions show the long-stroke vowels except the following:

(a) those with strokes so short as to be almost Irish-type notches:

Auquhollie; Cunningsburgh 2 (?); Dunadd (?); Inchyra C; North Uist.


(b) those where the strokes are shorter than M-group strokes though

1. It is accepted as dogma, rather than proved, throughout this thesis that consonant slope is always backwards to the direction of reading from the point where the stroke touches the line, thus always $\searrow \ll$ and never $\swarrow \ll$. This hypothesis is used in several instances (e.g. Newton, Logie Elphinstone) to help determine the direction of reading. There is some justification for this: in inscriptions where we know which direction to read (e.g. from angled vowels, or because a recognisable word or name emerges) it is always so; accepting that the inscriptions nearly always read upwards (Newton excepted), this is the direction that consonant slope always is; finally there is the subjective opinion that with inscriptions where the direction is in doubt a more pronounceable result usually emerges if one accepts this as a rule. The only instance that might go against this is Abernethy, where we seem to end up reading a horizontal ogham right to left rather than left to right if the rule is followed, and if the decoration is assumed to be a horse which should be upright. But the fragment is so small, that no great conclusions can be drawn from it; and anyway there is no early evidence that a horizontal ogham could not go in either direction. Buckquoy also violates it if we read clockwise.

still recognisably Pictish: Birsay 1; Buckquoy; Cunningsburgh 2; Golspie; Gurness; Inchyra A; Keiss Bay; Newton; Weeting.

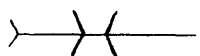
It may be noted that in no instance in either of these two groups are the strokes bound.


The full-length vowel-strokes are of course recognisable from Irish oghams outside the main period in that country; they appear on the following inscriptions: CIIC. 27 (Ballyspellan); 54 (Killaloe); 72 (Aultagh); 362 (Eglwys Cymmin, Carmarthenshire); 1086 (Kilgulbin)¹; Ahenny²; all of these (except perhaps the Welsh example) are late, ranging from the eighth to the nineteenth centuries, and the Pictish forms thus seem to have been arising just as the one type was supplanting the other, since there are a few old-style ones but the great majority are of the later style. This is one of the instances where the Pictish forms seem to have developed together with the Irish ones.

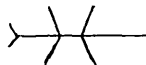
But this does not nearly exhaust the total of Pictish vowel-forms, which indeed show a quite astonishing variety. One of the commonest is the angling of component strokes (just like the feather-mark well-known in later Irish oghams, e. g. CIIC. 27, Ballyspellan), with or without bind-strokes. *M*'s written thus occur in Golspie and Brodie; *O*s in Aboyne, Birsay (1), Brodie; a bound *U*  in Cunningsburgh (1); a bound *E* in Lunnasting; and an unbound *E* in Cunningsburgh (3). Possible comparisons occur in CIIC. i p. 478 (Hackness) and nos. 241, 246B, all three inscriptions being cryptic and more or less incomprehensible (though no. 241 is on a stone bearing a normal inscription as well).

1. JRSAL. xcvi. 29.

2. JRSAL. xcix. 161 and pl. 21.

Similar to this are what one presumes to be two further ways of writing an E - that is, with a cross (the K-forfid), either simple or with its two halves separated, thus:  . Both these forms occur in Irish oghams as either vowels or consonants (i. e. as E or K), as follows:

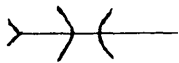
 as vowel: CIIC 27, 104, 129, 223, 235, 239, 256, 1086
 as consonant: CIIC 22, 34, 38, 120, 155, 156, 197,
 216 (?), 301 (?) in the majority of which it is
 for K in KOI 'here'.

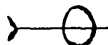
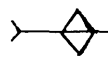
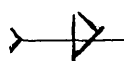
 as vowel: CIIC 176, 187, 230 (?)
 as consonant: CIIC 48, 98, 127 (?)


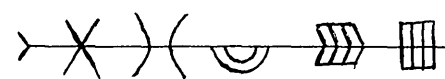

if one assumes that MacAlister's readings are correct.



In the Pictish inscriptions the true cross appears four times; twice it is between vowels (Burrian, Newton) and therefore presumably has a consonantal value (probably K); twice it appears at the beginning of an inscription (Cunningsburgh 3, Lunnasting) before TT, and probably has vocalic value (E), it being apparently the same word or name that starts each of these two.

The divided cross is found in four inscriptions, and seems to have vocalic value in all of these: Aboyne, Burrian, Golspie, Lunnasting. In this last example the points are rounded off, thus:

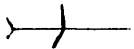



There are several possible occurrences of the O-forfid, some more plausible than others. The two most likely examples are a rounded one at Aboyne  (where the circle is much deeper where it crosses the line than away from it), and Bressay  . In both of these it seems best to transliterate simply as O. At Inchyra (A) occurs the strange symbol  , which may be intended for the

O-forfid (it is hard to see what else it can be); since this inscription seems to be a craftsman's jotting for his own use, we might expect forms to be somewhat reduced here. Lunnasting contains a quite unparalleled symbol:  . This is usually transliterated as O, which is as good a guess as any; but as already noted, Cunningsburgh (3) begins with the same sequence of letters, except that this letter is replaced by an angled E. So, strange as it may seem, this symbol may well have the value E (thus bringing up to five the number of ways that E is represented in the one inscription; viz. ). A possible clue to the origin of the O-forfid may be provided by a form of O that occurs in Burrian and Lunnasting. It is carved with straight strokes, and bound:  . It should be pointed out, however, that as the O-forfid occurs once or twice in Irish oghams (CIIC. 7, 193; both dubious and on both occasions with consonantal value and clearly twice with vocalic value on no. 235), it appears to be older than either the type of score required or the custom of carving bind-strokes. This symbol also occurs in the Auraicept, ll. 1141, 1143, 2873 as well as in the alphabets at the end; it is here given the value of either O or OO.

A further very common vowel-form is an embellishment on the normal A by adding a serif, nearly always on the same side:  . This occurs in Aboyne, ^{Buckquoy,} Burrian, Golspie, Latheron, Lunnasting and in what may be a solitary ogham letter on Scoonie (across from the main inscription). A form in Birsay (1):  is presumably the same phenomenon. One surmises that the solitary cross-stroke was not felt to be clear enough, and the serif was added (perhaps by analogy with the bind-strokes on longer letters) to make it more secure. Parallels occur in the alphabet in bind-oghams on the Kirkmichael stone (where the serif serves as a 'bind-stroke'; yet there is very little overlap

Scandinavian context¹; but one must beware of the circularity of forcing a Norse conclusion by presupposing a Norse sound.

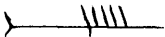
The M (?) in Birsay (1), carved as  is paralleled in many Irish inscriptions; in all of the following there are bent M-group strokes, and most of these have one half at right-angles to the fleasg: CIIC. 44, 56, 114, 116, 153, 228, 235 (also containing two E- and two O-forfeda), 353, 368, 409, 426. There seem to be three similar strokes in Brodie (B).

More interesting are the double Rs found on Bressay and Burrian:  respectively (i. e. with five and four strokes). This is paralleled twice in the manuscript tradition: in the Auircept's alphabet no. 64 (snaithi snimach, 'interwoven thread'), where it is given the value R simply as part of a whole alphabet like this; and in the Berne Bibl. de l'Université MS. 207² an example with four strokes in each direction is given the value RR³, and is lower down used as a divider between letters. The extra work and trouble involved in carving this 'letter' must have been considerable, and it implies that a double letter was perhaps necessary at this point in the inscription, and was not just the whim of the carver. However, it may be that to produce an attractive inscription the carvers were prepared to go to these lengths. Whether there is any connexion between the two Pictish letters and the manuscript forms is an open question: certainly the similarity is striking, yet the removal in time as well as place is also great; since there seems to have been a lasting Ogham tradition, with interchange between the two countries, the possibility of a connexion cannot be ruled out.

1. See below, pp. 34, 64.

2. Written, probably at Fleury, in the middle ninth century: Rand, Phil. Quart. i. 269-270.

3. Derolez, Scriptorium v. 3-19 and pl. 3.

In the Golspie inscription there occurs twice an apparently intentional form in which the first stroke of a five-stroke consonant crosses the line slightly:  . This is presumably in order to aid separation of the letters, but is not paralleled elsewhere (though there are several instances where consonant strokes cross the fleasg, presumably unintentionally).

Dots as a motif to separate words occur on Birsay (2), Bressay, Cunningsburgh (3), Lunnasting; also perhaps on St. Vigean's and Fordoun. There are no occurrences in Ireland, but as noted above they are a very common feature in runic inscriptions.

Both Buckquoy and Gurness display a little cross well to the left of the fleasg at what may be presumed to be one end of the inscription (though in the case of Gurness it is more likely to be the join between the two parts). In this it might be a parallel to the feather-mark in later Irish inscriptions (e.g. Ballyspellan, CIIC. 27), which does not occur in Pictland (perhaps because it could be mistaken for an A). Whether the deep, wide 'H' at the end of one line in Aboyne is also a mark of this kind is not clear.

The question now arises whether these various considerations can be used to classify the Pictish inscriptions in any way (for although they can be said to form a single group, there are still major differences between many of the inscriptions). To some extent this is possible: for example, Burrian and Lunnasting come together in almost all aspects (especially with both possessing bind-oghams and forfeda), and this agrees with the great similarity of carving technique¹ and other considerations (both being probably class III stones and therefore rather late in the series).

1. See below.

Bind-oghams are in fact limited almost completely to class III stones, with the sole exception of Inchyra (which is puzzling anyway: it is most unusual for a class I stone to be a carefully-dressed slab, quite apart from the complex sequence of uses to which the stone was put); it may be taken that on the whole their presence is an indication of lateness, probably of a ninth rather than eighth-century date.¹ If this is so, it probably applies to other stones exhibiting similar features; Bressay is one of these, having the double crossed R mentioned above, and also the ornate Ds and I. This is again in agreement with the decoration, which is probably of the ninth century and certainly has Scandinavian affinities², and the 'runic' dots confirm a post-Scandinavian date.

Altyre, though on the whole remarkable for its lack of decorative forms, does exhibit the same curly vowel-strokes as Bressay and Lunnasting, and being a class III stone is probably quite late.³ However, the case with Latheron is different, as it is a slightly different form of vowel, and is anyway a class II stone with incised symbols (though they may by this time have a Christian meaning: see Catalogue).

It appears that other decorative forms such as the angled vowels may also be fairly late features: these appear mainly on class III stones, with three exceptions in class II: Brodie and Golspie, which are both highly sophisticated, well-thought-out designs (and might well therefore belong quite late in the eighth century), and Aboyne, where the

1. Though Burrian appears to be somewhat earlier archaeologically.

2. PP. 128.

3. Ninth or even tenth century; PSAS. xc. 246-250 is silent on this point.

inscription is evidently considerably later than the stone and might therefore belong in the ninth century. The A carved with a serif has a distribution which overlaps to some extent: Aboyne, Birsay (I) and Golspie all display both features. Since Burrian and Lunnasting both also have this letter, it too may perhaps be taken as a mark of lateness (though since Latheron again and perhaps Scoonie also show it, the serif was perhaps a long-lived feature - there is no reason why not).

At the other end of the time-scale, none of the inscriptions on portable objects shows any late features at all (if the A with serif is excluded as being unreliable). It is possible that this is a characteristic of the chattel inscriptions (though this is emphatically not true in Ireland), but the archaeological context seems to agree. A date in about the seventh century seems right for these.

The same is true for most of the class I stones. Brandsbutt, Dunadd, Keiss Bay, Logie Elphinstone and also Newton are all very similar in their style of carving as well as in their lack of late forms (the K-forfid in Newton is of course quite compatible with a date in the seventh or eighth centuries). This is a style consisting of wide smoothed-out lines which have a semi-circular cross-section, and it seems to be predominantly an early one: the only later stones to show it markedly are Latheron and Scoonie, and so it may be suggested that the carving technique puts these early in the class II period, say first half of the eighth century (this would perhaps be in agreement with the decoration on both, which is part-incised and in the case of Latheron shows a decidedly odd form of cross).

The other main carving technique is one of scratches, which may be shallow (Burrian, Lunnasting) or deep (St. Ninian's Isle, Bressay). These are much narrower on the whole, and probably involved less work in

the making (the Birsay stones seem to have been carved with one slash per letter, or sometimes a second, not quite in the same place). The techniques of St. Ninian's Isle and Bressay, in particular, are so similar that they may be taken to indicate closeness of date even though there is nothing else on the St. Ninian's Isle slab to give any indication of date.

The shallow scratches also appear in inscription (A) on the anomalous Inchyra slab, but this may not mean anything, since this inscription is probably the carver's own jotting.¹ However, this serves to emphasise that the division of techniques is not hard-and-fast: there are many inscriptions which come in between the two in this aspect, and which it would therefore be unsafe to date by it.

1. p.103.

Chapter Three

Contents: spelling; possible meanings.

At first sight the Pictish oghams look utterly unpronounceable when transliterated, and it is hard to believe that they are meaningful at all, or that the right key is being used.¹ But as one becomes more familiar with them patterns begin to emerge (in a small way), and they become more manageable.

One of the more bewildering features initially is the habit of doubling letters, which is of course a well-known trait in Irish oghams as well. This doubling is not completely random, though MacNeill's suggestion² that it is the longer letters that are double will not hold for the Pictish inscriptions, since H, D and V are amongst the commonest double letters. But where we can tell the word-divisions in inscriptions (e. g. from dots to show them, or from recognisable words), it does seem that initial consonants were never doubled; moreover, as has already been seen by others, it is extremely rare for vowels to be doubled. The former of these rules can be of help in postulating word-divisions in undivided inscriptions, though this would always be speculative.

If the doubled letters are simplified, and once one has become used to the Pictish consonant clusters, the inscriptions seem more plausible. HCCVVEVV for example could be a fairly plausible

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1. O'Rahilly, EIHM 375: "if the various attempts made in recent times to decipher these inscriptions are even approximately correct, one may legitimately doubt whether the Pictish engravers ever mastered the Ogam alphabet sufficiently to be able to apply it accurately to their own language."
 2. CIIC. i p. xvi.

rendering of a word pronounced /χwew/ or similarly.¹ Admittedly some clusters in Altyre and Burrian still have an unpronounceable air (though the readings are not definite); and Dunadd remains an intractable mass of consonants unless one experiments in moving the fleasg around²; but on the whole the inscriptions have an air of being in a language of some kind, and not of being nonsense or in code. (Wainwright has pointed out that if a code were being used we should not expect to recognise occasional words); and in any case, since inscriptions are meant to be read, putting up an inscription in code would defeat its own purpose.

Several elements reoccur on various inscriptions, among them one that is apparently the Irish word magg- 'son', borrowed into Pictish.³ It may be present on the following inscriptions:

Aboyne	MAQQO-
Altyre	MAQQ
Bressay	MEQQ
Golspie	^A M _E QQ
Latheron	MAQQ
North Uist	M. Q
St. Ninian's Isle	MEQQ

The Buckquoy whorl contains the syllable MIQ, but (in spite of the Modern Scottish Gaelic genitive mic) this is not a possible form, especially at a date before the ninth century, because of the I, which

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1. It might be pointed out that /χwew/ is a perfectly possible collocation of sounds in a Brittonic language, though not attested at all.
 2. See p. 89.
 3. For the two possible reasons for its borrowing, see Professor Jackson, PP. 141-142.

is a much later development. Nevertheless the form bears a striking resemblance to the normal loan-word, and should perhaps be mentioned in this context, since it might be a mis-spelling of meic or maic. The forms MEQQ may, as Professor Jackson says, be early instances of the later Old Irish genitive meicc (in which case the -QQ is strangely archaistic, but the Irish oghams are full of archaisms). If these surmises are right (and it seems wholly probable) then we should expect to find Pictish names either side of the element, and in some cases these are recognisable. It is interesting to see that in some cases the Picts apparently borrowed the Irish ogham formula along with the alphabet (though there is sometimes great discrepancy between the 'names', and these inscriptions are outnumbered by those with no recognisable formula).

Bressay and Burrian contain what may be the word 'cross': CRROSCC and CERROCCS respectively. Both these forms are curious: the likely sources for a borrowing are OIr. cross and ON. kross; the Scottish Gaelic form is crasg, though crosg is found, with the final g unexplained (and apparently limited to Scotland: modern Irish is cross).¹ How old the form with final g is does not appear to be known; but it would be strange if it were as old as the ninth century. Similarly, even if CRROSCC is a genuine form, CERROCCS cannot be - it is presumably a mistake, with CCS for SCC (though this seems rather a peculiar slip); on the other hand, CER may well represent /kær-/, especially if the language had no initial group /kr-/ of its own.

1. Watson (CPNS. 486 n. 1) seems to feel that in place-names crasg nearly always means 'cross-roads', though implying that as a common noun it can mean 'cross'.

As far as names are concerned, it is on the whole a disappointment that those found in the Pictish inscriptions do not reoccur very much in other sources (mainly written ones, e.g. the Irish annals, Adamnan, Bede), though there are a few points of agreement. One of the most striking is the well-known Pictish (and Irish) name Nechtan, which became Naiton in Bede, though the later stones in the North still have a spirant of some kind, as follows:

Lunnasting	NEHHTONS
Latheron	NAHHTO... (?)

With these should be compared several stones which apparently have the first element of the name, at least once as the first part of a longer word, and in two cases followed by V:

Aboyne	NEHHT(VROBBACCENNEVV)
Bressay	NAHHTVVDDADDS
Inchyra	(I)NEHHTES...
Keiss Bay	NEHHTETRI

Whether it is the same element present in all these is open to doubt; but it does look as though there were other names on the base NEHT-, or else that NEHTAN was a diminutive or other derivative of NEHT.¹ It is worth mentioning that NEHHT (Inchyra), if a svarabhakti form of the same element, is not Celtic, since none of the Celtic languages felt any need for an epenthetic vowel in the group /χt/. Whether the Hs in the Oghams represent a true guttural spirant, as in the Irish form of

1. There has been considerable speculation on the origin of the name Nechtan, often in an Irish context; but none of it is particularly conclusive: O'Rahilly, EIHM. 368; Vendryes, Lex. Etym. MNOP. s.v. necht; Meid, Zeitschrift f. vergleichende Sprachforschung lxxix. 303.

the name, or a weakened one, is uncertain.¹

Another name known from elsewhere that occurs in the inscriptions is:

Scoonie	EDDARRNONN
Brodie	EDDARRNO...
Newton	IDDARRNNN
Fordoun	(p)idarnoin

This is clearly the same name found in *AU.* (669) and *ATig.* (668:

RC. xvii. 201): "Eharnan 7 Corindu apud Pictores defuncti sunt."

Forbes, 'Kalendars', gives St. Ethernanus as first bishop of Rathin in Buchan, and this seems fairly well authenticated. Whether the bishop, and the Inscriptions the Itharnan of the *Annals*/all refer to the same person is another question: it may have been quite a common Pictish name.² Since it does not seem to be Celtic in origin³ it might be worth suggesting a possible derivation (which would, however, disobey the rules of the development of Welsh): the Latin *Eternus* gave rise to a Welsh name, found as *Eterni* (Genitive) on the Clydai stone⁴, and as *Edern* in the written sources: *Edern* map *Nudd* is mentioned in passing in *Culhwch ac Olwen* and in *Breudwyd Ronabwy*, and *Edern* map *Cunedda* had a territory named after him.⁵ It is by no means impossible that the Picts should have borrowed a name from Latin (or from the Northern Britons), though

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1. Bede's form *Naiton* may represent a partly Welshified form, or represent a part-way stage in the Welsh process $\chi t > ith$: *LHEB.* § 60 and p. 708; cf. *Harleian Genealogies*' *Neithon*, *Bartrum*, 'Early Welsh Geneal. Tracts', sections 4, 5, 16, pp. 10-11.
 2. The Fordoun form is anomalous: the initial *p* might be the final letter of a previous word (cf. *Macalister's* interpretation) or else a prefix or preposition of some kind; the ending *-oin* might be a Genitive - cf. *Jackson*, § xiii, *PP.* 166; but one ought of course to avoid seeing Irish forms in Pictish.
 3. *PP.* 140.
 4. *CIIC.* 430.
 5. *Edeirnon* at *PKM.* 38. 29, also occurring as *Edeirnyawn*, *Edeirnon*.

its subsequent development would be irregular by Welsh standards. If this is so, then the -on/-an might be the same suffix as in Nechtan. A further name which may have had this suffix is Talorgan (found frequently in the Irish Annals and PKL).¹ The simple form Talorgg also occurs in the Annals and PKL, and may also be present in Aboyne's MAQQOTALLUORH.²

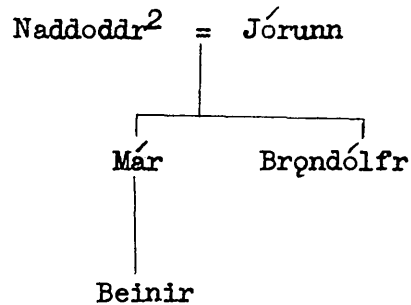
The Drosten-stone (St. Vigean's) contains several forms that probably are found elsewhere. The name Drosten itself turns up in manuscript sources³, and is a recognised Pictish name, which gave rise to the Arthurian Tristan and may be present on the inscribed stone at Castledor in Cornwall.⁴ If Uoret is a name it is probably the same as PKL Wrad and Old Breton Uuoret.⁵ Forcus (pron. Forggus) on the other hand is Irish, from *Worgustus 'super-choice'; the name is not the same as Fergus ('choice man'), but is found elsewhere.⁶ The mixture of Irish and Pictish names suits a late ninth-century date quite well.

The ninth-century Bressay inscription has certain interesting implications which ought to be looked at in detail. During the last century Bishop Graves⁷ offered a translation without giving a definitive reading:

'the Cross of Naddodd's daughter here
Benres the son of Druid here'.

1. See Stokes, *TPS*. 1888-90 p. 414 for references.
2. Though this would be against Jackson's rule (vii), *PP*. 164.
3. E. g. *Book of Deer Notes*, ed. Jackson, p. 4 and refs.; PKL, again with a doublet Drust or Drest; *ATig.* 635; 686; 713 etc.
4. *CIIC*. 487; *TYP*. 329 sqq., 445.
5. *PP*. 140.
6. E. g. *Adomnan, Vita S. Columbae* i. 7: "Forcus filius mac-Erce".
7. *PRIA*. vi. 248.

There are several objections to this translation (if ANN is the correct reading it means 'there', not 'here'; the last phrase MEQDDRRROANN, is all one word; and the correct reading appears to be BENNISES), but it seems that in finding links with the Icelandic Landnámabók, Bishop Graves may have been starting in the right direction. For there is a family mentioned at several points whose genealogy is as follows:¹



This is apparently a Faeroese family which may have had connexions in Orkney (at any rate friendships). This compares closely with some of the words on the Bressay stone, namely BENNISES and NAHHTVVDDADDS, and the fact that DATTRR appears to be a Norse loan-word³, in spite of O'Rahilly's apparent scepticism⁴. The two names look as if they

1. For the relevant points see Landnámabók (Íslenzk Fornrit, vol. I), pp. 34-37 (Naddoddr was one of the 'discoverers' of Iceland and settled in the Faeroes); 107 ('Hildigunnr was daughter of Beinir son of Már, son of Naddoddr of the Faeroes'); 382 (Thorbjörn jarlakappi from the Orkneys came to settle in Iceland, and bought land from Már son of Naddoddr; also the genealogy Beinir son of Már, son of Naddoddr and Jórunn). Cf. also Genealogical Table XXXIII a. This seems so well attested that we may probably dismiss the version given in Njáls saga (chapter XLVII), which has Thorgerdr daughter of Már, son of Brøndólfr son of Naddadr, as having made the two brothers Már and Brøndólfr into father and son.
2. Mr. Hermann Pálsson tells me that the name Naddoddr is totally unique and unexplained: one possibility is that it is a compound, Nadd-Oddr ('point-Oddr'), similar to Örvar-Oddr of the mythical saga named after him. One might suggest that it was a Norse spelling of a Pictish name, if Naddoddr did not seem to have come originally from Eastern Scandinavia.
3. PP. 142.
4. EIHM 374 n. 2.

are Norse genitives singular in form, though this would not be a conclusive fact on its own. ANNA (the most probable reading) is not attested as a Norse name until the later middle ages; but Unnr is, of course, and its most famous bearer (Unnr the deep-minded) certainly came from Scotland. Equally there is no reason why ANNA should not have been a Pictish name. It should be noted, however, as Southesk was the first to do,¹ that the formula of this interpretation is neither Runic nor oghamic: it would be most unusual if the patronymic came before the actual name. However, very little is known about Pictish nomenclature and the formula may be Pictish.

With these conclusions may be compared an article by Hermann Pálsson in Íslenzk Tunga (Lingua Islandica) iii. 66-69. Mr. Pálsson investigates the origins of a family called the Erplings ('descendants of Erpr'), who were an early settlement family in Iceland. Erpr is not at all a common Norse name,² and he suggests that it may be derived from the Pictish name Erp, as occurs frequently in PKL for example. He finds this supported to some extent by the fact that both of the man's parents had Irish names, given in Landnamabok as Meldún (Maeldúin) and Myrgjöl (Muirgeal); Myrgjal's father is named Glíómal 'king of Ireland' - not a known Irish name, but one which Mr. Pálsson proposes to equate with Cathmal³; and a king of this name died in AU. 853 at the hands of the Vikings. Since Erpr himself is quoted in Landnámabók as being a freedman of Audr (Unnr) the Deepminded, it is possible that he fell into Viking hands at around this time.

1. PSAS. xviii. 199.

2. I have found only two other instances of it: in the heroic lays of the Elder Edda (CPB. i. 51, 56; ii. 2, 6), where it is of Germanic origin as it also occurs in Jordanes, and as father-in-law of Bragi the skald at Landnámabók p. 82.

3. This is on the grounds of OIr. gléo 'battle' (ZCP. xx. 364 sqq.) being equated with cath.

All this may seem somewhat hypothetical, but what is certain is that Erpr bore a name very like the Pictish one, had parents of Irish families and came from Scotland (and Irish names continued in his family: he had a son Dufnall - whose great-grandson, incidentally, was called Beinir). All this may be taken as evidence of the intercourse which existed between Scotland and the Norse world even in early Viking times.

Other names are not recognisable in the Pictish inscriptions, but if the tentative interpretations are correct, then in such an inscription as St. Ninian's Isle (BESMEQQNANAMMOVVEZ) it is likely that BES and NANAMMOVEZ (or the first part of it) are names. This can be applied to other inscriptions, and obviously should be to the St. Ninian's Isle sword-chape (resad fili spusscio), but nothing very recognisable emerges. However, the names are no more peculiar than some of those in PKL, and even have a similar look to them in a few cases (e.g. Usconbutts, Morbet and many others). There is one that seems to occur on Lunnasting and Cunningsburgh III (EETECUHEETS, EETEC...) and possibly on Cunningsburgh II (...EETECNMORS), if this is not another occurrence of a Neht-name. More than that it does not seem possible to say.

This is the total of evidence that the Pictish stones provide for the language of the Picts, and it can easily be seen that it is hard to say anything definite. The best summary of the evidence is certainly Jackson, PP. chapter VI, especially 138-142.¹ It may be said here that all earlier theories (both those of Rhys, and those of Southesk, Nicholson, Diack and Macalister) were to a greater or lesser

1. See also Wainwright, Ogam xi. 269 and separately, 'the Inchyra Ogham' for further useful discussion.

extent based on preconceived notions, and twisted the evidence to fit the ideas. For the most part the inscriptions are too unclear for anything to be certain, and when they are clear, there is no general pattern visible: one has to confess that the language is not a known one. Occasional names are recognisable, and one stone appears to be in a mixture of Norse and something else. This shows that one is on the right lines in following a conventional Ogham transliteration, and that the inscriptions were meaningful (at least in part), but as far as language goes the evidence is directly against other sources, which favour a Celtic language, possibly with Gaulish or at any rate p-celtic affinities (Jackson, *op. cit.*). There are two ways of reconciling the evidence. First, it may be pointed out that about half the inscriptions come from the Northern Isles, where there is virtually no place-name evidence for a p-celtic language (mainly because Norse names have entirely superseded whatever was there before the Vikings came); so that there may have been two languages current in historical Pictland, one mainly in the North and the other in the South. The other (complementary) possibility is that a pre-Celtic language was kept in Pictland for ritual or commemorative purposes even after a Celtic language was the common spoken medium.¹ This would explain the clash of evidence, though it does not help us in understanding what the inscriptions actually say.

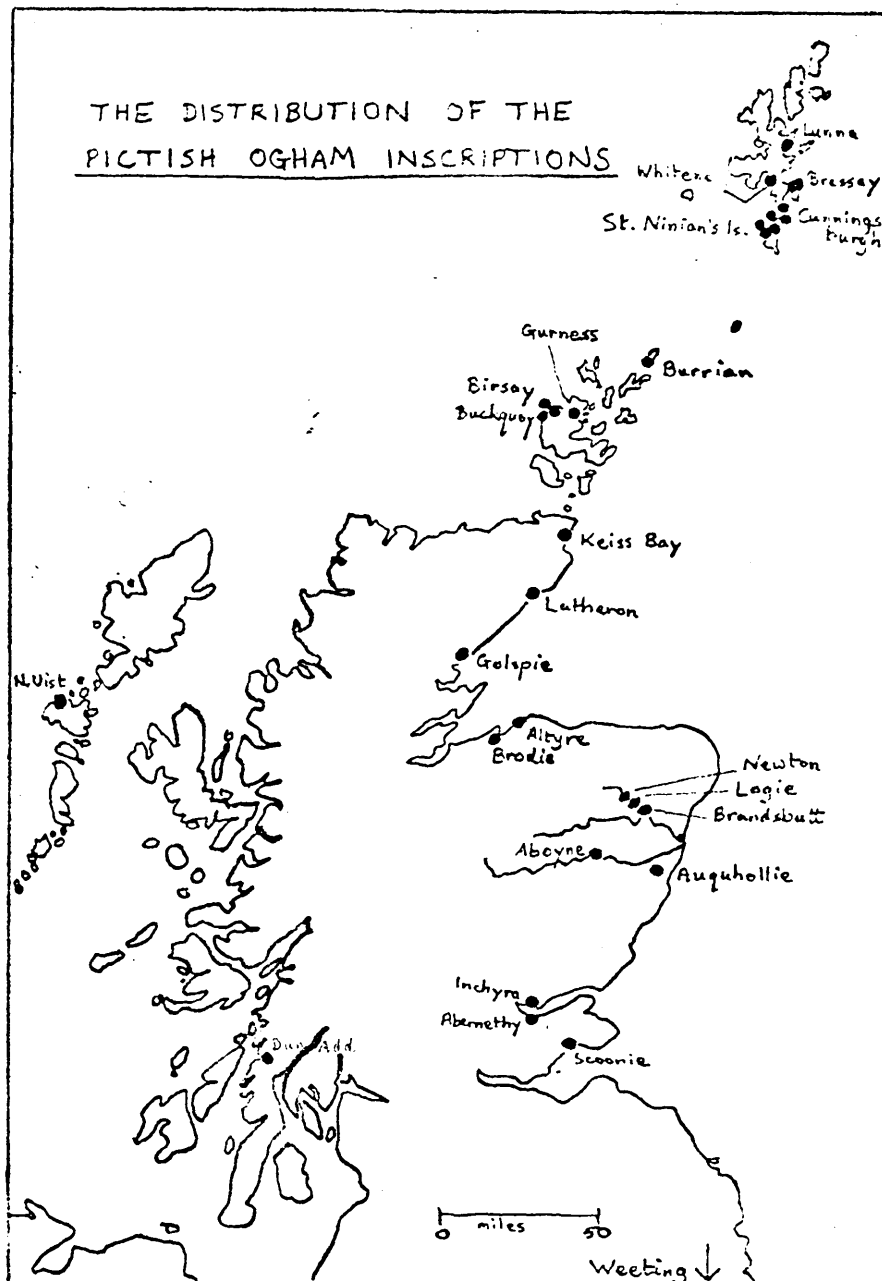
1. This was suggested by Professor Jackson, PP. 154, who has since pointed out to me that parallels exist in Samothrace and Babylonia for the retention of an otherwise lost language for ritual purposes. A further parallel might be drawn with our own practice of erecting tombstones in Latin.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the theory of Basque affinities, first proposed by Rhys, has recently been revived by two scholars. A Frenchman, Henri Guiter, has published two papers: "La Langue des Pictes" in *Boletin de la Real Sociedad Vascongada de los Amigos del País*, xxiv (San Sebastián, 1968), 281-322; and "La pensée picte" in *Bulletin de l' association Guillaume Budé*, xxix (Paris, 1970), 259-271.¹ The first of these articles has not been available to me (there does not appear to be a complete run of this periodical in the country), but if one is to judge by the information supplied in the second, this may not be a great loss. It will probably suffice to quote M. Guiter's translation of the Brodie stone: "Il s' en va mélancolique: ainsi, qu' il ait besoin de pleurs. Sur sa couche le poids de la terre qu' il supporte l' a brulé . . . Il est endormi sous la neige . . . Pour lui un torrent de plaintes."

The other scholar, more cautious, is Douglas Gifford, of the Department of Spanish, St. Andrew's University. In a radio talk in 1969 he rightly criticised Guiter for twisting the evidence, but suggested that the question might be worth a further look. He adduced various words in mediaeval Basque, such as etxeko 'of the house', lurre 'earth' and maku 'crescent', which may be present in the Pictish inscriptions. It may be added that, given a pre-Celtic language in Eastern Scotland, there is no reason why it should not be connected with Basque, although it would be surprising if the forms on the Pictish stones were identical with those current in Basque during the Middle Ages, since the languages must by then have been separated for a millennium or so. Perhaps the time is now right for a Basque scholar to take a careful and unbiased look at the

1. I am indebted to Anders Ahlqvist, Esq. for this reference.

Pictish oghams, preferably with the help of an oghamist, to see whether anything more may come of this.



After Wainwright, with the addition of Birsay no. II,
Buckquoy and Weeting, and the removal of Cunningsburgh no. IV.

Part II: A List of the Pictish Ogham Inscriptions.

ABERNETHY (Perthshire)

ECMS. 323: IMN or QMI

PSAS. xxvi. 268 (Rhys 2): IMN or QMI

xxxii. 345 (Rhys iii): the same.

Nicholson B

Diack XIV.

Macalister 16: IMN

Rev. D. Butler, 'Ancient Church and Parish of Abernethy', photograph
facing p. 230.

Proc. Cambridge Ant. Soc. vii (1892). 88.

National Museum no. IB. 198.

This stone is technically class III (though the fragment is such that it could have come from a class II stone). It comes from 'a house in the Station Road' (Butler). Apart from the ogham the only other carving is the leg of a horse in relief.

The letters are very clear and there is no doubt about the reading, though it could be in either direction.¹ But there are several interesting stylistic points, even though the fragment is too small to be of any linguistic value. First, the letters are very unevenly spaced, which is especially surprising as in other respects (consonant slope, stroke size), the carving is fairly careful. Second is the presence of bind-oghams, which are practically unknown in Irish oghams, though they are fairly common in Pictish inscriptions and occur in the BB tract.² Thirdly, and most confusingly, the slope of the five-stroke consonant is such that we are compelled to read the inscription from right to left

1. See below.

2. See pp. 17-18.

(however unlikely this may seem) if it is associated with the fragment of a picture.¹ The only alternative is to postulate that the ogham ran vertically (as illustrated here), which still does not help in orientating the horse. However, the picture is so fragmentary that this should not be an overriding consideration.

(1) In the letter Q the bind-stroke is not quite parallel with the fleasg, as the letter-scores increase slightly in length. The consonant-slope is typical of Pictish oghams, and determines the direction of reading.²

(2) An M, very close to the preceding letter.

(3) After an empty gap there is a clear I, carved with long straight cross-strokes (in ECMS. the bind-stroke is wrongly depicted as continuing beyond the last score: see photograph).

The reading is thus: ... QMI ... (or, if taken improbably in the other direction, IMN).

It seems fairly certain that the other Abernethy ogham³ is a forgery, as Macalister⁴ suggests; however, the similarity to the Biera tablets⁵ may be pointed out.

ABOYNE

ECMS. 205: MAQQOITALLJORH NAAHHTFROBBACCAANEVV

PSAS. x. 602 (Skene)

xviii. 186 (Southesk): (same reading).

xxvi. 271 (Rhys 5): MAQQOTALJUORR-NEHHTVROBBACCENNEVV

xxxii. 349 (Rhys vii): (the same).

1. This has been pointed out by Nicholson, Appendix p. 85, and Diack, p. 74.

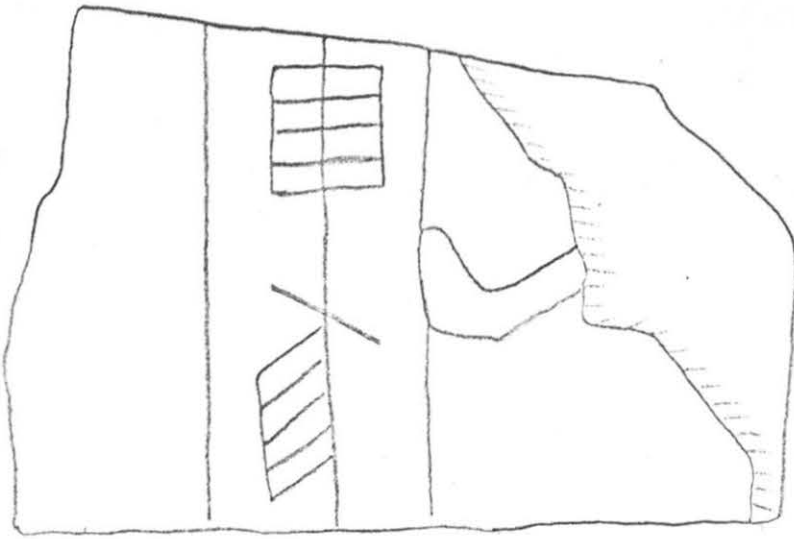
2. See above, pp. 19.

3. PSAS. xxix. 244; ECMS. iii. p. 309.

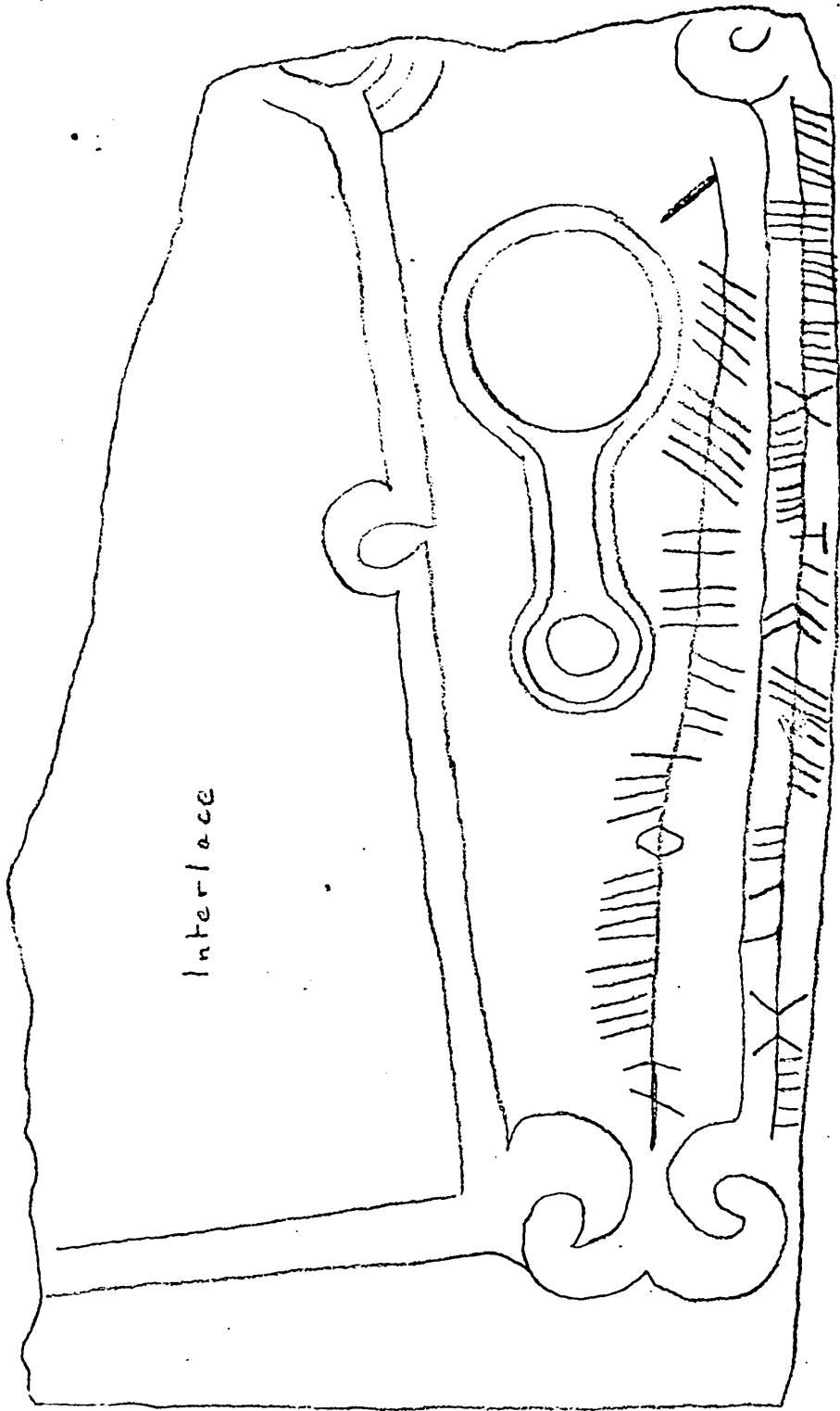
4. p. 215 n. 15.

5. Macalister, 'Irish Epigraphy' ii. 141.

Alfred J. Butler



ABERNETHY (Photograph: National Museum of Antiquities).



Interlace

Absyne

Brash p. 364: MAQQOITALLUORRH NEAHHTFR OBBAT CEANNEFF

Ferguson p. 139: (1) the same; NEAHT^{T.F.}AROBBSDOC EANNEFF
HGL TC

Nicholson E

Diack IX.

Macalister 14: as Rhys.

The stone is in Aboyne Castle grounds, very close to the southern west lodge (Grid Reference NJ/522993): it has thus been moved since Allen's time; originally it was in Formaston churchyard, 2m. East of Aboyne. The first point that should be made is the strange state of the stone; though only a fragment, it has all the requisite elements: interlace cross, Pictish symbol and apparently complete ogham inscription (for both lines fit neatly onto the stone as it now is). Rhys' hypothesis¹, then, that the ogham may be later than the breakage of the stone, must be taken as virtually certain: the different techniques of the carving on the inscription and the cross encourage this view. The mirror probably belongs with the cross rather than with the inscription (the inner line bends to go round the symbol).

The outer edge of the stone as it survives is nowhere near parallel to the edge of the cross. Macalister's reconstruction², though unconvincing and inaccurate in detail, is the only shape that will fit what we have. An approximate parallel is seen in another cross formerly at Aboyne³, though in this instance there is no beading, and the stone is generally more roughly carved.

The lettering is very clear, and the problems in interpreting the inscription arise mainly from the use of forfeda and other unusual

1. PSAS. xxvi. 271.

2. pl. V, p. 213.

3. ECMS. 210: it has been moved back to Loch Kinnard since ECMS. was published.

forms. There are two stem-lines; one on the face, which bends to avoid the mirror-symbol, and one on the beading, as at e.g. Brodie (though the carving technique is different). The scores are gashes with a V-shaped cross-section; similar to those on Birsay, and furthest removed from the rounded, smoothed lines of such inscriptions as Brandsbutt. The letters are of fairly even size, spacing and slope, though more closely-packed at the top of the right-hand line, suggesting that the carver was trying to fit it all in. This may indicate that the left-hand line comes first, unless the carver was simply trying to reach the end of a word.

My reading agrees closely with that of Rhys:

NEHHTVROBBACCENNEVV

MAQQOTALLUORRH

but several points require comment. Where the vowels are written in full, all are carved in the characteristic Pictish way, with cross-strokes at right-angles instead of the Irish notches.¹ The O in the right-hand line is carved with angled strokes, which is again very common in the Pictish inscriptions, though by no means universal.² The fifth letter of the left-hand line is reasonably taken by all authorities as being the O-forfid, which occurs elsewhere in Pictish and Irish inscriptions. The groove here is much shallower away from the fleasg than at the points where it crosses. Two of the three Es are carved by means of forfeda: in both, the two halves are not quite touching (hence Allen's AA). The variable ways of depicting the same letter seem to have been quite acceptable within one inscription; it probably depended mainly on the whim of the sculptor (perhaps he was

1. See above, pp. 19-20.

2. p. 20.

showing off his erudition?), rather than indicating any difference in pronunciation, though this is not impossible. It does seem strange that it was just as things were becoming cramped that he used the full form. The A in the right-hand line also has a Pictish form: with a serif as here it is found in a good many of the Pictish inscriptions. The idea was probably to clarify: a single straight stroke may have been felt to be a little ambiguous, and the serif would have been a convention to make things more exact. However, this does not explain why it was used in some and not other letters of an inscription.

The only consonant requiring comment is the possible H at the end of the left-hand line: it is considerably deeper and longer than any of the other scores, and seems rather incongruous: it might conceivably be a 'continuation mark' or else a finishing-mark, though there is no parallel for this known to me. At VR in the other line the stone is a little worn, but this reading is almost certain.

Several interesting linguistic features occur in the inscription; for one thing, it is one of several which appear to contain the Irish MAQQ(-) in some form (this means nothing about the Pictish language¹); here the following letter appears to belong as well, to make a compound word (o as composition vowel), though by the probable date of this inscription (eighth or ninth century) the form maggo- would have been decidedly archaic.

Others have already commented on the similarity of TALLUORR(H) to a name in PKL, occurring in a variety of forms such as Talorc (with variants) and Talorgan (with variants). If the names are the same, it is hard to see how the stop has come to be spelt as a

1. Jackson, PBA. xxxvii. 94; PP. 141.

spirant in the inscription. Stokes¹ has a compound Dubtholarg, which presumably contains the same name; Rhys² compares CIIC. 200 (Coolmagort 4), MAQITTALL, but this is probably merely a superficial similarity.

In the same way the first syllable of the corner line, NEHHT, brings immediately to mind the name Nechtan; what the relation of the two can be is not clear, for the -ǎn ending is probably not the same as in Talorgan (probably diminutive -ǎn from *-agnos; perhaps Neht as a name was formed from Nechtan by analogy with other pairs.

Finally, there seems no real reason to follow previous authorities in taking the inner line first (except for the cramped end of the outer line, which is not conclusive as it may be finishing a word or name); if one takes the corner line first instead, the reading

NEHHTVROBBACCENEVV MAQQOTALLUORRH

has the marginal advantage of appearing similar to the formulae in the Irish inscriptions.

ALTYRE (Morayshire)

SSS. i. pl. 114.

ECMS. iii. p. 136.

PSAS. xc. 246 (Calder, Jackson):

AMMAQQA^{AH}_D ALLMVBVMAAHHRRASSUDDS³

This tall class III cross-slab stands in a field near Altyre House, just to the east of one of the drives (Grid Reference NJ/039553). The stone has had a chequered history, and was taken to its present position from the Laich in about 1820. It seems to have come to the Laich from

1. TPS. 1888-90 p. 414.

2. PSAS. xxvi. 313.

3. The A just before double S was omitted by a misprint in the reading given, though it is referred to 13 lines earlier.

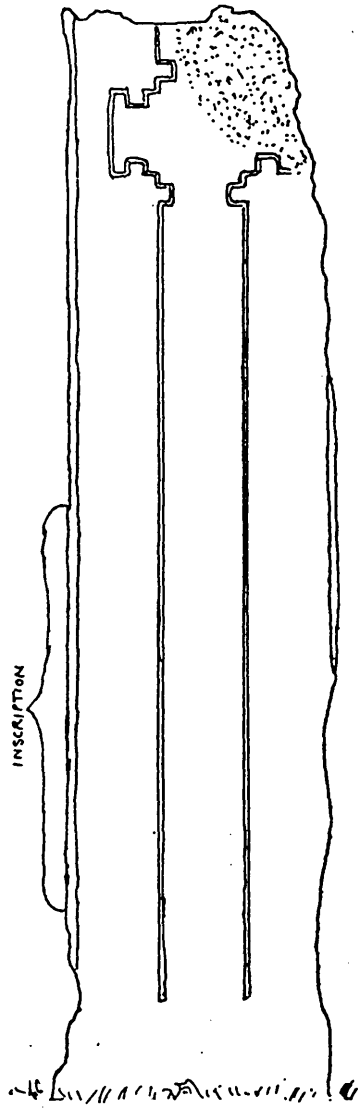


Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.

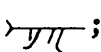
Altäre : from PSAS. xc.

Roseisle.

The position of the inscription is shown in the illustration¹; it appears to be complete, but the stone has weathered in such a way that there is a 'stem-line' visible right up both sides of the stone, though no letters are apparent outside the inscription as given. The guide-lines mentioned by Jackson may be further manifestations of this tendency of the stone to weather in vertical lines, since the letters by no means always keep to them, and they are somewhat irregular.

It is not necessary to give an exact account here, but the following comments could be made on the published reading: Professor Jackson's third A is followed by a weathered patch that could have held two more strokes on the H-side. Since the A itself is blurred on the B-side this letter may have been a T. The next two strokes are also obscure: they almost seem to be part of an E-forfid, though not quite. It might possibly be two more H-scores (with the former crossing the line by mistake), which might then be to be read in conjunction with the preceding (dubious) three, to give a third Q. This is not very satisfactory, but nor is any other explanation: an A at a slope would be without parallel.

Of the two Ls, the second slopes more sharply than the first.

Professor Jackson's first V seems to be something like ; the sloping part of the first stroke is very faint, and BL seems a possibility. The next two letters, BV, are also very obscure: the former could be of more than one stroke, and the latter either two or three. The only certainty is that there is nothing on the H-side at this point (though there is a dot, due to weathering, opposite the B, as there is also just after the U). The following M is obscure on the

1. From PSAS. xc. 248.



H-side: it might be a B only, or possibly an angled A.

The next A is, as Professor Jackson suggests, probably not a letter at all (double vowels are almost unknown in the Pictish inscriptions).

The second of the two Rs seems rather careless: the strokes are not all parallel. In the first S, the apparent prolongation opposite the third stroke is fairly certainly due to weathering. The U is of an interesting form, with wavy strokes: cf. Bressay I, and Latheron A. Thus the reading may be altered to:

A	V	B	L	M
AMMAQQ	TALL	BL	L	V
			BA	HRRASSUDDS
	Q	V	A	

which may seem unnecessarily complicated, but parts of the inscription are decidedly weathered and thus obscure.

It should be pointed out that this is quite a full inscription: there is probably a good deal of Pictish grammar if one could but get at it. AM before MAQ, if not a name, might be a preposition (meaning 'for?'); if TALL- is the reading it might be compared with TALL- in Aboyne.

AUQHOLLIE (Kincardineshire)

ECMS. 218, 219: VUONON(I)TEDOV

PSAS. xx. 37 (Southesk)

xxvi. 270 (Rhys 4): V^I_{UO}NONIT_.EDOV

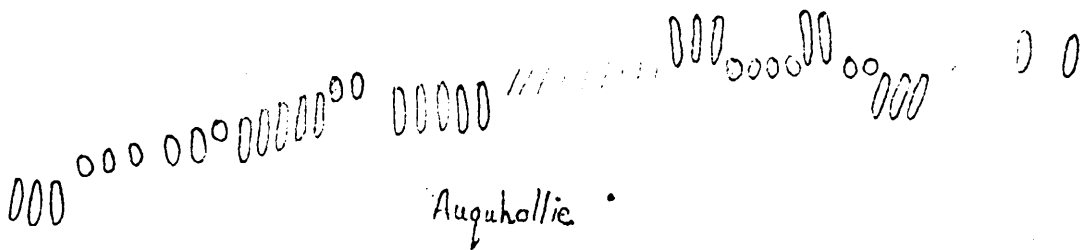
xxxii. 348 (Rhys vi): VAMUNONIT_BEDOV

lix. 265 (Diack)

Nicholson D

Diack III

Macalister no. 1: VUENON ITEDOVOR



This rough pillar-stone is on a field-boundary a short way north-west of Nether Auguhollie farmhouse (Grid Reference: NO/823908). Both Diack and Macalister claim to have found symbols on this stone (in different places), but nothing definite or even suggestive is visible to me.

Macalister has rightly pointed out¹ that this is the only fully 'Irish' inscription in Pictland (the Newton stone is the only other of vaguely Irish type, and it has various Pictish peculiarities): the vowels are carved as nicks, not as long scores; it runs up the corner of a rough pillar, and the stem-line is not shown; there are no forfeda, and even the consonants are on a scale and of a type like Irish ones.

Diack (and also Rhys very tentatively) thought he saw an **A** at the beginning, but I could not see it, nor did Romilly Allen. It may be added here that the corner is so rough that one can often see what vowel-nicks one wishes, and in several cases the only reading of a vowel is by measuring the space available, rather than by counting actual marks.

1. CIIC. 1. p. x

- (1) The first letter is clearly a V, at a slope.
- (2) This vowel seems to be a U, followed by a short gap.
- (3) This is probably another U, rather than Allen's O or Macalister's E. Its first two strokes are longer than other vowel-strokes in this inscription, but hardly enough to justify making them consonants (with Southesk, and Rhys tentatively).
- (4) A clear N.
- (5) There is one fairly certain vowel-notch in this space; to read any more would make a rather cramped group, though it would not be impossible.
- (6) Another N, again quite clear.
- (7) It is impossible to tell exactly how many vowel-nicks there have been in this space (Macalister's photograph gives an impression of greater clarity than there is); five seems likely, but the space could have taken more than this; perhaps a word-gap occurred, as Macalister thinks.
- (8) T is clear.
- (9) Four faint notches, giving E.
- (10)-(12) DOV are clear, and most authorities give this.
- (13) There is a vowel of at least two notches, with a possible third: O or U.
- (14), (15) Two separate B-strokes, with space for one stroke between them, but no trace of anything; they preclude the possibility of Macalister's R (his photograph again seems to be misleading).

Thus: VUUN^A_ON (I)TEDOV^O_UB.B

BIRSAV (Orkney)

Two inscriptions were found in the course of excavations here before the

last war. They are at present in Argyle House, Edinburgh, awaiting publication of the finds.¹ One had been reused in the building of Thorfinn's palace in the eleventh century; the other was picked up on the beach. Both inscriptions have a hurried, careless air; such features as wavering stem-lines, some strokes carved double (as if the inscriber felt that his first slash had not been clear, and quickly did another in roughly the same place to clarify it), and unevenness of the spacing, slope and size of strokes, all combine to give this impression. One might go so far as to say that the milieu to which they belong is much more that of the casual graffiti of the Runic world, than that of the carefully-planned memorials known from the Irish oghams or such a stone as Brandsbutt.²

I. The wall stone: the inscription takes up $14\frac{1}{2}$ " on a fleasg $19\frac{1}{2}$ " long; it is on the only really flat surface of a roughly cuboid block, approximately $24\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12" x $4\frac{1}{2}$ ". The block has broken at some time and been cemented together. The fact that the fleasg is considerably longer than required again indicates a lack of planning.

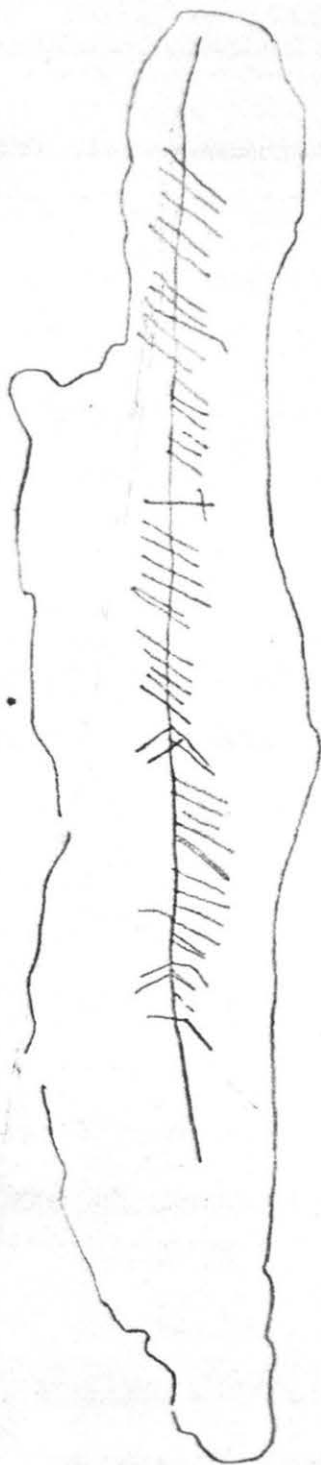
The direction of reading is indicated by several angled vowels.

- (1) The first stroke is quite long, and at right-angles to the fleasg on the H-side, but at the slope of an M on the B-side. It could be either a feather-mark or an M, for which there would be Irish parallels.³ A very faint B-stroke, at a slope,

1. Their existence is mentioned by Cruden, 4th Viking Congress, p. 25; Radford, Ministry of Works guide to Birsay, p. 5.

2. The 'casual' type of inscription may still, of course, be a memorial: for this type of monument in Orkney, see e.g. Bruce Dickins, 'The Runic Inscriptions from Maeshowe', FOAS. viii (1929-30). 27-30.

3. Cf. p. 24.



Birsay, I.



BIRSAY, No. I (Photograph: Department of the Environment)

follows it (not visible in the photograph of a rubbing).

It seems artificial, yet cannot be meant as a letter-stroke.

Perhaps it is a false start or something similar.

- (2) An O, quite clear. It is of the typical Pictish angled type, but the B-side of the second stroke is double and rather bent.
- (3), (4) Two Ns are slightly less clear. In the first one, the first stroke is double (wide in the photograph); the second continues across the line, though this looks accidental and the spacing suggests a single letter for the whole group. In the second, the first stroke is more sharply angled than the surrounding ones — presumably to separate the letter from the preceding one; the third score does not quite reach the fleasg, but is still definite.
- (5) An O, carelessly carved. It is of the angled type, but the first stroke, instead of making a point on the fleasg, makes a small cross just to the B-side of it; however, the letter is not in doubt (though the H-side is faint in the photograph, and there is the appearance of a long M-group stroke).
- (6), (7) Two Rs, spaced apart from one another; in the second, the initial stroke is double.
- (8) This letter is presumably an A, though it is not paralleled anywhere. It is reminiscent of the A with serif, as at Aboyne and elsewhere; but the vowel-score protrudes beyond the serif. This may be by intention, or due to carelessness.
- (9) Here there appear to be six B-group scores; but the third is faint and does not quite reach the fleasg. It may be a mistake for N (cf. Golspie, which also has a group of six equally-spaced strokes); or it may be to be read LV, ignoring

the third stroke altogether (its faintness could be carver's realising that he had started the V too close to the L, and stopping before it was complete). A third, less satisfactory, way would be to read VV: there is a very slightly greater gap between the third and fourth strokes to support this. The apparent elongation of the fourth and fifth scores in the rubbing is an illusion: there is nothing to correspond to this on the stone.

(10), (11) Two clear Rs end the inscription. The middle score of the former has bent tips.

After a gap, near the end of the stem-line, there is a very indefinite H-stroke, continuing a short way across the fleasg. It seems most improbable that this is part of anything, especially as nothing seems to be lost before it. This also applies to two strokes, one either side of a cemented crack in the same face: they appear to be of the same technique as the inscription, but cannot be fitted into any rational scheme, as far as I can see.

The probable reading is therefore:

(M)ONNORRA^{LV}_NRR

II. The stone from the shore. The inscription occupies a mere $3\frac{1}{4}$ " on a flat edge of a very irregularly-shaped slab, $14\frac{1}{2}$ " x $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x 2". It is so weathered that one cannot tell how much more of the inscription was originally present. The photograph is fairly accurate, except that it fails to show patches of weathering.

(1) A single, sloping stroke on the B-side (the small mark after it is probably due to weathering). The surface is worn away on the other side, so it could have been a feather-mark or



BIRSAY, No. II (Photograph:
Department of the Environment)

angled A (there would not quite be room for an M). This and the following letter show the direction in which to read the inscription.

- (2) Five sloping H-strokes: Q. The first is not so much shorter than the others as appears in the photograph.
- (3) Five fairly straight cross-strokes: the third, however, is wavy, like the Altyre U.¹ The spacing strongly suggests one letter for the whole group, therefore presumably I. The dot that follows could be one of a pair, as at Bressay: there is a mark opposite it which could be just weathering.
- (4) A long cross-stroke, bent on the B-side, and carved with several strokes. This could be either A or M.
- (5) One end of an A-, B-, or M-stroke, which could have crossed over (the other side is worn away here), and could have been part of a longer letter.

The reading is therefore:

(B)QI(:)A^B_A

Linguistically, it could be noted for no. I that there is a Norse word Norræn 'Norse, Norwegian'; although the possibility of Norse forms in the Pictish inscriptions, especially in the Northern Isles, should not be totally discounted, it is unlikely here, because (1) the adjective does not end in -r; (2) if the O at the start of the inscription (assuming the M to be a feather-mark) were Norse ó 'from', one would expect a dative form anyway.

In no. II, the ending (A)QI could be part of Old Irish MAQI, though if it were, it would be the only example of this form in the

1. See p. 23.

Pictish inscriptions. In any case, the **A** is open to doubt.

BRANDBUTT (Aberdeenshire)

ECMS. 551: IRATADDOARENS...

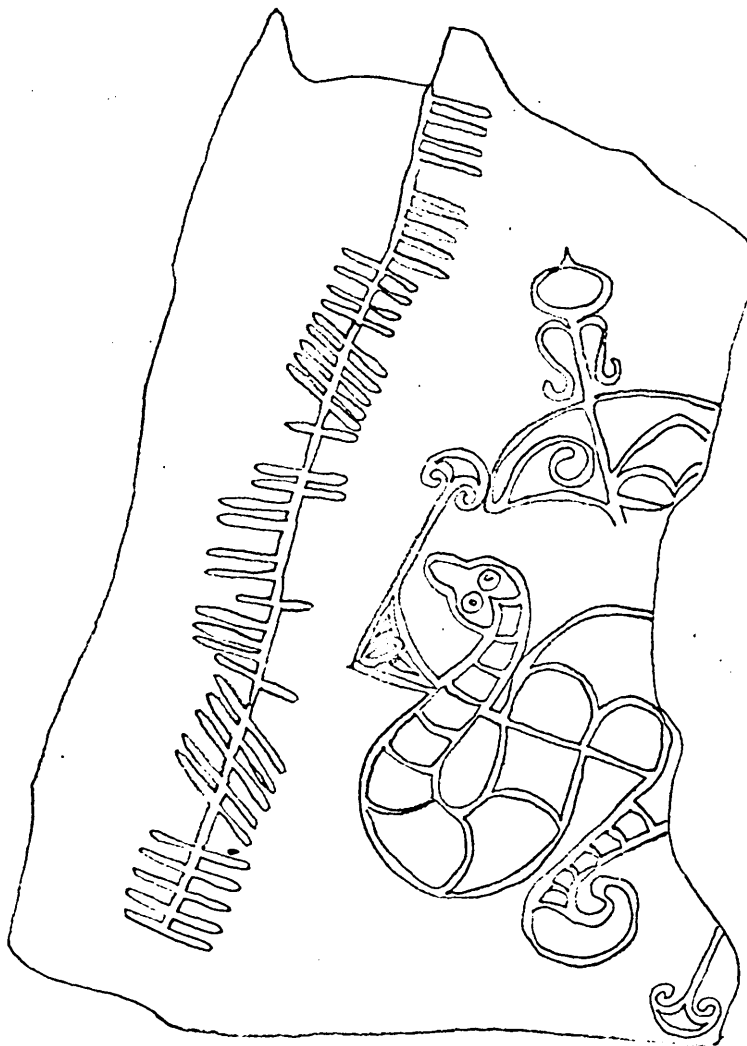
PSAS. xxxv. 230 (Coles)

lxxxviii pl. 8 (ii) (Gordon)

Diack VI: same reading.

Macalister 5: same reading.

The remains of this fine boulder are now in a small Ministry of Works enclosure (Grid Reference: NJ/758225) just west of Brandsbutt farm,



Brandsbutt, after Macalister.

north of Inverurie. It is one of the clearest of the inscriptions, being in Diack's words 'as legible as the day it was cut'. When complete the class I monument must have been very impressive, as it is a large boulder well used: the carefully smoothed front and expert design give an impression of lateness when compared with such a monument as, for example, the Craw Stane at Rhynie. This may be partly due to a difference in the type of rock, however, and such speculation must really wait until a full study of the Symbol Stones.

Typologically the ogham might be early in the Pictish series¹: there are no forfeda or angled vowels (though their absence does not prove anything, of course). But what makes this monument still recognisably Pictish (apart from its incomprehensibility) is the vowels, done with long straight cross-strokes, and the presence of a stem-line. The reading is quite certain; it is also certain that the inscription formerly continued further: the stem-line can be seen to do so. The word-divisions of Macalister and Diack (at different places) are not based on spacings in the inscription.

BRESSAY (Shetland)

SSS. i. 30, pl. 94, 95.

ECMS. 4: CRROSCC : NAHHTVVDDAÐDS : DATTRR : ANN

BE^{NN}_{RR}ISEF : MEQQDDRRROANN

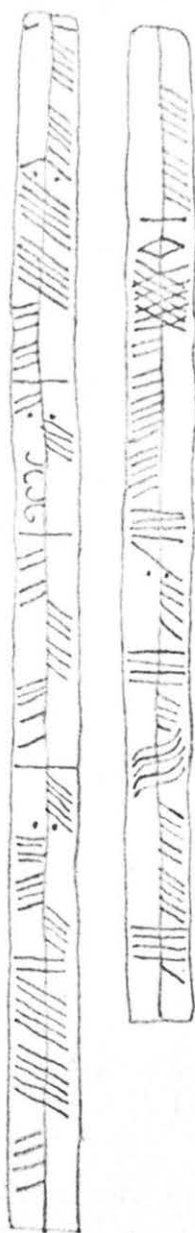
PSAS. v. 239 and pl. 12.

xii. 20 (Goudie)

xviii. 195 (Southesk): BERNISEST̂ : MEQQDDRRŌLANN

CRROESĈC : NAHHTFFDDADDS : DATTRR . ANNB . . .

1. Though it is late compared with Irish oghams: Henderson, 'Picts' 116-117, and indeed is very similar to CIIC. 27, 54, 1086; all late inscriptions.



Bressay: after ECMS.



BRESSAY (Photograph:
National Museum of Antiquities)

xxvi. 297 (Rhys 16): as ECMS.

xxvii. 411 (Rhys): BENNISES . . . etc.

xxxii. 377 (Rhys xix): much the same.

Brash p. 354.

Ferguson p. 134.

Nicholson L

PRIA. vi. 248 (Graves, also in Gentlemen's Magazine, July 1885, pp. 80-81.)

Diack XIII: CRROSCC NAHHTVVDDACS DATTRR ANNA

BERRISEST MEQQDDROANN

Macalister 8: CRROSCC : NAHHTVVDDADDS : DATTRR : ANN

BENNIS : ES : MEQQDDROANN

National Museum, Catalogue No. IB.109.

The decoration on this class III stone is generally considered to be a blend of Scandinavian, Irish and Pictish elements¹, and Norse influence tends to be confirmed in the form and content of the inscription, as specified below. On the whole the lettering is pretty clear, and disputes have tended to range more around the interpretation of the two full inscriptions, one occupying each narrow side of the stone.

On each inscription there occur pairs of dots, situated one on each side of the fleasg; these can only be intended as word-divisions, and as such are paralleled once in Cunningsburgh III, possibly in Birsay II and very commonly in runic inscriptions, as pointed out by Graves² and Allen³; for good examples in runic inscriptions see Kermode.⁴ This is quite useful, as in conjunction

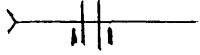
1. Dr. Stevenson dates it in the ninth century: PP. 128.

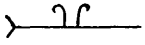
2. PRIA. vi. 248-249.

3. ECMS. iii. p. 9.

4. 'Manx Crosses' pll. xxx; xlii.

with other examples of word-division to be found, it rather confirms the thesis that word-initial consonants are not usually doubled (especially so since there is a marked preponderance of doubled consonants in this inscription). But if one accepts this, it must be strictly followed: one cannot ^{insert}/further word-divisions where it suits one's thesis, as do Macalister and Diack.

The first word of the longer side, CRROSCC, possesses only one unusual form: the O. This is carved not quite as Macalister shows it, but , with the little notch either side pretty well at right-angles to the stem-line. Neither quite touches the fleasg, though the second one almost does. The second stroke of the O is very slightly longer than the first.

The second word starts clearly NAHHTVVDDA, and then follow what are probably two more Ds, but they are modified in a unique fashion, thus: . There is a superficial resemblance to one of the oghams in BB, Calder's no. 54 (ogham insnitheach or 'infilleted'), which is unlikely to be significant. The probable explanation is that this form was simply the carver's whim - perhaps as with the many forms of E in Lunnasting (and elsewhere) he was showing off his knowledge, or merely being decorative. Alternatively some modified D (possibly a voiced spirant) is not impossible, though one has to beware of suggesting Norse interpretations by presupposing a Norse sound. This word closes with an S.

The final word on this side starts with ANN, in which the vowel is of the angled type. There follows a stroke on the B-side, which Diack read as an A, making the whole a woman's name ANNA; this is perfectly possible, since there is what could be the tip of a stroke emerging from a patch of wear on the H-side at this place, thus:

 .

In the inscription on the other edge, all is pretty clear. The first word is BENNISES, although the two Ns are less clear than other letters: the scores of the first one cross the fleasg slightly (though not enough to make an R possible). In the second, the third and fourth scores and part of the fifth are rather faint, though this does not alter the reading. The I has long wavy strokes, with a slight slope, opposite to that of the M-aicme.

The one pair of dots in this line comes after BENNISES: Macalister's illustration and reading (different from one another) are both extremely inaccurate in this respect.

The other word in this line therefore, if the dots are a sure guide, is MEQQDDRROANN. There are two unusual forms here: one is the crossed Rs seen also at Burrian and in manuscripts, here very carefully carved.¹ The other is the O-forfid, as at Aboyne and elsewhere.²

Thus the reading for the whole inscription is fairly certainly:

CRROSCC : NAHHTVVDDA(DD)S : DATTRR : ANN(A)

BENNISES : MEQQDDRROANN.

There are several points of linguistic interest: first, several of the words have a fairly recognisable look, taking into account the fact that one can bear in mind a Norse or Irish context as well as a Pictish one, since the sculpture on the stone is probably of Viking date.³ The detailed interpretation is discussed in the introduction, 34-36; it is sufficient to note here that some of the names seem to tie up with a family cited in the Icelandic Landnámabók. On the form CRROSCC see

1. See p. 24 for details of the manuscript occurrences.

2. See p. 21.

3. So R. Radford, *Antiquity* xvi. 16, though without giving good reasons, and for 'runic' read 'ogham'; Stevenson, loc. cit.

p. 31. With MEQQDDRROANN Rhys¹ compares a Manx ogham, MAQI DROATA (CIIC. 503); the resemblance is slight, however. He later compared a name from a Manx runic inscription²: TRUIAN : SURTUFKALS : RAISTI : KRS PINA:..³ Since, as Principal Rhys pointed out, D was not used in Manx runes, the form is quite close to the Bressay one. Whether there is any connexion, however, remains in doubt, although geographically Shetland and Man were fairly close as far as the Vikings were concerned. The Manx inscription is most unlikely to be as early as the ninth century.

Whether or not the last word of the first line is ANNA, the formula of the inscription is not like anything in Norse or Irish inscriptions⁴: one would expect to have the owner of the cross named first, and then the ancestry. It should be added at this point that ANN, if it is Irish, means 'there', not 'here', and the various interpretations based on that guess are not really valid. On the whole, a woman's name at this point is what one would expect.

BRODIE (Morayshire) ('Dyke', 'Rodney' Stone)

SSS. i. p. 9, pll. xxii, xxiii (without inscriptions).

ECMS. 136, 137.

PSAS. xx. 14 (Southesk)

xxvi. 287 (Rhys 8)

xxxii. 367 (Rhys x)

Ferguson § 217.

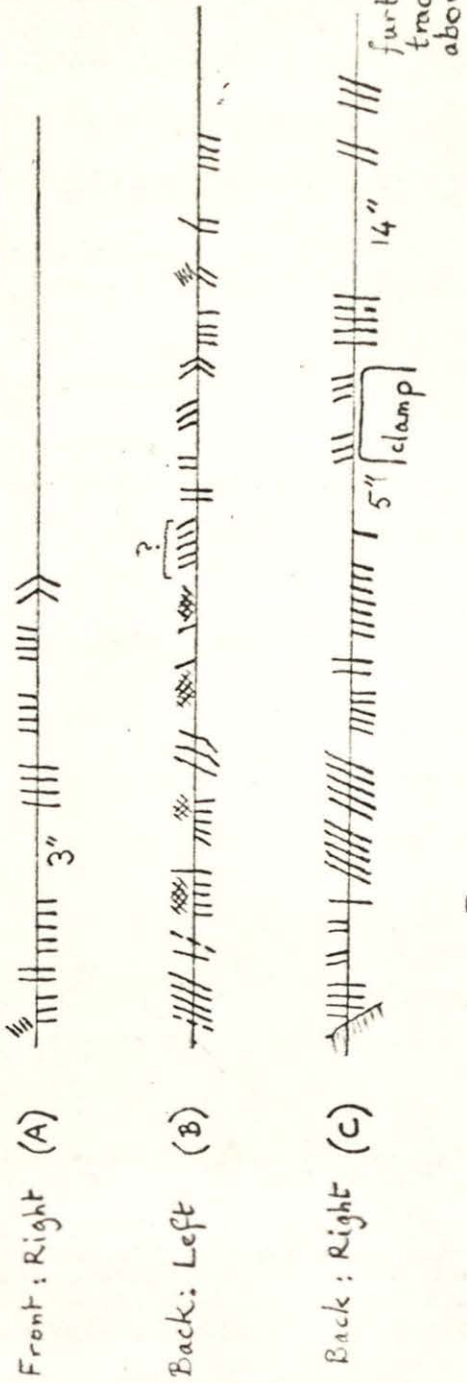
1. PSAS. xxvi. 299.

2. PSAS. xxxii. 379.

3. Kermodé no. 92, p. 169, pl. xlii.

4. Southesk pointed this out first.

BRODIE: BACK



Brodie: diagrams of inscriptions.

BRODIE: FRONT



Nicholson H

Macalister 7.

A fully typical class II stone, this was brought to Brodie Castle from Dyke church, where it was dug up. It had been re-used as a tombstone, and as a result there are two pairs of letters carved on the face, and the inscriptions are worn to the point of being nearly indecipherable. It now stands where the east lodge of the castle used to be, by the edge of the castle grounds (grid reference NH/984577).

Macalister's reading is on the whole too fanciful to be worth considering seriously, but is quoted for the sake of completeness:

Front, right VONSEODTO

Back, left MADE OEUV IPENN GARIOZ

right EDDARRNON ILCIUDOVORR VITEOR

Other authorities¹ agree in reading EDDARRNON, and vary in how many more letters they manage to detect. The readings suggested here are highly tentative, as the stone is so worn; the stem-line must originally have been deeper than the letters, as it remains visible where the letters have gone.

(A) Front, right.

(1) Three right-angle strokes to the right, giving V.

However, the surface is lost opposite the first, so that AL is possible.

(2) Two straight cross-strokes: O.

(3) Five strokes to the right: N.

Then there is an illegible gap of about 3", into which five strokes could be fitted.

(4) Four cross-strokes at right-angles: E

1. Including Diack, p. 67.

(5), (6) Two letters, each of four strokes to the left: CC.

(7) Two angled cross-strokes, giving O. These show by the direction in which they point that the inscription should be read upwards.

The left side of the front of the stone does not look as if it ever bore an inscription, though it is difficult to be certain about this.

(B) Back, left.

(1) Five sloping cross-strokes, giving R. The first of these is faint (hence Macalister's final Z, since he read this one downwards), but fairly certain (Southesk, Rhys, Nicholson all read R).

(2) Two sloping cross-strokes, the second rather faint. The first is nearer to right-angles than any of the surrounding strokes, and may possibly be a vowel (giving AM for these two strokes); however, G is more likely.

(3) Five equally-spaced strokes; the first four are visible only on the B-side, but the final one continues across. Since the H-surface is lost opposite the first four strokes, it can be taken that this letter was probably I: the spacing makes any subdivision unlikely.

(4) Five strokes on the B-side: N. The first two are at a slight angle, and the H-surface is lost opposite the last two, but again the spacing is against a subdivision.

(5) Three sloping cross-strokes: \widehat{NG} . The latter two are bent.¹

(6) A single H-stroke follows a gap where the H-surface is illegible. Since there was apparently never anything on the B-side

1. Cf. Introduction, p. 24.

here, this gap must have contained three H-group strokes if it contained anything. Hence C is very likely, with only the final stroke visible.

(7) After a short distance, another H-group stroke appears, followed by a further illegible patch on the same side. Any letter in the H-aicme is possible.

(8) Five very dubious H-group strokes could be a Q.

(9) A fairly clear O, carved with straight strokes.

(10) Two H-group strokes at right angles: D.

(11) Three slightly sloping strokes to the left: T.

(12) An O, carved with angled strokes, presumably indicating that this inscription should be read upwards, as most authorities have done.

(13) Four right-angle strokes to the right. The last is slightly separated from the others, but probably not enough to justify its separation.

(14) Two sloping strokes to the left. The H-side is illegible at this point, hence either O or L is possible.

(15) A sloping cross-stroke (angled¹) is closely followed by a single B stroke. These ought to make MB, but are so close together that it is tempting to see them as one letter. However, the wear is too severe for further speculation.

(16) Four strokes to the right: S. All of the last seven letters are fairly widely-spaced, and the gaps may often have contained further strokes now lost. However, none of the gaps is so large that it could not be just a space between letters.

(C) Back, right. This inscription is, to start with, clearer than the others, and evidently once continued most of the way up the stone.

1. Cf. the Introduction, p.24 and letter 5 above.

(1) Four straight cross-strokes: E. The B-side of the first is lost owing to the loss of the corner of the stone, but the letter is not in doubt. From the shape of the stone it is unlikely that anything ever preceded this letter.

(2), (3) Two Ds are quite clear, the first sloping slightly more than the second.

(4) A single vowel-stroke: A.

(5), (6) Two Rs, accurately spaced to avoid confusion.

(7) Five B-group strokes, of which the first three are at slightly more of a slope than the last two. However, the spacing is such that the reading N is not in doubt.

(8) Two vowel-strokes: O.

(9), (10) Seven B-group strokes, followed after an interval of wear by a further single one. The gap is such that two more strokes would fit it, making NN extremely probable. The spacing between the fifth and sixth strokes may be slightly greater than between the others, but if so it is very little. Slope is not terribly accurate, some strokes sloping a little more than others; but the differences are not great. A gap of about 5" follows the last stroke; five or more strokes may be lost here.

(11), (12) Opposite the clamp two groups of three H-strokes are visible. These may be TT, but one cannot tell whether they continue across, so UU is a possibility.

(13) This letter probably consists of five straight vowel-strokes, giving I. However, the fourth seems to be incomplete, lacking part of the B-side next to the fleasg, and it does not seem to have been worn away. The letter is hardly in doubt, though.

It is followed by a long gap of 14", in which nothing is legible.

(14) Two M-group strokes would give G if the letter is complete.

(15) After $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (a little wide for a letter-gap, but perhaps not impossible) there seem to be three further strokes of the same type, giving \widehat{NG} if there were never more. There are more traces of letters above this, but nothing legible.

Thus tentative readings for the three inscriptions are:

- (A) $\begin{matrix} V \\ AL \end{matrix} ON... ECCO...$
- (B) $\begin{matrix} G \\ R_{AM} \end{matrix} \widehat{INNG} \widehat{CHQ} \widehat{ODTOS} \begin{matrix} O \\ L \end{matrix} MBS...$
- (C) $EDDARENONN... \begin{matrix} TT \\ UU \end{matrix} I... \begin{matrix} + \\ + \\ G \\ NG \end{matrix} ...$

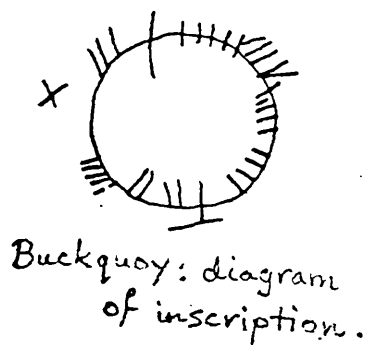
These inscriptions are too fragmentary to be of very much use linguistically, except that the name Eddarrnonn recurs on the Scoonie stone and elsewhere.¹

BUCKQUOY (Birsay, Orkney)

Jackson (forthcoming), PSAS. : (E)TMIQAVSALLC

Q
or (E)_N^SDDACTANIMV

This is a spindle-whorl found by Dr. Anna Ritchie in the course of her excavations, in a pre-Norse layer. There is an ogham inscription in a circle on one side. The reading will be taken clockwise, though it



1. See Introduction, p. 33.

could go in either direction.

- (1) A small cross to the outside of the fleasg could be an E-forfid, but is more likely to be a starting marker.
- (2) Three strokes on the outside: V. If one reads clockwise then these strokes slope in the wrong direction; but in a circular ogham this may not be conclusive (but cf. Logie Elphinstone).
- (3) A single sloping cross-stroke: M
- (4) Five short cross-strokes: I.
- (5) Five strokes on the outside. The first fails to reach the fleasg since it meets the last score of the I; the fourth and fifth meet at a point on the fleasg.
- (6) A single short cross-stroke: A.
- (7) Three scores on the inside of the circle: V. A possible very short score just before them is probably not part of a letter; it may have been intended to clarify the first of the three (as happens on several occasions in the knife-handle inscriptions).
- (8) Four strokes to the inside: S.
- (9) A T-shape lying across the fleasg. This is probably the A with serif, as at Aboyne and elsewhere, though if one reads clockwise the serif is here on a different side from that in all other occurrences, and the serif is in this instance unusually long.
- (10), (11) Two Ls are clear.
- (12) Four strokes to the outside, with a possible fifth just before them: C or Q.

This gives Jackson's first reading; the second one is obtained if one reads anti-clockwise. As Professor Jackson says, the former is more pronounceable, and what slight evidence there is suggests that

circular oghams should be read clockwise (for several analogues to this whorl, and circular oghams in general, see chapter I). On MIQ as a possible mis-spelling of MEIQ or MAIQ, see p. 30.

BURRIAN (Orkney, North Ronaldsay)

ECMS. 20: UORRANN(UU)RRACTPEVVCERROCCS

PSAS. xii. 20 (Goudie)

xviii. 200 (Southesk) NAALLUORARANNU^URRACTM^HEFFCA^AARROCCS

xxvi. 292 (Rhys 11) ... U.OR.R.AN.NUURRACTPEVVCERROCCS

xxxii. 372 (Rhys xiv) ... UORRANNV^U_ERRACTPEVVCERROCCS

Brash p. 362. IALELRARBANN^U_{NG}RRACT^{EA}_PEFFC^{MM}_{AA}ROCCS

Ferguson p. 135. ... RRANN UURRACT THETTS CCRROCCS

Nicholson J

Macalister 12. IOLIRBANN UTRRACT KEVV CERROCCS

Arch. Scot. v pl. 46.

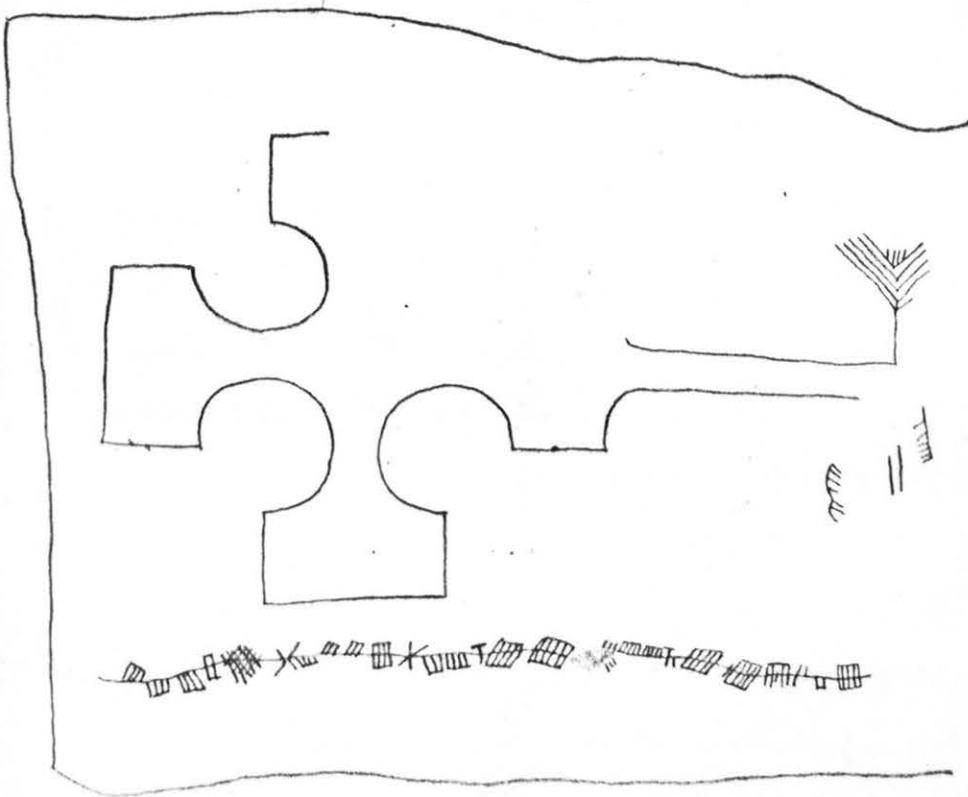
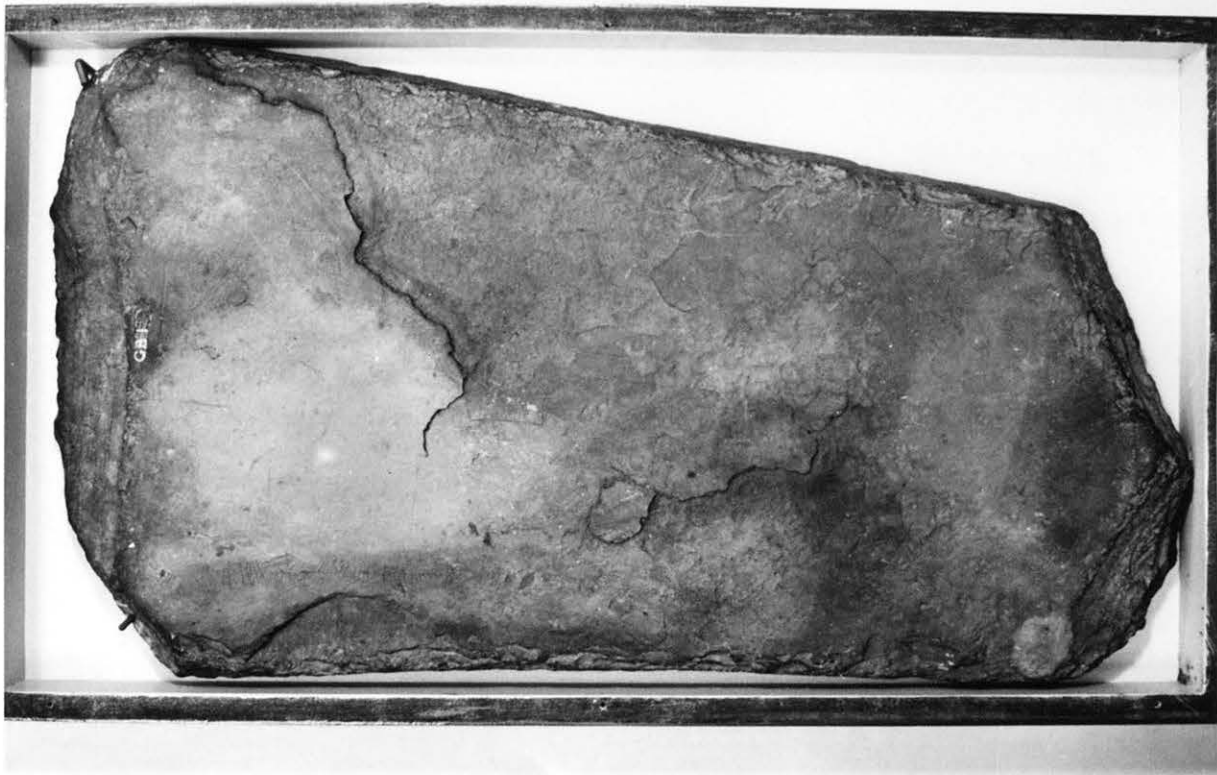
National Museum, Catalogue no. GB. 1.

This is a very lightly-incised flaky stone, with an outline cross and possibly parts of a fish below; thus technically class III (or perhaps II). It was found during a nineteenth-century excavation of the Brough of Burrian; the finds do not seem to be very well stratified, and all that can be said of its date is 'seventh or eighth century'. The inscription is in bind-oghams throughout, with several irregular forms. It starts very indistinct, but the latter part is adequately clear. However, it is not very carefully written - even the stem-line is somewhat irregular - and cannot have taken long to execute (although the cross has a regular, planned appearance).

(1) An I is fairly clear at the start, though parts of it are lost.

There may have been further letters below it.

(2) BURRIAN: A LARGE SLAB OF BURRIAN



Burrian: after Mocalister.

BURRIAN (Photograph: National Museum of Antiquities)

- (2) This letter is probably a bound D, although the second stroke continues across the fleasg. If this is not a mistake, the letter may have been O, though it does not look worn.
- (3) A single stroke to the right, closely followed by another at a slope and continuing across the fleasg. These two should read BM, but they are very cramped to be two letters.
- (4) Five straight cross-strokes: I. The middle one and the left-hand bind-stroke are largely worn away.
- (5), (6) Two Rs, fairly clear, and both with slightly curved bind-strokes. A small mark just after the former one, if it is a stroke at all, is probably a false start to the second one.
- (7) A small stroke to the left (not the right, as Macalister) may be an H, if it is a letter at all.
- (8) A single cross stroke: A. There may be a very faint serif on the end, as in letter (14) below.
- (9), (10) Two small Ns, with strokes of gradually increasing length and thus sloping bind-strokes.
- (11) Either side of a patch of wear on the fleasg emerge three sloping strokes. This must have been an angled U, but it is strange that it is not bound, and the strokes must have been successively longer than one another. The patch of wear might have contained another letter of two or three strokes.
- (12), (13) Two Rs, with rather curved bind-strokes.
- (14) An A with serif.¹
- (15), (16) C and T, the second letter at more of a slope. The

1. Cf. Introduction, p. 22.

some form of a word for 'cross'.

CUNNINGSBURGH (Shetland)

Three ogham-inscribed fragments come from this parish (as well as three runic inscriptions, of which two do not seem to be comprehensible¹); they are listed under RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 1136, but there are only three, not four as stated (see below).

No. I

ECMS. 11: $\begin{matrix} E \\ R \\ I \end{matrix}$

PSAS. xii. 20 (Goudie)

xvii. 306 n. 1 (Goudie)

xviii. 206 (Southesk): IR..

xxvi. 294 (Rhys 13)

xxxii. 376 (Rhys xvii): IR or RI

Brash p. 366.

Nicholson N

Macalister 17: IR(U)

Goudie 'Antiquities' p. 53; RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 1136(1).

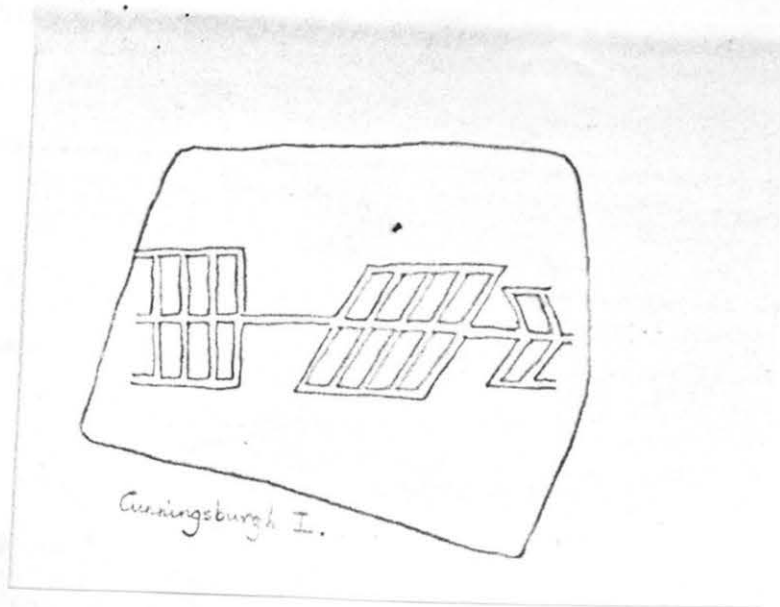
National Museum, no. IB. 114.

This fragment, decorated on one side, is very evenly cut in bind-oghams² on the reverse, and the direction of reading is shown by the angled vowel.

- (1) This letter seems definitely to have contained five straight strokes, though half of the first is lost, owing to the breakage of the stone: I.

1. ECMS. iii. p. 19; Vik. Ant. VI. 158-160.

2. p. 17.



CUNNINGSBURGH, No. I (Photograph: National
Museum of Antiquities)



- (2) This R follows a gap in which nothing seems to be lost.
- (3) Two angled strokes are quite clear, but the right-hand bind-stroke continues past the second, so the letter must originally have contained at least three strokes.

The reading is thus:

IRU[†]

It is of course quite common to have different types of vowel-stroke within a single inscription.

No. II

ECMS 10: D(E)V(O)DDR(E) ...EHTECONMOR

PSAS xvii. 306 (Goudie)

xviii. 206 (Southesk): ...ROMQOSEFB[†]E...

xxvi. 295 (Rhys 14): DEVODDRE EHTTECONMOR

xxvii. 411 (Rhys)

xxxii. 374 (Rhys xvi) EHTTECONMOR[†] [†]D(U)V(O)DDRS

Goudie 'Antiquities' 53-54.

Nicholson M

Diack X (1).

Macalister: DEV...ODRS EHTTECONMOZS

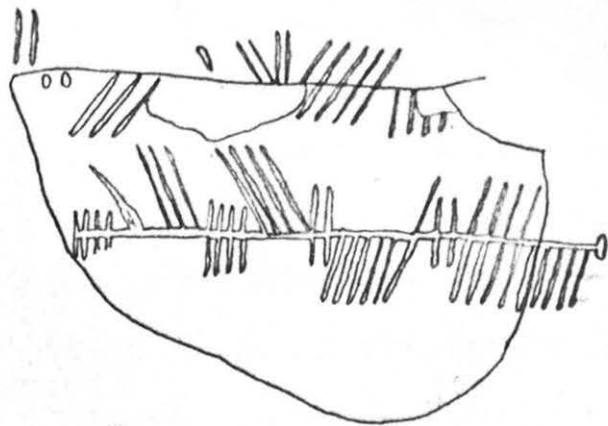
RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 1136 (2).

This slab has two lines of writing, one on a face and one on a corner (which is one of very few Pictish oghams on the corner of a stone).

Macalister's account and illustration are on the whole pretty accurate.

Direction of reading is shown to be the same in both lines by the slopes of consonants.

The face: (1) An E, of which the strokes diminish gradually in length. The tips of the B-side are lost owing to



Cunningsburgh, II: after Macalister.

CUNNINGSBURGH, No. II (Photograph :
National Museum of Antiquities)



IB 115
Cunningsburgh
Shetland

damage. There does not seem to have been a fifth stroke, though one cannot be certain.

- (2) A single stroke to the left: H. The part nearest to the fleasg is lost owing to damage. Like all the consonant-strokes in the face inscription, it is very long and spindly.
- (3) Three strokes on the same side, but spaced away from the H and not at such a slope: T.
- (4) Four of the shorter vowel-strokes: E. Some letters in the face inscription (this one, and nos. 6, 9, 10) give the appearance of being bound (or partially bound). This is probably due to the wear that the stone has suffered; if bind-strokes were ever present they must have been considerably shallower than the actual letters, since they are now so much less visible.
- (5) Four long H-group strokes: G.
- (6)-(9) The letters ONMO are all quite clear, though both vowels are more worn than other letters.
- (10) This letter consists of at least four M-group strokes. A fifth stroke actually on the corner is only visible on the B-side, but owing to wear one cannot tell whether it originally continued right across. If so, this letter is R, not Z; if not, the corner stroke must belong with the following letter.
- (11) There are four B-group strokes on the end of the stone; these will give N or S, according to whether the preceding stroke is taken with them or not.

The fleasg seems to end with a small shallow depression, much too short to be a vowel. Rhys later thought he saw a single vowel-stroke on the

next corner, but I could not see this.

The corner:

- (1) Two H-group strokes could have been part of a longer letter.
- (2) As far as I could see there are only two vowel-notches (very short, like those on Keiss Bay¹) present here, though Rhys, Allen and Macalister all have E. Four would be very cramped, though three are a possibility.
- (3) A very sloping V is clear, followed by a gap in which there is only part of a single H-score visible. However, since the H-surface is largely intact here, anything lost must have been on the B-side.
- (4) Two sloping H-scores could have been D or O, but they are so close to the following letter that an angled vowel would have been rather cramped (I could not see Macalister's 'lower tip in the second of its scores . . . detected in the spall-matrix").
- (5) A certain D, at right angles.
- (6) An R is fairly clear, although the B-side of its first stroke is lost.
- (7) The last visible letter is S, of which the last two scores have lost all but their tips. It could have possessed a fifth score, and the inscription may well have continued further.

The readings are thus:

...EHTECONMO^{RS}_{ZN} ...⁺D⁺_{UV}... ^D_O⁺DRS...

EHTECON may be the same as Cunningsburgh III, ETTECA... and Lunnasting,

1. Cf. Rhys, PSAS. xxvii. 411.

EHTECUHEITS; or else it may have been Neht... originally (cf. Keiss Bay).

Rhys compares various names from Irish written sources, as follows:

- ATig. Tolair aithicain/Tolar(g) (mac) Aithicain (AD. 686, RC. xvii 209).
 AU. Talorgg mac Acithaen, Accidan (648).
 AFM. Aedhacan, Aedhagan.
 LL. Educan, gen. Educain (318 a 1, 340 a, b).

However, the AFM and LL forms are Irish diminutives of the name Aed; the other two examples are presumably a Pictish name¹; whether EHTECON and Aithicain could be the same is open to doubt, though they are not unlike one another.

If MORS is the correct reading, it may be pointed out that mor was presumably the Celtic-Pictish word for 'big'; -s might then be a non-Celtic termination.

No. III

Macalister no. 19: EHTECO...ATVVALT...RTTA...

Diack X (2).

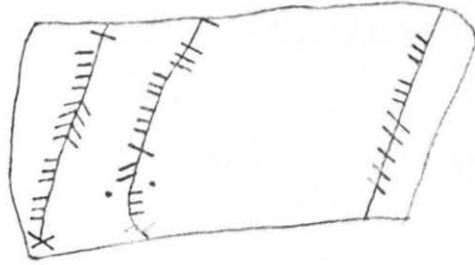
RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 1136 (4).

Goudie 'Antiquities' 54-55.

A parallelogram-shaped fragment, with three ogham lines. Macalister² suggests that they were constructed in a rather improbable way, as one continuous line; it is true that the middle line does bend sharply at one end; but more positive evidence than this would be needed on which to base such an unusual hypothesis, and consonant-slope is against his direction of reading the second line.

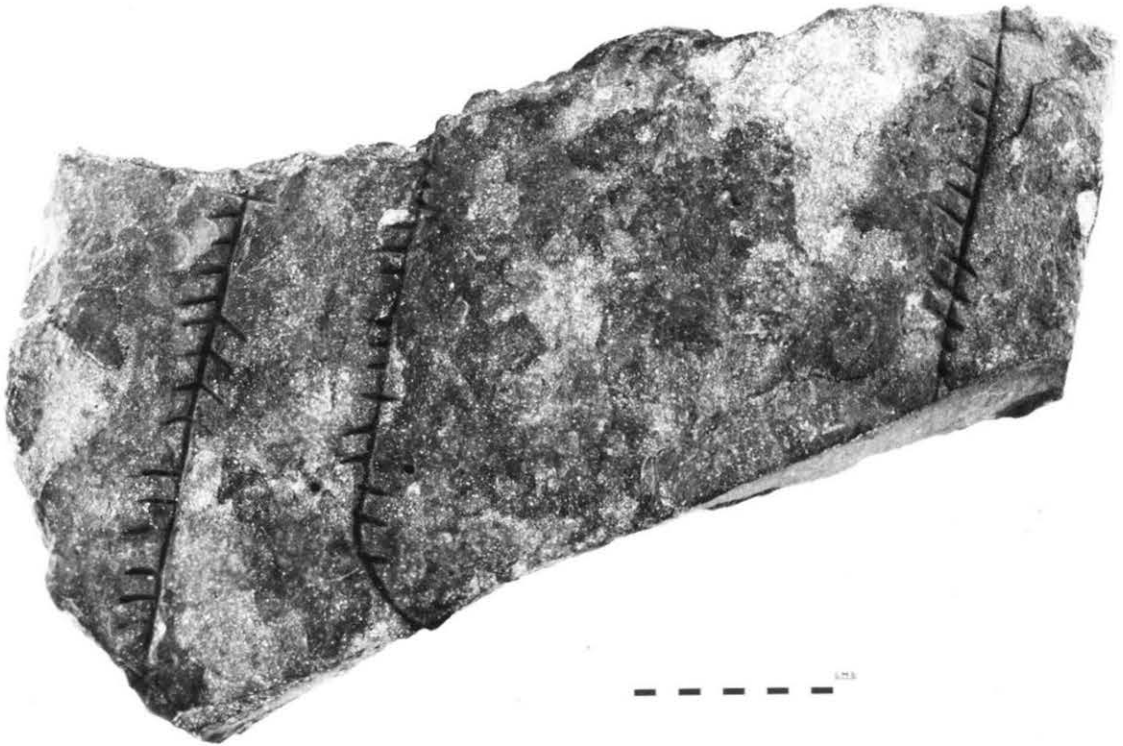
1. Cf. Stokes, TPS. 1888-90 p. 392, who favours the Tigernach form.

2. Pl. VIb, p. 216.



Cunningburgh III = after Macalister.

CUNNINGBURGH, No. III (Photograph: National Museum)



The inscription at the wider end:

- (1) There is a cross at the end of the fleasg: this is presumably the E-forfid, and is strikingly close to the same occurrence on Lunnasting.
- (2)-(4) TTE are quite clear, the vowel this time carved with angled scores.
- (5) Although parts of this letter are lost, there is no doubt that it is a C.
- (6) A single, longish stroke at right angles, presumably a vowel. The letter could well have been longer.

The middle line:

- (7) Three B-scores, slightly unevenly spaced, though probably not enough to warrant separating them. Hints of a single stroke either side before this are probably just unevennesses in the stone. After it, however, there are two definite dots, one either side of the fleasg,¹ Since they are rather far away from the fleasg, they may have been added as an afterthought, perhaps because the carver decided that the word-division needed clarifying.
- (8) A sloping D indicates the direction of reading this line.
- (9)-(11) APT are quite legible; the consonant strokes especially are very short.
- (12) This letter could be either U or V; the strokes are very short, and are slightly to one side but seem to cross the fleasg.
- (13) A single stroke that goes off the edge of the stone could have been part of a longer vowel or consonant.

1. Cf. p 25.

The third line ought to be read in the opposite direction to the other two, since two consonants slope in a way that should be conclusive. But the angle of slope is not great, and it may be that it should be ignored in order to read the line in the same direction as the other two:

(14) Clearly R, although parts of the first two strokes are missing

(15), (16) These letter would be TT if read according to the other lines, or VV according to their own slope.

Macalister's final A does not appear to exist, although there is a mark in the photograph.

The readings are therefore:

ETTECA...

...V:DAT^U_VA...
B
M

...RTT... (or) ...VVR...

Finally, the myth of the 'fourth Cunningsburgh fragment' must be discounted. This is listed under RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 1136 (3), who refer to Goudie 'Antiquities' p. 53. Here Goudie mentions an extra Cunningsburgh fragment, but he is in fact referring to the IRE stone (no. I here). This is shown by the fact that he mentions it again¹ as being found by a Mr. Cogle. Brash² confirms that this was the man who found the IRE stone. The Royal Commission seems to have misunderstood Goudie's statement in his book, and they in turn deceived Wainwright, who in his useful map of Pictish Oghams³ has one

1. At PSAS xii. 20 and xvii. 306 (and f.n. 1).

2. p. 366.

3. Ogham xi and separately, 'the Inchyra Stone'.

too many dots in the cluster around Cunningsburgh (there should be six, three Cunningsburgh and three St. Ninian's Isle, of which two are lost, instead of seven).

DUNADD (Argyll)

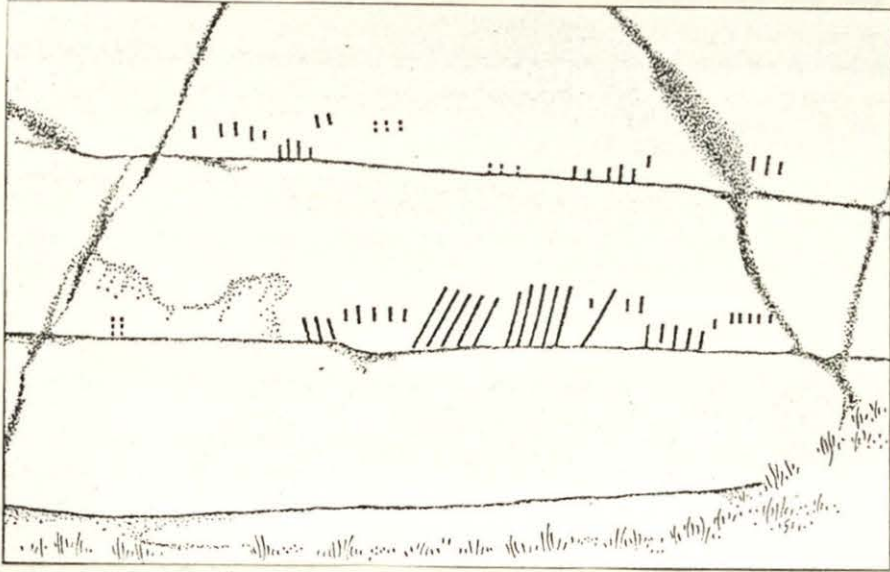
Antiquity xxxix. 300 (Jackson):

HCSD-T--V--^N_{LV}H-T
 L-----VQR^R_IHMDNHQ

Carved on the living rock, near the top of the fort, the inscription is presumably to be associated with the other carvings a few feet away (which are a boar, a footprint and a cup-shaped hollow¹). The inscription is without a stem-line, which makes it extremely awkward to read, and it is very strange that the cracks in the rock were not used for this purpose.

There is little to add to Jackson's analysis of the Oghams; but one point that should be made is that as it stands the inscription is (uniquely) quite unpronounceable. Either it must be discarded as gibberish, or some vowels must be worked into it by, as Jackson says, speculative juggling with the stem-line. This admittedly produces only a vague hypothesis; but it seems justifiable by the fact that many of the 'consonants' do look slightly more like vowels (of an Irish type, being nicks, not long scores), and by the fact that if a line is imagined through the middle of the M-group strokes in the lower line, it will go through the middle of some letters (this is probably more important than the actual size of strokes, since the wear is such that it is impossible

1. Radford, Antiquity xxvii. 238; Thomas, Arch. J. cxx. 40; PSAS lxxiv. pl. XVb.



(from *Antiquity* xxxix)

DUNADD

(Photograph: Dr. F.S. McKenna, Tarbert)



to tell how long most of the strokes originally were).

In the first line, then, it seems possible to imagine a stem-line through the middle of the first two letters and through the last (single-stroke) one before the crack. There may be the remains of a V at the end of the line, after the T: the marks are dismissed by Jackson as 'faint marks . . . not letters but appear to be accidental scratches', and this is probably the case; but the regular spacing makes a letter possible.

In the second line one can postulate a stem-line through the third letter; under these circumstances it should be suggested that the second letter with five long strokes is another R (differentiated from the first by sloping less), rather than I, as the vowels are short Irish-type nicks if the hypothesis is right. The stem-line would then continue through the middle of the two last letters, making these vowels as well. The single-stroke letter before the M is so short that it may be a vowel; but if so it is somewhat off-centre.

This would produce a highly conjectural reading as follows:

AESD-T--V--^N_{LV}A-TV
 L----VIRR^H_AMDNAI

This does not make the inscription any more recognisable, but has the advantage that it might be in some language unknown to us, since it is at least pronounceable for the most part.

On the whole the inscription gives an impression of being one of the earliest Pictish inscriptions (by which one means most like the Irish inscriptions, as is Auquhollie): the absence of a fleasg, the short nicks for vowels (if they are vowels), and the complete absence of forfeda or later forms all separate it off from the Scholastic nature of

most of the Pictish corpus. Although this could be a difference of area (since a 'Pictish' inscription in the West is strange anyway: if carved by invaders, they might have had to find a West coast, i. e. Irish oghamist to do it for them, for example), yet a difference in date seems just as likely. However, this does not fit in with the historical material, since A. D. 736 (A.U.) is our last record of the Picts' capturing Dunadd; as Jackson points out, if we postulate an earlier capture as the occasion of carving the inscription, we would perhaps need to explain why the Irish, on regaining the fort, did not deface the Pictish inscription. But if 736 or after is the date of the inscription, it cannot be much earlier than many other Pictish inscriptions which have a much more 'Scholastic' appearance. This is an incongruity that cannot be solved on the present evidence.

[FORDOUN (Kincardineshire)

PSAS. xxvii. 412 (Rhys)

xxxii. 348 (Rhys)

Macalister no. 6: VUN(I)MSEITOR BRE(...EN)N

Although Rhys saw traces of an ogham on this stone, he considered them indecipherable. Macalister's reading is given for the sake of completeness, but I could not see an inscription, although there may once have been one; the stone has been under cover for some time now and is unlikely to have weathered much since Macalister's time, although it became badly worn some time before the nineteenth century. The very real half-uncial inscription is given below, in the section of inscriptions in Roman letters.]

GOLSPIE (Sutherland) ('Kilmaly')

SSS. i pl. 34, p. 12.

ECMS. 48: ALLHHALLORREDDM(A)QQNUUVVHRR ^{EIRF}
_{HCHC} IANN

PSAS. xviii. 193 (Southesk)

xx. 22 (Southesk): ALLDALLDQQAADDMMQQNUUFFHRRRI(A)NN

xxvi. 288 (Rhys 9): ALLHHALLORREDDM ^{HCHC} ^Q ^Q ^{NUUVV} ^H ^{ARR} ^{EIRF}
_Q _Q _{NUUVV} _{ARR} _{IANN}xxxii. 368 (Rhys xi): ALL ^{HH} ^D ^{ALLORRE} ^{REDDM} (A) ^{QQ} ^{NUUVV} ^{ARR} ^{EIRF}
_D _{ALLORRE} _{REDDM} (A) _{QQ} _{NUUVV} _{ARR} _{EIRF} _{RR} _{NG}

xlii. 347 (Bannerman)

lxxiv. 85 and pl. XXXVIII (Curle)

Brash, p. 363.

Ferguson, p. 151.

Nicholson I

Diack XII.

Macalister 11: ALLHHALLORR EDDARR NAIVALARRENN

RCAHM 'Sutherland' no. 295.



Golspie, after ECMS.

Formerly at Craigton churchyard (2m. from Golspie), the stone is in the private museum at Dunrobin castle, just north of the town. It is a fairly typical class II monument, with a cross on one side and figures on the other. Unusually, especially for a class II monument, the fleasg is not marked; this produces doubt about the intended positions of some letters; but the lettering is still quite sharp and can be read with some surety.


- (1) The A with serif is certainly the beginning of the inscription; the chipped corner below it is original, since the decoration fits round it (as on the Maiden Stone and the Dupplin cross).
- (2), (3) Two Ls, well sloped and carefully spaced from one another.
- (4), (5) Two sloping scores to the left. The spacing is such as to make D most improbable: HH is virtually certain (the spacing is careful enough on this stone to be used in interpretation).
- (6) A further A, this time of the angled type.
- (7), (8) Two more Ls, again spaced apart and sloping slightly more than the first pair.
- (9) An O, carved with straight scores.
- (10), (11) Two Rs; the second has lost the B-side of its second and third strokes, but the letter is not in doubt.
- (12) The E-forfid, with its two halves separated as is usual in the Pictish (and common in the Irish) inscriptions when it has vocalic value (though Cunningsburgh II, Lunnasting have it as a cross).
- (13), (14) Two Ds, the second slightly more sloped than the first.
- (15) An M, of which the tip on the B-side is lost. Macalister illustrates this at a slope, but transliterates as A for some

reason.

- (16) A letter has been lost here: the B-surface is worn away, and the H-surface less so. There are hints on the B-side of a V-shape with its point touching the line, which could be part of an E-forfid; alternatively M or (with Rhys and Allen) A may be lost. However, the H-side may never have had anything at all, in which case the reading would be B, however improbable this may seem.
- (17), (18) These are probably both Qs, but they have the unusual feature of the first strokes being longer than the following ones, in both directions. They are strongly sloped, at the same angle as one another, and the long strokes seem to be simply a way of distinguishing the beginnings of letters (a method one might wish that other oghamists had employed).
- (19) A clear N, at a mild slope.
- (20) At this point there are six evenly-spaced cross-strokes at right-angles; they constitute a problem. There is a slight indentation between the third and the fourth, which may be dismissed as due to weathering¹; but on the whole the stone is not badly weathered (it seems to have been buried for some time), and it is quite possible that it was added (afterwards?) to separate two letters; thus UU. There is another possibility: the sixth stroke appears to lack its middle part, and it may be a mistake (six strokes for five, as happens in manuscripts sometimes), arrested before it was complete; in this case we should read L.²

1. With Macalister, p. 208.

2. This is suggested, rather unconvincingly, at PSAS xlii. 350.

- (21) A sloped V. This brings us to the corner, where there is considerable doubt; this is mainly because the corner was already very rounded when the stone was carved (as is apparent from the comparative clarity of the notches, and the fact that the spiral decoration fits the rounded corner).
- (22) The first letter at this point seems to have consisted of three B-strokes; but the first of these (Macalister's A) crosses the fleasg and then does a small right-angle bend upwards, thus:  This brings to mind the A with serif (letter l), or it could be the same idea as that in the initial strokes of letters 17-18, especially as there is a V immediately before this letter (thus making this another doubled letter if this is correct). This group is therefore either V or AL.
- (23) A single H-stroke which crosses slightly over where one imagines the fleasg to be: H or A.
- (24), (25) Two sets of five sloping strokes each; the second is certainly R, but the first could be either R or N, since the scores are considerably shorter on the H-side. It may be suggested that R is more likely, in view of the R following; the shortness could be due to the round corner setting the inscription off line slightly. In the second R, the B-side of the last two strokes is lost owing to wear.
- (26) The same patch of wear has removed the B-side of the first stroke of this letter; however, it is certainly an E, carved with straight strokes. After it there is a patch of flaking, in the middle of which is the clamp holding the stone upright. About three or four strokes are probably lost here. As Macalister points out, there would be no gain in removing the

clamp: it looks as if the surface of the stone was damaged previous to its fitting.¹

(27), (28) Ten equally spaced **strokes** follow the worn patch; parts of the first two and the B-side tips of the last four are lost, but this is obviously what they were. The strokes are presumably to be subdivided as two five-score letters; but it is not obvious to which aicme they belong. Nearly all authorities have rendered them NN, presumably because of their slope; but they are too far over towards the H-side for this to be likely (though it is possible), and RR is more probable² (QQ is impossible because of the direction of their slope). Several early scholars give a five followed by a four-stroke letter; they have probably missed the tip of the first score emerging from the patch of flaking that surrounds the clamp. Thus the reading comes out as:

~~ALLHHALLORREDDM~~ ^A ~~EQQ~~ ^U ~~N~~ ^V ~~HR~~ ^{RR}
~~E~~ ^I ~~ALAN~~ ^{RE} ~~NN~~

in which the ending ~~-NIVVHRRE-RR~~ seems good, as being one of the simplest possible. Several points arise linguistically. One is the apparent presence of MAQQ or MEQQ, as in several other inscriptions³; EDD is a syllable that occurs elsewhere (often as part of the longer name EDDARRNONN), and it may be the same as the syllable ET(T) that is found on several inscriptions (e.g. Keiss Bay, St. Vigean's). ALLHHALLORR has been interpreted by many as a Norse form⁴, usually in a somewhat

1. Cf. plate in SSS.

2. This is pointed out, but ignored, by Southesk, PSAS xx. 24, who wishes to read ANN.

3. See above, pp 30-31.

4. E.g. Nicholson, p 7.

vague way. While there is no reason why it could not be Old Norse all- 'very' and hallr 'leaning' there is equally no reason why it should be, and the form would be a fairly late, Icelandic one if it were.

Although this looks a fairly long and somewhat complex inscription, it might be one of the few that could correspond to the usual Irish ogham formula, '(of) X son of Y'. If this were so, then -EDD (variants -ETT, -ADD, -UDD?) might be a genitival ending (though one should not necessarily look for Indo-European categories in a non-Indo-European language).

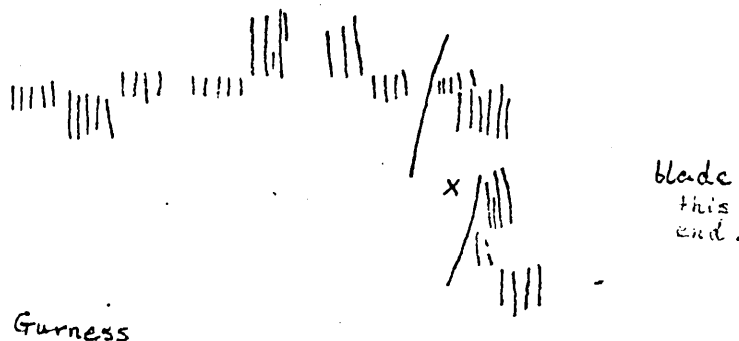
GURNESS BROCH (Aikerness, Orkney mainland)

Macalister 22: INEITTEMON MATS...

National Museum no. GAA

RCAHM 'Orkney and Shetland' no. 263 (vol. ii p. 75) deals with the broch itself.


This is one of the three inscriptions on knife-handles made of organic matter, and was apparently found at a level below a (probably ninth-century) Viking grave.¹ Thus an eighth-century date seems a reasonable



1. Norf. Arch. xxxi. 186; Ant. J. xxxii. 71 sqq.

assumption. The site itself appears to have had frequent occupation from broch times onwards, ending with a Viking long-house.

The scores are on the whole quite clear, and it is more on account of cramped and perhaps unplanned arrangement that some of the reading is in doubt. No stem-line is inscribed, the angles of the knife-handle being used in a somewhat haphazard way. The vowels are short straight lines, consonants are longer ones and M-group letters are very long indeed. There is a full line of writing on one side, and a short line on the other, preceded by a little cross, very similar in size and position to that on the Buckquoy whorl. It might mean 'start here' (as it is assumed that the Buckquoy one does), but it would be peculiar to start an inscription at the end of the space available, so that it had to be continued on another line. Possibly it may mean 'continue here', like a hyphen, or 'finish here'.

Reading the longer line towards the blade, we find INEITTEM quite clear, the only area of doubt being the first T, in which the first and second strokes have little 'false starts' in the form of an extra short score very close to the main one (to take these as actual letter-scores would mean an extremely cramped and haphazard inscription). The same phenomenon of strokes inscribed double, is seen in Birsay I and II. After the M the last eight strokes (of which the first is a double one in the way just described) are in considerable doubt. There seem to be four short vowel notches, and six longer B-group ones, of which the first two overlap with the last two vowel-scores, thus  (simplifying by omitting the doubled first stroke). This could be read as EN, assuming one too many consonant-strokes by carelessness or a slip of the knife; or as ON or UN, assuming further slips and duplications. The overlap can be explained by the fact that the end of

the line was approaching (which confirms us in reading in this direction). None of these readings is wholly satisfactory, but no further explanations spring to mind.

The short line could be read in either direction, depending on whether the cross is taken as a finishing- or a continuation-mark. Here again there is a very considerable degree of overlap, though with less reason (since the whole length of the handle was available): the best explanation is probably that the cross serves as a hyphen, and that the inscriber, in starting the continuation, did not leave himself enough room even for these few letters. This all implies a total lack of planning, of course; but chattel inscriptions are in any case likely to have been carved in an odd moment, perhaps without much forethought.¹ The reading is ^xMATS, but each letter overlaps with at least one other; there is a possible (very faint) second vowel-score after the first; the first stroke of the T is doubled. This gives a complete reading of

INETTEMEN ^xMATS

If the short section were read in the other direction, it would be ^ACVOM^x.

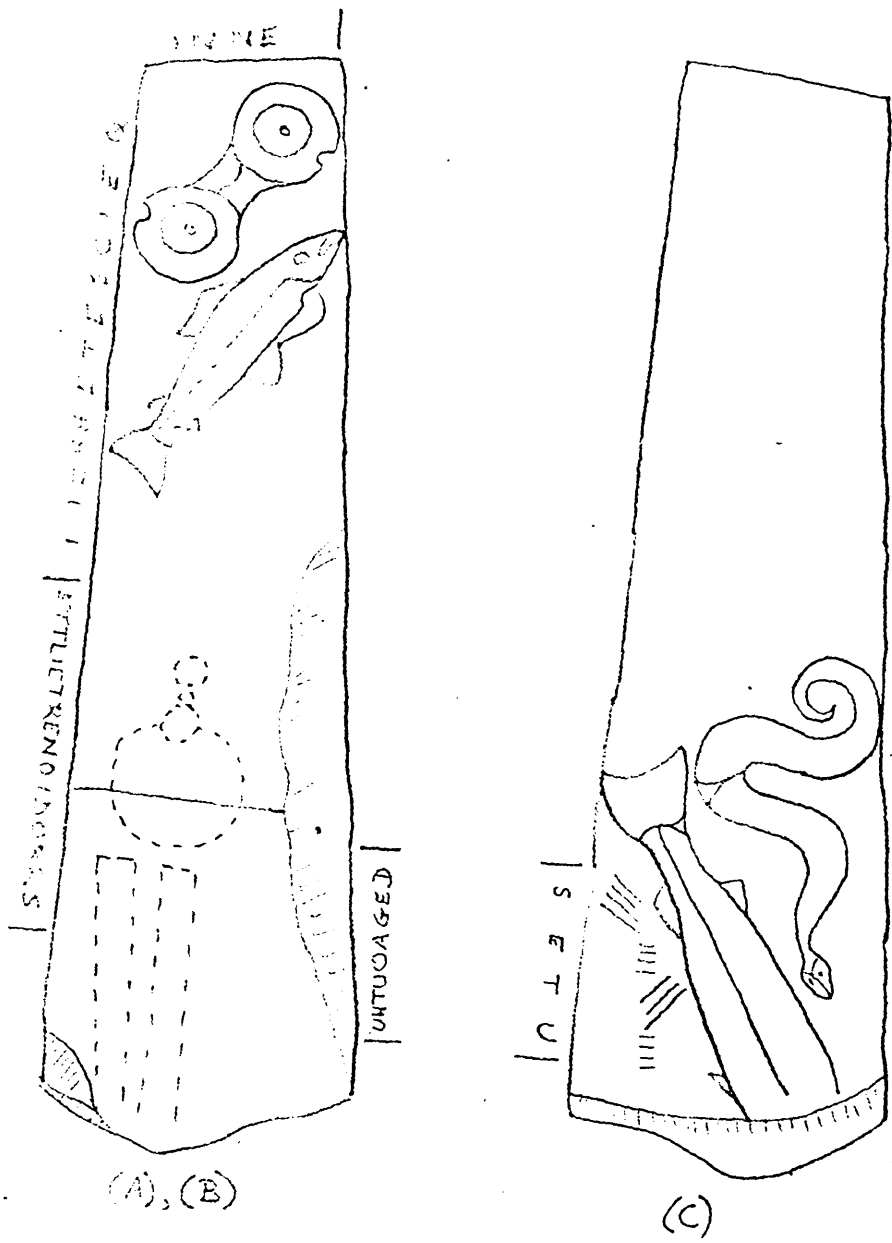
INCHYRA (Perthshire)

Ogam xi. 269 (pl. II faces p. 368) (Wainwright: also separately, Dundee Museum 1961).

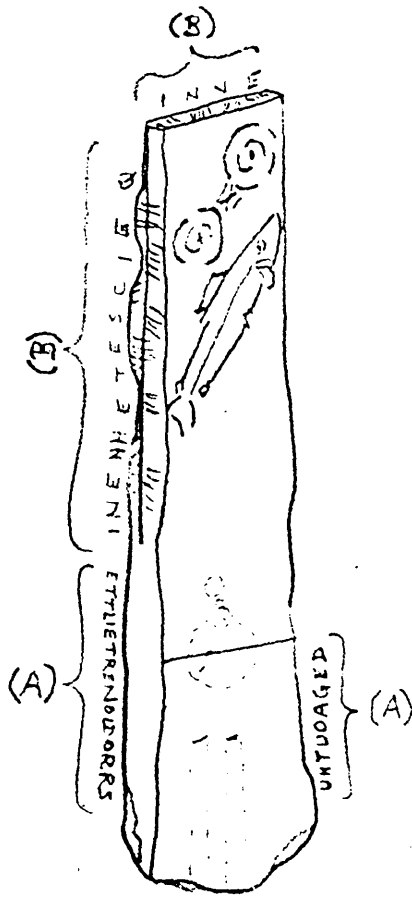
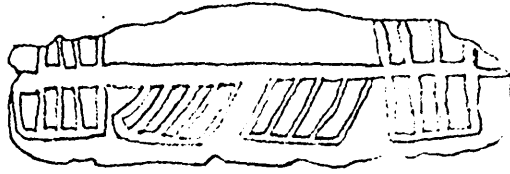
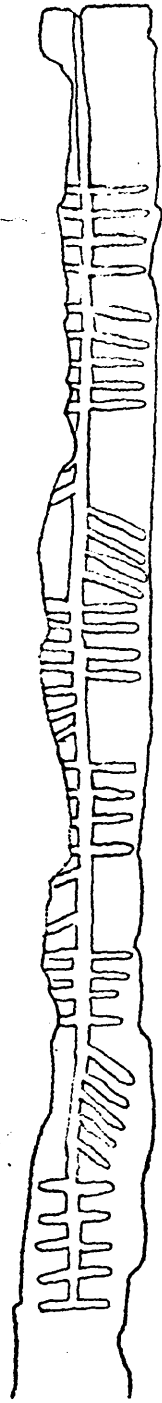
PSAS. lxxxviii. 42 (Gordon)

xcii. 33 (Stevenson)

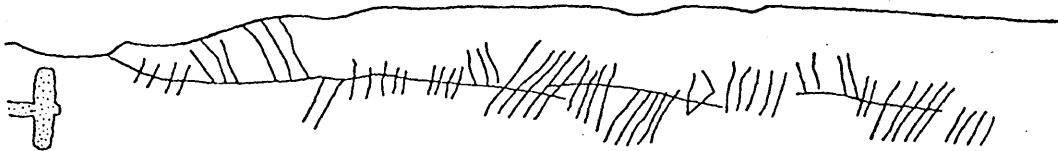
1. The inscription also implies probably a fairly widespread knowledge of oghams amongst ordinary people: see above, pp. 2-3.



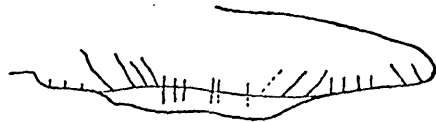
Inchyra: the relative positions of the inscriptions & symbols. After Stevenson.



Inchyra (B): after Wainwright.




INCHYRA (A) (from PSAS. xcii)



and where, and had noted them down in the right places; but the exact format was presumably left to his own decision. It also means that we should not expect great clarity from this inscription, since his notes for his own benefit had to be comprehensible only to himself. The haphazard nature of the stem-line (where it is present at all) is a further indication of the casual nature of this inscription.

There are only one or two points to make about the published reading (the drawings¹ are quite accurate). First, there seems no reason to read Z when the letter is so rare, the strokes are so short, and it makes for awkward (though not impossible) pronunciation, to our ears. E is perfectly in accord with the scores on the stone, for although they are at a slope, the fleasg also curves at this point, so that as well as being short the scores are in fact at right angles to it.

The shape of the first O is not paralleled; it is in fact a little wider than in the illustration, and at two of its corners one line runs on slightly after meeting the other, thus  . O is a guess as to its value, but seems the most likely one. In the following I, the third and fourth scores are separated by a slightly wider gap than the others, though to read UO would be too subtle.

As can be seen in the illustration, the first stroke of R is slightly separated from the others, but again this probably does not mean anything. The first and fourth strokes of the following S are extremely faint, so as to be scarcely visible.

On the opposite edge of the stone there is a further inscription in exactly the same hand: it may be supposed that this is part of the same inscription (or at least belongs with the other), since the tentativeness and position on the stone are so closely comparable.

1. From PSAS xc. 38.


The transliteration given by Wainwright and Jackson is again accurate, and the only modifications that I would make are: the ends of the first vowel are a little longer than in the illustration, though this does not alter the reading; the third and fourth vowels could be an I (with two of the strokes lost), which^{would} eliminate the vowel cluster UOA, unusual in the Pictish inscriptions (though this 'restoration' must remain tentative); the two M-group strokes that are clear continue across the crack (unlike the illustration) and thus are certainly G. I could see no trace of the earlier (dotted) score, which would in any case run into the final vowel-stroke if prolonged to normal length in the position as drawn.

A tentative reading of the whole inscription is thus obtained:

ETTLIETRENOIDDORS

(...) UHTU⁺_IOA⁺GED (...)

(B) The double-disc and fish at the narrow end, on the same face as (A). Presumably in association with these is a fairly clear inscription, which runs up the same side as the first part of the inscription (A), then turns and runs along the end (these few letters being in bind-oghams), where it finishes. The transliteration given by Wainwright is again excellent, and very few points require comment: all the B- and H-group consonants are well sloped (except for the first T, where the slope diminishes with successive scores), and clearly distinguishable (there are no M-group consonants); the letters on the end are all bound, but none of those on the side is (a curious fact, without a ready explanation); the first letter (an I) on the end is slightly dubious, since on the loose fragment (which carries the H-side of the end inscription) the end of its first score is not visible at all: if it has been lost owing to breakage it must have been very

curved, which would be out of keeping with the regularity of the other scores. Furthermore, the bind-stroke on the complete side does not continue all the way to the first stroke. We thus have something like: . It is possible that the 'first stroke' is part of another letter (though it is perfectly spaced to be part of the visible one). The issue will have to remain in doubt. Finally, in the first N on the end of the stone, the bind-stroke is very curved, owing to a very short first stroke. The probable reading is thus:

INEHHETESTIE^Q(...) INNE
 C D
 DH DT

(C) On the other face, at the broad end, is what appears to have been the final use of the stone: a serpent (of slightly unusual shape) and a fish, together with a short inscription up the face of the stone. There is no stem-line and the vowels are much more of Irish type. Wainwright's reading appears to be certain, although the third score of the U is rendered invisible by a modern scratch. The T is interesting as its sloping scores grow progressively longer. The S is also sloping, but its scores are of more regular length.

SETU may safely be taken as the reading here.

There is very little that is at all recognisable in these inscriptions: the possible beginning **EIT**— can be compared with Lunnasting and Cunningsburgh II, and it is just possible that NEHHEI is a svarabhakti form of NEHHT¹; -ORS is paralleled by Cunningsburgh II. There may be some importance in the fact that both parts of inscription (B) begin IN(N)E

1. This could not be so in a Celtic language, since all the branches of Celtic are perfectly at ease with the group /-χt/ or changed it in other ways; but in non-Celtic Pictish a svarabhakti vowel could have been felt necessary.

It should in conclusion be emphasised that Stevenson's postulated sequence of the uses of the stone, here followed as A, B, C, is not proved but is that which best fits the evidence available (though Stevenson¹ thought that (A) must be later than (B) since it starts only 1½" below the beginning of (B). The reasoning here is not infallible, but his opinion ought to be noted. Certainly it is hard to dissociate the tentative Ogham from the unfinished symbols).

KEISS BAY (Caithness)

ECMS. 25.

PSAS. xxxi. 296 (Anderson); xxxii. 370 (Rhys xii).

Macalister no. 15.

Diack V.

RCAHMS Caithness no. 587.

National Museum no. IB. 168.

This is a good class I stone, with the rectangle symbol and the lower part of a fish (on the fairly common association of the fish with ogham inscriptions, see the introduction). Its **general** layout is very similar to that of Brandsbutt: a boulder with smoothed front, two symbols on the right and the fleasg running at a slope up the left. Similar also are the lack of forfeda and the great clarity with which the inscription has survived. (But in general confidence of execution this stone does not at all match up to the other stone).

Allen, Rhys, Macalister and Diack all agree on the reading, which is NEHTETRI. . . except that Diack does not consider that the inscription was ever longer than it now is. One cannot in fact tell

1. Op. cit. p. 38.



KEISS BAY (Photograph: National Museum
of Antiquities)

what the answer is on this: by the end of the inscription, the fleasg has petered out (even the last two strokes of R are unbroken by a fleasg), and the cramped nature towards the end gives one a feeling that the end is approaching (this is subjective, to some extent). But there could easily have been one or two more letters (and the shape of the slab could have accommodated this, though not much more).

The vowels are interesting as they are more Irish in type than is common in Pictland: at the end there is a juxtaposition of vowels and M-group strokes, and the difference is quite clear. But, short though they are, the vowels are still strokes (of variable length), and not nicks. So they are recognisably Pictish, unlike those on the unique Auquhollie inscription. There is no doubt about the reading, and the inscription certainly may have continued a little further originally.

The beginning is very definite, with no length of fleasg continuing before the first letter. H and both Ts are sloped in the usual way, but N only slightly; the R is less sloped than one might expect, perhaps to save space: the last four letters are slightly cramped (as mentioned above). Spacing is not altogether regular, but there is little doubt that HT is intended in the middle. On Allen's (and thus Diack's) photograph, the second T appears to be split one and two (= HD), but this is not in fact the case. (This photograph also makes the surface after the I look smooth, whereas it is in fact badly worn.) The first stroke of I is curtailed on the H-side, to avoid the sloping last score of R: in this way the I could be closer to the preceding letter (further evidence for the cramped nature of the end of the inscription).

On the interpretation, Rhys suggests a name NEHTET and compares Uoret on the Drosten-stone, and Namet, Morbet as second-names in PKL. If NEHT (cf. Aboyne) is a name, one might further compare

the -ET with -EDD on Golspie. The question also arises about the possible relation of this name to the widely-attested name Nechtan: this last is perhaps related to Latin Neptunus, both from nepto-, with -no- suffix.¹ This would make the -on (> -an) ending an intrinsic part of the stem, which would make the two names less likely to be related; however, Necht is an attested name in early Irish.² It is unlikely that the pair NEHT/Nechtan is on a par with such pairs as Talorc/Talorgan (both, with variants, in PKL); here -an is probably a diminutive -an from *-agnos.

KIRKMICHAEL (Isle of Man) ('the Mal Lunkun Cross')

PSAS xxvi. 302 (Rhys 17)

xxvii. 411 (Rhys): HUIHT . . . OSTE (tentatively) (downwards).

xliv. 437 (Kermode)

The Academy November, 1887 (p. 359) Southesk: MUUCOMALL

AFI UA MULLGUC (downwards).

October, 1890 (Canon Browne)

Arch. Cambr. lxxxiv (1929). 370.

NTS iv. 386 (Marstrander)

Macalister 20: G. . . ERCADDOSDEN (upwards).

Kermode no. 104 (p. 195, pl. LIV; cf. p. 100).

The total of what is to be found on this complicated stone is as follows: on the face, a cross of very much Irish design (though with Scandinavian decorative elements, e.g. the ring-chain circle near the centre); human and animal figures of a type closely comparable with

1. O'Rahilly, EIHM p. 368.

2. Vendryes, Lex. Etym. MNOP s. v.

some of the Pictish class II scenes (and occurring on other Manx crosses); and in a panel below the cross and to the right an alphabet in bind-oghams, roughly scratched¹, and notable mainly for containing an A with serif, as found at Aboyne and elsewhere. Among the vowels and the M-group letters, very few are bound on both sides.

On the back of the stone are two runic inscriptions and an extremely faint ogham one. Both runic inscriptions contain dots to separate the words (cf. Bressay); one is gnomic and the other contains Irish and Scandinavian names. Uniquely for Man, the inscriptions (and the Norse name) are considered to possess Swedish rather than Norwegian affinities.

The ogham must probably be given up (with Kermode) as undecipherable. All three published readings, apart from differing totally from one another, rely too heavily on conjecture to carry weight. However, it is interesting that both ogham inscriptions on this stone have Pictish, rather than Irish, affinities in character (the bind-strokes) and technique (quick slashes rather than careful notches); however, this may be due solely to the lateness of the inscriptions.² Kermode makes the plausible suggestion that ogham and runic alphabets were put into church walls to instruct the congregation, and says that there are parallels in Scandinavia.

1. Illustrated Kermode p. 101; PSAS. xxvi. 303n. and xlv. 442.

2. Kermode says eleventh century for the slab, with the oghams later: PSAS. xlv. 441; David Wilson, Saga-Book xviii. 1-18, says middle to late tenth century, and this may be taken as authoritative for the time being; the oghams are pretty certainly a later addition: only Canon Browne thinks the opposite, and since he gives no reasons this cannot be accepted.

For further details on the Manx inscriptions see above, pp. 6-7.

LATHERON (Caithness)

PSAS. xxxviii. 534 (Anderson): ...DUNNODNAT M QQ NEFO...

lxxiv. 76 and pl. XXII (Curle)

Macalister 10: DUNNODNAT MAQQ NETU...

RCAHM 'Caithness' no. 299.

National Museum no. IB. 183.

A class II cross-slab, with a rather primitive (and seemingly unparalleled) form of cross, which Mrs. Curle regards as seventh-century: the stone would go well in her transitional ('early') group¹, since it has a relief cross but incised symbols, like Glamis and Golspie which she cites. She also suggests that the eagle and fish may be the Pictish symbols reinterpreted as Christian ones. Macalister's illustration² is right about the horsemen below the fish. The form of writing is perhaps unlikely to be as early as the seventh century, though the first half of the eighth century is a possible date.³

The inscription is very worn towards the top, so any reading is tentative. The fleasg runs down to the lower edge of the stone in spite of Macalister's drawing, so there may originally have been more letters; but as there is a gap of $1\frac{1}{4}$ " before the first letter, it seems more likely that we have the beginning of the inscription.

- (1) A sloped D, quite clear.
- (2) Three cross-strokes; although very slightly sloped, they are unlikely to be $\overset{\curvearrowright}{N}G$ for reasons of pronunciation, and the rarity of this letter; U is quite acceptable.

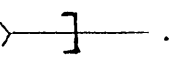
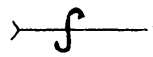
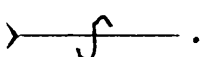
1. PSAS. lxxiv. 82.

2. p. 207.

3. See p. 27.



LATHERON (Photograph: National Museum of Antiquities)

- (3) This letter has usually been read as N, but in fact there are only three scores (= V), followed by a space which could hold two more; as the fleasg is intact and the inscription not excessively worn at this point, V followed by a space seems correct.
- (4) This letter is N; the middle stroke is slightly longer than the others, and the last two cross the fleasg by a short distance.
- (5) - (8) ODNN are clear; the D and first N are sloped (for the sloping of one of a pair of letters, cf. p. 19).
- (9) This is probably the A with serif, but the right-hand part of the serif is very faint (though visible), and wear on the H-side gives the letter a false appearance of .
- (10) This letter is probably T; however, the first and third strokes slope at different angles (cf. a T in Inchyra B.), and the second stroke does not reach the fleasg; the other possible reading is HH, with the second score being the inscriber's mistake (he may have realised before it was complete that in that position the two scores would look like a D, and that the second H ought to be spaced away for clarity).
- (11) An M, very worn but identifiable.
- (12) This letter is illustrated by Macalister as  and taken as A by comparison with vowels at Lunnasting and Bressay (cf. also now Altyre), although it is not identical. This is the most likely reading; the only improvement that can be made is that on the H-side the curl is more angular, thus: .

- (13), (14) Two clear Qs. After them the inscription is very worn and uncertain, but a reading is not impossible.
- (15) An N is visible, as other authorities have seen.
- (16) I could see only one vowel-stroke here, thus A. Others have taken it in conjunction with the following strokes to give longer vowels.
- (17), (18) Two sloping H-strokes, spaced in such a way as to make two separate letters (thus HH) probable. It must have been these which made Macalister postulate his improbable E with only the last two strokes angled. It should be mentioned that there is a possible stroke opposite the second of these two; this would give A, but it is very dubious.
- (19) T is fairly clear; the word 'CAITHNESS' is painted on the last stone, and its/few letters are on the third score.
- (20) There are only two vowel-strokes visible here, though of course there may have been more once, as the inscription breaks off at this point.

The tentative reading is thus:

DUV NODNNA^T_{HH} MAQQNAH^H_A T⁺...

An obvious word-division presents itself, putting MAQQ on its own as the Irish word; and if the reading of the last few letters is valid, then it looks very much like the NEHHT... of Aboyne and elsewhere (cf. Keiss Bay), and the Nechtan known from written sources. The spacing is such that DUV looks as if it must be a separate word. NODNNAT might conceivably have something to do with the Romano-British god Nōdons, Gen. Nōdontos, whose name survives in Irish Nuadu, Welsh Nudd; but this is highly speculative.

LOGIE ELPHINSTONE (Aberdeenshire) ('Carden Moor')

SSS. i pl. 3 (2); p. 4.

ECMS. 189, 190.

Brash p. 358 ('forgery')

Ferguson § 215.

Nicholson F

Diack IV.

Macalister p. 189 and figs. 1, 2.

PSAS. xviii. 189 (Southesk); xxvi. 279 (Rhys 6); xxxii. 357 (Rhys
Athenaeum July 29th, 1882 (Southesk) viii).

G. Moore, 'Pillar Stones', pp. 74 sqq.

This stone is in the garden of the house at Logie Elphinstone (now an hotel) along with several others also brought off Carden Moor.

(Present site: NJ 703258). As others have noted, it is the lapidary equivalent of a palimpsest: crescent-and-V-rod and double-disc-and-Z-rod are placed over a considerably fainter double-disc-and-Z-rod.

The inscription, in a circle, is towards the pointed top of the stone, and one can only assume that it goes with the two later symbols (all quite clear on the photographs in ECMS. and Diack).

Readings are as follows:

Southesk: **ATHAT** BHOTO (starting at 2 o'clock; clockwise).

Rhys¹ : **CAHOHTALIT** (starting at 5 o'clock; clockwise).

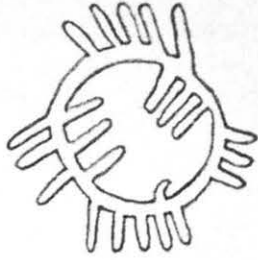
Rhys² : **CA^LT^A** HADBHO (starting at 11 o'clock; clockwise).

Moore : **OBHEN** PETHECH

Ferguson: **TOGTUCH**

Nicholson: **OVOBHVAHTA**

Diack : **CALTIBHO** (starting at 11 o'clock; clockwise).



Logie Elphinstone,
after Macalister.

LOGIE ELPHINSTONE



Allen: HT/C A
 O H A C T L/BA

Macalister does the carver less than credit by assuming that he was trying to produce a symmetrical pattern: considering the accuracy with which the symbols are carved, one need not really take this seriously (though this does not of course discount the possibility that there is a magical purpose behind the circular fleasg).

The inscription is quite clear, and the disagreement in readings is due to the cramped and indefinite layout, and also to the lack of any indication where to start. Theoretically one could also read in either direction; but in practice all seem to have decided that clockwise was correct (this agrees with the slopes of the strokes).

Although there are many places where there are strokes on both sides of the fleasg, yet these very rarely actually meet straight on: usually they just fail to do so. They can be taken as either consonants or vowels, at will.

It seems possible that, owing to the cramped space available, B- and H-group consonants may have been carved overlapping: this makes the following readings all possible, starting at the gap at 10 o'clock:

DDAL		Q	U
C AL	T	CH	BHO
DTV		CAHO	
DTBL			

with alternative readings in descending order of preference. This gives a preferred reading of DDALITQU (or perhaps QUDDALIT: see below), but that is tentative. It assumes, with Allen and others, that the two strokes which do not quite meet at one o'clock are an A;

that the continuation of the second of the four regular strokes at six o'clock is either a mistake or a stone flaw (nobody seems previously to have considered this apparent continuation: presumably because **HAT** or similar would seem too cramped); and that the various strokes at about eight o'clock which fail to meet are intended to do so, and to be read as vowel-scores.

I could not see the supposed continuation of the second stroke of L, though both Diack and Allen have it.¹ Also visible in the photograph, and this time present on the stone, are two little holes inside the circle at the top. These appear to be flaws.

In the strokes at the top of the circle, there is an abrupt change of slope after the first two; this inclines one to separate them off as D. The following three are so alike in slope and size that it is tempting to read them as T, but there is the first of three strokes on the opposite side against this view: the three could be a V overlapping with the preceding letter, but it seems slightly better to take the middle scores as intended to be a vowel and read **DAL**.

It may be preferred to start at five o'clock (where there is an adequate gap to justify it), and thus obtain the reading **QUDDALIT**: since initial consonants are rarely if ever doubled one cannot start at ten o'clock, and there are no other convenient gaps.

The interesting question of wheel-oghams in general and in association with pillar-stones is discussed in the introduction, pp. 13-14 (and cf. Buckquoy).

1. See Diack, pl. 20: he reproduces Allen's photograph and is thus not independent testimony; the horizontal stroke shortly above this is likewise not visible on the stone.

LUNNASTING (Shetland)

ECMS. 12: .TT⁰CUHETTS: AHEHHTMNNN: HCCVVEVV: NEHHTONN

PSAS. xii. 24 (Goudie)

xviii. 202 (Southesk): XTT⁰CUH⁰A⁰TTTS: AH⁰A⁰HHTMNNN: HCCVVEVV:
NEDT: ONN

xxvi. 293 (Rhys 12): .TT⁰CUHETTS: AHEHHTMNNN: HCCVVEVV: NEHHTONN

xxxii. 373 (Rhys xv)

xlii. 342 (Bannerman)

Brash p. 365.

Ferguson p. 134 ('the transliteration is singularly repellent')

Nicholson 0

Goudie 'Antiquities' 35 sqq.

Macalister 13: ETTYCUHETTS AHEHHTMNNN HCCVVEVV NEHHTONN

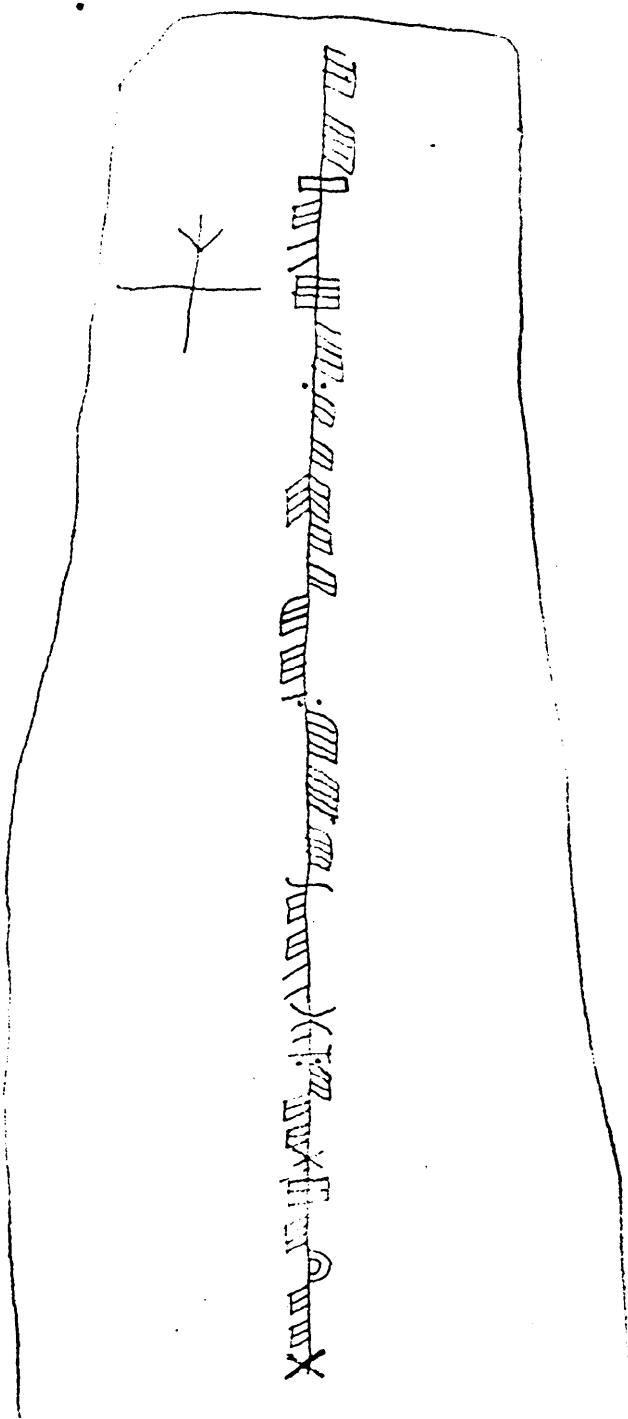
National Museum no. IB. 113.

As can be seen from the great degree of agreement between authorities, this stone is quite clear, and the only real area for doubt is how to interpret various forfeda used in it. It is an almost completely undecorated slab, with just one (unparalleled) mark¹ on the same face as the inscription (there seems no good reason to separate the two in date, with Macalister). The inscription itself is scratched on a stem-line down the middle of one of the broad faces of the slab. Dots are used, presumably to show the gaps between words (as on Bressay and many runic stones); and at one end of the fleasg is a cross, just as on Cunningsburgh III, which is indeed closely comparable in content to start with. As in that inscription, it could be either a mark to show the beginning of the inscription, or

1. CIIC. 104 provides an approximate comparison.

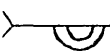

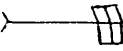


LUNNASTING (Photograph: National
Museum of Antiquities)



Lunneting: after ECMS.

(more probably) an E. Runic inscriptions in *Man* frequently end with a cross¹, but that cannot be so here, as the inscription clearly reads the other way (from consonant-slope and the rule of initial consonants not being doubled).

The other features requiring comment in the first word are as follows: the symbol , usually taken as O or U; Cunningsburgh III starts *ETTECA*... with E as fourth letter, and as this inscription starts *ETT. CU*... it seems best to transliterate it as E, remembering that it might have been an intermediate vowel, rendered  here and E in the Cunningsburgh inscription. The U is very slightly angled, thus: ; the group UHE (containing a second cross as E) is rather cramped. All scores are carefully bound, as indeed they are throughout the inscription (Allen's failure to show the binding on the O, third letter to last, is a slip): this is one of the reasons for its clarity.

The second word contains the A with serif, the split cross for E (as at Aboyne, Burrian, Golspie), with its strokes slightly curved; and a letter, usually taken as M, which is a straight cross-stroke with bent-up ends. A seems best for this, in comparison with Altyre and Bressay vowels. In the three consecutive Ns (cf. Newton), the third has its bind-stroke formed out of a continuation of its final score - a very neat device, used again in this inscription.

The third word contains a further type of E, carved with four angled cross-strokes: this form is not found elsewhere, but Os and As inscribed in this fashion are common. The initial group HCCVV looks fairly unpronounceable, but could in fact be a fairly good attempt to render such a sound as Welsh *chw*- (= /χ^w/).

1. E.g. Kirkmichael, Kermodie 104, pl. LIV.

The final word contains a fifth type of E, the simple straight vowel-strokes being used. The last letter has only three and a half scores: the N of most authorities is an assumption, and it may have been an S. The inscription probably never continued very much further, as it would involve a very long and narrow slab to prolong it much more.

The reading is quite definite:

ETTECUHETS: AHEHTANN: HCCVVEW: NEHTON[†]

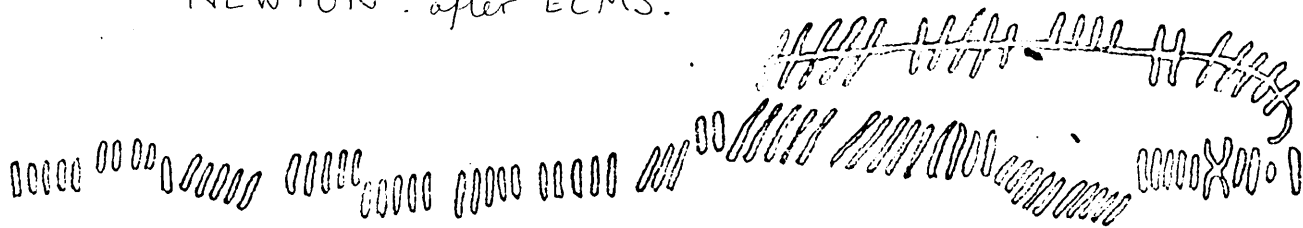
The presence of five different forms of E, even allowing for one or two representing different sounds, is truly remarkable, and in the absence of any other explanation will have to be put down to a desire for variation and decoration (and possibly showing-off his knowledge) on the part of the carver; likewise the two forms of A. The last word is clearly the well-known Pictish name, but the others are not recognisable, except ^{that} the first three syllables of the first seem to be present on Cunningsburgh III, as noted.

NEWTON (Aberdeenshire)

SSS. i pl. I, p. 1.

ECMS. 214, 215.

NEWTON: after ECMS.



- PSAS. v. 224 (Thompson), 289 (Skene)
 vii. 11 (Ralph Carr)
 x. 134 (Brash)
 xiv. 292 (Ralph Carr Ellison)
 xvii. 21 (Southesk)
 xviii. 191 (Southesk)
 xx. 30 (Southesk), 298 (Graves)
 xxvi. 280 (Rhys 7)
 xxxii. 360 (Rhys ix)
 xlii. 56 (Bannerman)
 lxxxviii. 40 (Gordon)

Antiquity ix. 389 (Macalister)

Academy June, September 1892 (pp. 542, 565, 240) (Stokes, Southesk,

Arch. Scot. ii (1822). 317 (Stuart) Ramsay).

Brash p. 359.

Ferguson p. 137.

Nicholson G, Moore 1-73.

Macalister no. 3.

Grid reference NJ/662297

An excellent bibliography up to 1922 is to be found in Diack, pp. 109 sqq.

In the readings below, those in brackets are of R, given where relevant.

Allen IDDAIQNNNVORRENNIPUAIOSRR

Skene UD DDAROT NUN [^]NGORRMAONN EAGE JOSA EI

(DUUD DARURTNUN NGUOROAONTH AEGE JESU EI)

Brash AIDDARCUN [^]FEAN FORRENNI [^]EA_R^IS IOSSAR

Southesk AIDDAIQ^{NN N}_{NEAN} FORRERI IBHUA IOSIE

(PSAS. xx AITTAI FURUR-INGIN SUOL O UOSE URCHN ELISI MAQQI

LOGOU-PATR)

Rhys IDDAIQNNNVORRENNIPUA(IO)IOSIF
 Ferguson UDD MQ QUINSN FOTRENNQ REGS GIST XTLI
 Nicholson AEDDAIQNNNVORRENNIPUAROSIR
 Graves AIDDAI CUNNING ORKONN IP... ROSII
 Moore IDDAI^{CH LHB}_{K N I} NUD^{CHCH}_{K K} DDGG^{NI}EAUIODDIE

This famous stone needs no introduction: Macalister gives a useful resume of the stone's history in Antiquity ix (but his dating conclusions are refuted in PSAS. lxxxviii). It appears to have come originally from near the Shevack toll-house, South of Newton. From the photograph in Dr. Moore's book the stone has evidently been moved at least once within the Newton grounds. For the alphabetic inscription see Appendix. The illustrations of the Ogham (and less so of R) in ECMS. are excellent.

For no very clearly stated reason, all authorities have agreed in reading the Ogham downwards instead of upwards. It is true that it is more plausible when taken that way; and the extra piece added at the bottom is a further indication that this is likely to be the end of the inscription. But this is effectively one of the two Pictish inscriptions in Irish situation (on the corner of an undecorated pillar stone - the second being Auquhollie), though its vowels are different, and it is anomalous that while the vast majority of Pictish stones read upwards like Irish ones, one of these two should read downwards. However this is what the situation appears to be.

Although, on the whole, the inscription appears to be quite unweathered (and the alphabetic one certainly is), it is very hard to read with any certainty, as the vowels and M-group strokes are very similar, and the stem-line is not put in on the corner; this, combined with an inexactness of stroke slope and of the course of the inscription,

means that any reading is rather tentative.

Several readings start with an A at the top, but this is not visible now, if it ever was.

- (1) The I is quite clear, and most agree on this: it is probably too short, as well as being without slope, to be R.
- (2), (3) Two Ds, well spaced, are quite clear.
- (4) Almost all agree that the next letter is A - again the usual Pictish vowel-stroke.
- (5) Five clear strokes, crossing the corner and each one further over to the B-side than the last. From the slope one would say R, but those who claim I can justify this: since the imaginary fleasg is itself at a slope at this point, the strokes are at right angles to it, though not to the general course of the inscription. This may be too subtle, however.
- (6) A further group of five, probably all one letter. They are predominantly to the H-side (and thus have been read as Q by most), but perhaps cross slightly over where one imagines the fleasg to be. Owing to the propensity for doubled letters in Ogham inscriptions, one wonders whether this would entitle one to read R, but although this has great advantages in both pronounceability and meaning, it involves stretching the facts to fit a subjective interpretation. This may or may not be considered justifiable. A further possibility here (suggested by the right-hand photograph in ECMS and also by the stone itself) is of reading AC. On the whole the balance is against because of the spacing, but it is not impossible.
- (7), (8), (9) Three Ns are perfectly clear: well-spaced, and no doubt as to their being to the left of the fleasg. When

people have read differently, it is in an attempt to avoid a combination which is improbable to modern eyes. But since the same occurs in Lunnasting, there seems no reason to avoid it.

- (10) Three strokes, probably on the B-side (thus V). The hypothetical fleasg by this stage has drifted well over to the right, and shortly after this letter it bends back to the left. If one were to imagine it going straight down all the way, then the third N might be I, and this NG (thus Bishop Graves with improbable interpretation). Certainly the slope of this consonant alone among B- and H-group letters is strange (if any were sloped, one would expect one of the doubled letters); but on the whole the former interpretation is more probable, with the sloped V simply due to the carver's whim, or perhaps the beginning of a new word.
- (11) Two short strokes at right-angles. If one extrapolates the fleasg in the most probable way, then these form O; but they do not go far beyond the tips of the V, and D would be a possibility, though rather unlikely from most points of view.
- (12), (13) Two Rs seem quite legible here: the reading of these is quite important, since one's extrapolation of the stem-line for the previous three letters depends on whether one puts it through the middle of these strokes or to their left; but from their size, M-strokes are likely, so that ..NVORR.. may be safely taken as the most probable reading.
- (14) Four vowel-strokes, equally spaced, with the first two prolonged into a point on one side. Disregarding the last feature one would read E; or one could postulate that OO was intended, and that the ends of the first O were joined after

the carver had realised the ambiguity of four simple strokes. Doubled vowels are very rare, however, and the 'correction' could have been done more clearly.

(15), (16) Two Ns, very cramped, their strokes of somewhat irregular length, and tending strongly to the left. It looks very much as if these are trying to avoid the following letters, which has great importance for the relative dates of different parts of the inscription. (In this context should also be noted that below where the supplementary fleasg comes in, the angle of the stone looks defaced - perhaps as if an inscription there has been removed - to be replaced by the supplementary fleasg?) At any rate these letters seem to close one section of the inscription, if the next letter was already there.¹

(17) I is quite clear - five short strokes at right angles.

(18) A shapely example of the E-forfid, its strokes curved in the manner of a Greek Chi. With vowels preceding and following, this must be taken with consonantal value, as at Burrian; therefore K or P. Southesk's comparison of the Crickhowell P² is not really justified, since there the form is the usual cross to the side of the fleasg. Here we have the form common in Ireland (though with straight strokes) for K, usually in KOI (see examples cited on page 21). If the cross corresponds to the swastika in R, it may not be a forfid at all, but have some further meaning.

1. And cf. Gordon's conclusion (PSAS. lxxxviii) that the two Oghams are in different hands though in the same basic technique.

2. CIIC. 327.

- (19) Three very obscure strokes: the first is mainly to the B-side, the second goes right across, and the third is a mere nick. They are spaced as for one letter, and are of vowel size for the **most** part, so U seems best.

At the point where the supplementary fleasg comes in, nothing is very clear. Allen's illustrations show well the situation: after bending round quite reasonably towards the corner of the stone, the fleasg suddenly does an extra angle turn, to go up and almost meet the end of the U's third stroke. After a gap from the angle, there is a letter A exactly where the fleasg would have gone had it not done the extra bend. This 'A' and the extra bend probably ought to be disregarded: since the fleasg clearly comes in above the vowel-stroke, it cannot be intended as part of the inscription, if the latter is to be read as one continuous whole. But it must be admitted that there are many questions regarding this part of the inscription (and the apparently erased part below) to which we have no answer.

- (20) The first letter on the extra fleasg is apparently I: as the fleasg curves fairly sharply **one** cannot tell whether a slope is intended or not; but the strokes would be inordinately short for an R.

- (21) Two cross-strokes, probably an O. They are longer than those of I, but there is almost no slope on them, so G is improbable.

- (22) Four strokes to the right - clearly an S.

- (23), (24) These letters are composed of long sloping cross-strokes - presumably M-group. The first is definitely of five strokes (thus R), but the second has only four visible, in spite of what most authorities (including Allen) have said. This is the only place on the stone where uncertainty is due

to wear, and a fifth stroke is possible (in Allen's illustration the inscription has evidently been chalked in); but the wear is not severe, and this seems unlikely. By the end of the first four strokes the fleasg is very faint, and it does not continue beyond them much. -SRR has to be admitted as slightly more plausible than -SRZ (Z being extremely uncommon anyway), but unfortunately the stone does not support this interpretation. However, the slope on these two letters is such that they might be vowels, though they would be rather long ones. In that case the reading is $\overset{\dagger}{\text{IE}}$.

So the final reading, omitting some of the less likely alternatives, is:

$\overset{\text{Q}}{\text{I}}\text{DDARR}\overset{\text{Q}}{\text{I}}\text{NNNVORRENN} \quad \overset{\text{K}}{\text{I}}\overset{\text{A}}{\text{P}}\text{U}(\text{A}) \quad \overset{\text{Z}}{\text{I}}\text{OSR}\overset{\text{Z}}{\text{I}}\text{E}$

It will be seen that to read R at the 6th letter would give a word very similar to the **EDDARRNONN** of Scoonie and Brodie, and to the Pidarnoin of Fordoun; but that does not prove it to be the correct reading in this instance.

The wobbliness of the inscription has been compared (by Skene) with the Faunkill inscription¹; and certainly the forms of some of the letters (the Ns bending away from the fleasg) are very similar. But that does not necessarily mean that there is the same reason in each case for the particular forms; and if Macalister's reasoning about the Faunkill stone is correct, then the reasons are probably quite different (since no part of the Newton stone is out of reach).

With **VORRENN** one may compare the tentative reading of Allen's

1. CIIC. 66.

on Burrian: UORRANN.

There are many possibilities for various phases of use of the stone, which have not been fully developed by previous writers. First, the strange occurrence of the extra fleasg at the bottom - together with the apparently defaced part below: They imply that the inscriber started to continue the inscription towards the bottom, but on finding he had not enough room turned the fleasg upwards again and rewrote on it everything that he had been going to put below that point, defacing anything already there as being now redundant. This implies a singular lack of planning on the inscriber's part, but is still the most plausible explanation (though an alternative would be that an ineradicable mistake was made in the now-erased part, so that it had to be rewritten; but this would not explain why the fleasg was turned upwards, instead of running down parallel with the erased part).

Secondly, one might deduce from the way the fourth and fifth Ns run that IPU... was already there, possibly even before the higher inscription was begun. This is admittedly not the case (by Macalister's explanation anyway) of the very similar Ns at Faunkill mentioned above, but no other explanation immediately presents itself. However, it is inconceivable that an inscription should have begun where IPU... does, running downwards, especially if there was doubt whether there would be room. Perhaps IPU... was put in at approximately the right point after the upper inscription had been started, but before it was complete; or else the carver had a special reason for wanting this section to be at that particular point. It should be remembered in this context that according to Gordon¹ the second ogham is in a 'different and more careless hand', but is of fundamentally the same technique. The

1. PSAS. lxxxviii. 44.

question remains a mystery, like the downward direction of the inscription.

NORTH UIST (Valley Island) (BAC MHIC CHONNAIN)

Macalister 21: BELANCEN UCOTA

RCAHM 'Outer Hebrides and Small Isles' no. 271 (p. 89) deals with
the site.
PSAS. lvi. 12; lxvi. 56 (fig. 11) and p. 65 (Callander):

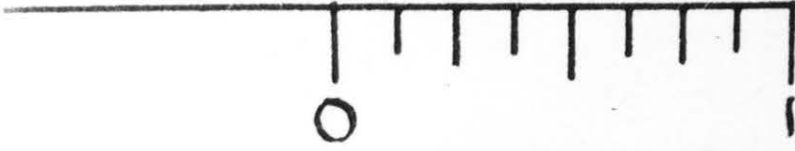
MAQUNM(?)DENC^OTT

PPS. n. s. xiv (1948), 75-76 (Sir Lindsay Scott)

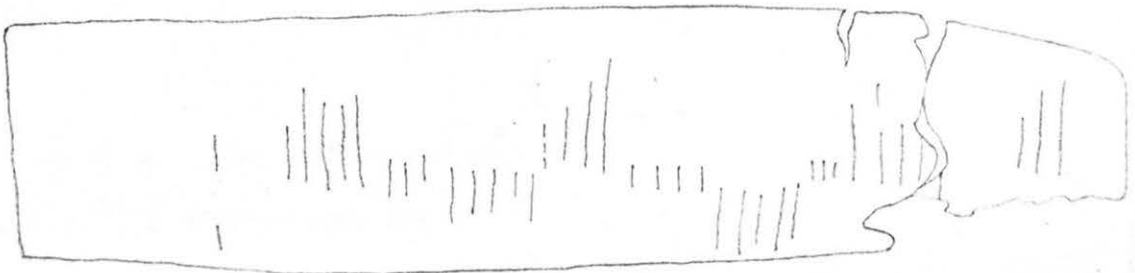
National Museum no. GNB. 134: MEQUNTENUCOT

Macalister has an excellent photograph of this knife-handle at fig. 8 (opposite p. 218). There is slight difficulty as to where the fleasg should run, and B- and H-group strokes are somewhat variable in length; but the vowels are clear, being short nicks.

- (1) The first stroke is clearly visible on the H-side, but a patch of weathering on the B-side obscures its nature; there is a small line further out from the weathering that might be a continuation of the stroke: such a long stroke at right angles would probably be M; but in view of the doubt over the B-side, H is also possible.
- (2) Then a gap which probably held one or two vowel-strokes, now worn away.
- (3) Q seems fairly certain for this. Macalister's BE is quite untenable: although the outer ends of the strokes are of different lengths, the inner ends all stop on the fleasg (Macalister's fleasg is a short distance over to the left). Furthermore, the spacing is in favour of one letter for these five strokes; and four such long strokes for E would



NORTH UIST (Photograph: National Museum)



be against the other vowels in this inscription.

- (4) In this U, composed of three short nicks, it would similarly be reading too much into the comparative length to take it as LA, with Macalister.
- (5) Five strokes to the right, giving N. The third and fourth strokes are scarcely visible, and the letter is thus not certain, though very probable.
- (6) Either three or four strokes to the left (T or C). The indefinite one would be very close to the last of N, if it is a stroke; but there is no reason why this should not be.
- (7) Four nicks, giving an E. The fourth is less clear than the others.
- (8) Five unequally-long strokes to the right - clearly N. These are followed by some smudging and extremely close-packed indentations, read by Macalister and the National Museum's label as U; but Callander may be right to ignore them. Perhaps there is a single vowel-stroke (A) rather closer to the N than to the ensuing letter, but there is not really room for anything more.
- (9) Although parts of the C's strokes are missing owing to the break towards the blade, its nature is not in doubt.
- (10) Most writers assume an O at this point, and the space is about right for it; but the only trace of any letter at all is to the right of the fleasg immediately after the break. This could be part of a B-group letter or of a vowel. There is no trace of anything else having ever existed between this and the following letter; but whatever came in between C and T could well have had at least one more stroke besides this fragment, since the extent of the lost position

over the break is unclear (though the tapering shows that it cannot amount to very much).

- (11) The final T is clear, and there is no trace of anything else following it.

The reading is thus:

$$\begin{array}{c} M \\ H \end{array} \dots QUN \begin{array}{c} T \\ C \end{array} EN \left(\begin{array}{c} A \\ U \end{array} \right) C \dots T$$

It is possible that it should instead be read in the opposite direction, giving

$$V \dots \begin{array}{c} A \\ S \end{array} \begin{array}{c} V \\ Q \end{array} ESQUN \dots \begin{array}{c} M \\ B \end{array}$$

The only argument in favour of either of these is that the Gurness knife-handle seems (on uncertain grounds) to read towards the blade; if followed here this rule would support the former reading.

This inscription, like the Weeting knife-handle, comes from outside the Pictish area; this is probably an aspect of the ease with which they can be carried, rather than an implication of any particular Pictish settlement or influence in the Outer Hebrides. This is especially true in the context of the Norse raids, when ships may often have touched first at Orkney in Britain, and then have continued down the east or west coasts, but on the whole the knife-handle inscriptions seem to date from before Viking times.

The writing-up of the earth-house in PSAS. lxvi does not, unfortunately, give any indication of the probable date of the use of the building; but in the absence of any other factors the knife-handle may probably be put at seventh to ninth centuries (these being the main limits of the Pictish inscriptions). In so short an inscription one cannot draw many conclusions about letter-forms, but it is notable that the lack of *forfeda* is in the same inscription as vowels of a

distinctly Irish type.

[RAYNE (Aberdeenshire)

PSAS. lix. 269 (Diack)

Diack claims to have seen in the Parish of Rayne a 'stone with ogham-like marks . . . in a wall'. However, he seems never to have followed this up (I am told by the librarian of Aberdeen University Library, where Diack's papers now are, that no mention of this can be found), and since even he seems to have been fairly uncertain that it was actually an inscription, it may safely be discounted.

In this category also come: Papil (Shetland), PSAS. lxxviii. 94 and Traprain Law, PSAS. liv. 72 and fig. 7 (p. 66) no. 42, where comment has been made that marks 'resemble Ogham letters'. In neither case is the resemblance of any significance.]

ST. NINIAN'S ISLE (Shetland) (I)

ECMS. 13: BESMEQQNANA^{MM}_GOVVEF

PSAS. xii. 24 (Goudie): ..ESMEQQNANAMMOFFEST

xviii. 204 (Southesk): ..ESMEQQNANAGOFFEST

xxvi. 296 (Rhys 15): ^B_NESMEQQNANA^{MM}_GOVVEF

xxxii. 376 (Rhys xviii)

Brash p. 364: As Goudie.

Ferguson p. 134: ..ESMEQQNAN AMMOFFEST

Nicholson K : LESMEQQNANAMMOVVEST

Goudie 'Antiquities', 30 sqq.

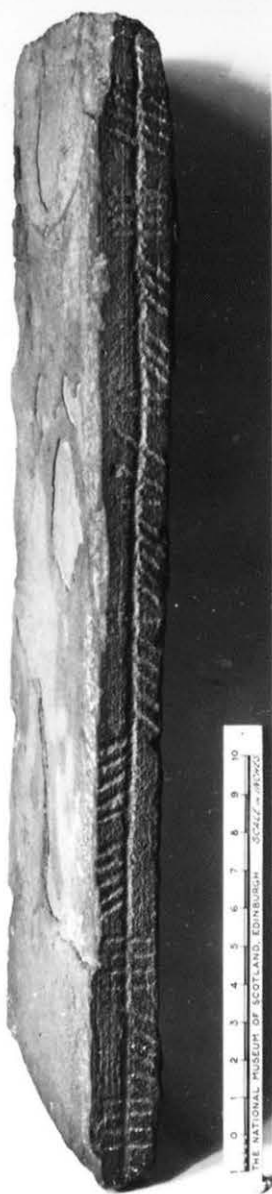
Macalister no. 9 : †LESMEQQNANAMMOVVEZ

Diack VIII.

National Museum no. IB. 112.



St. Ninian's Isle: after ECMS.



ST. NINIAN'S ISLE (Photograph:
National Museum of Antiquities)

The lettering on this undecorated flaky slab, carefully shaped, is very clear and regular. There can be practically no doubt about the reading - as is borne out by the consensus of opinions quoted.

(1) A single stroke to the right, B. What Macalister claims to be the remains of another is probably simply the wear at the breakage of the stone. However, there may well have been previous strokes in this letter (as there may also have been previous letters: thus (. . .) B⁺

(2)-(11) ~~ESMEQQNANA~~ are all perfectly clear; the vowels are simple cross-strokes, and the B- and H-group consonants slope regularly.

(12)-(13) These are usually (correctly) taken as MM, being two sloping cross-strokes. The reading G (Southesk, Allen, Rhys) will not do, because the spacing is quite definite (and being so regular elsewhere in the inscription it cannot be doubted here). Diack's point that there is slightly different slope on the two letters, to differentiate them further, may be correct (it is very slight if so); but the situation is further muddled by a small hole on the H-side just before (and joining) the first M. This was taken by Macalister to be a mistaken A, but in fact is simply a stone flaw.

(14)-(18) OVVEZ are ~~again~~ quite clear. What the phonetic value was of the final letter is not known (though according to the *Auraicept* tract it is variously st, str, stm and even s): the transliteration as z is a mere convenience.¹ It is

1. Its value certainly was not f, which is how it used to be transliterated in the nineteenth century (e. g. by Rhys).

unlikely, but not at all impossible, that the inscription continued after this: it gives the impression of stopping at this point.

In letter-style and in situation this inscription is very similar to Bressay; but there is a marked difference in that it is quite devoid of forfeda or decorated forms of any kind; nor is there any attempt at word-division. The absence of these features, however, is probably not enough to stop us from putting the stones quite close together in date and cultural milieu.

In the reading (...) [†]BESMEQQNANAMMOVVEZ it is likely that MEQQ is Old Irish meicc, Genitive of macc¹; if so, then it is a reasonable assumption that BES and NANAMMOVVEZ (or the first part of it) are names. There is a striking similarity to the Altyre inscription, where again the Irish loan-word comes very near to the start of the legend, and is followed by a very long series of letters.

ST. NINIAN'S ISLE (Shetland) (II, III)

PSAS. xii. 24 (Goudie)

lxxviii. 94 (Moore and Stewart)

Brash p. 365.

Goudie 'Antiquities' pp. 34-35.

Sir Gilbert Goudie evidently found two other fragments of ogham inscriptions at St. Ninian's Isle; but they seem to have been irretrievably lost.

1. See Jackson, PP. 141-142 and above, p.31.

SCOONIE (Fife)

SSS. ii pl. 12, p. 6.

ECMS. 360: EDDARRNONN

PSAS. xviii. 183 (Southesk): EDDARRBALMONN(EN)

xxvi. 267 (Rhys 1): EHTARRNONN

xxvii. 411 (Rhys)

xxxii. 344 (Rhys ii)

Brash p. 353: DOCEIOSOSN

Ferguson p. 140: As Allen.

Nicholson A: EHTARRBAVONN

Diack XI: As Allen.

MacAlister 2: As Allen

National Museum no. IB. 110.

A class II cross-slab (as at Golspie, Latheron and Glamis, the cross is in relief, whereas the symbols and other details are incised). It is rather weathered, as well as being incomplete, but the inscription up the right-hand side of the back can be read with some assurance. There is what may be part of an inscription at the bottom left corner of the back: clearly visible in Allen's photograph. If an Ogham at all, it seems to be a solitary A with serif. (If it is not an Ogham, it is hard to see what it can be.)

The fleasg is somewhat wavy and broken by the hunt-scene (thus post-dating it, but fitting in as part of the face's composition), but clear throughout.

(1) Four vowel-strokes: E. As the stone is mounted, the first of these is not visible (nor does it appear in Allen's photograph); but I have had the wood removed, and this letter is quite certain (though whether anything ever preceded it is unclear, but doubtful).



SCOONIE (Photograph : National Museum
of Antiquities)

(2), (3) Two Ds. Why anybody should have read there HT is a mystery: they are nearly equally spaced, but the second letter (unlike the first) is sloped, to differentiate it.

(4) A single cross-stroke: A.

(5) Two groups of five M-group strokes: RR. The second letter is at less of a slope than the first, but could hardly be read as I.

(6) Five strokes to the right. The first of these has a short and shallow continuation across the fleasg, presumably a mistake (or analogous with the Golspie Qs, though with less reason for it here). There is also a patch of weathering just beyond this first stroke, which has produced a dark shadow in Allen's photograph but is not part of a letter. This group is thus to be read N, with Allen and others. After it the foreleg of a stag crosses the fleasg and the N is slightly cramped to fit in before it.

(7) Two vowel-strokes: O. On their left side they abut on the stag's chest. At this point the fleasg is rather faint.

(8) This group is very weathered, and is not visible at all in Allen's photograph. But there are present five B-group strokes, of which the fifth abuts on to the stag's muzzle instead of the fleasg. Unlike the previous N, they are at a slope; and are also very cramped (again owing to the stag's presence).

(9) A clear N, more widely spaced than other letters, and hardly sloping at all, closes the inscription (the fleasg stops very shortly after this).

The reading is thus fairly certainly EDDARENONN, which is closely comparable with a probable name of the same form on Brodie (see under Brodie and Introduction).

WEETING (Norfolk)

Antiquaries' Journal xxxii. 71 and pl. XXIIIa (R. R. Clarke).

Proc. Cambridge Ant. Soc. xlvi (1953). 32 (Lethbridge).

Norfolk Archaeology xxxi. 184-187 (R. R. Clarke).

Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmwr. 1959. 40-42 (G. L. Wrenn).

R. R. Clarke 'East Anglia' (APP.) Illn. 44; pp. 139, 230.

D. Diringer 'the Alphabet' (3rd edn.) vol. II (illns.) 21. 11 (c)

(wrongly captioned: see vol. I p. 417).

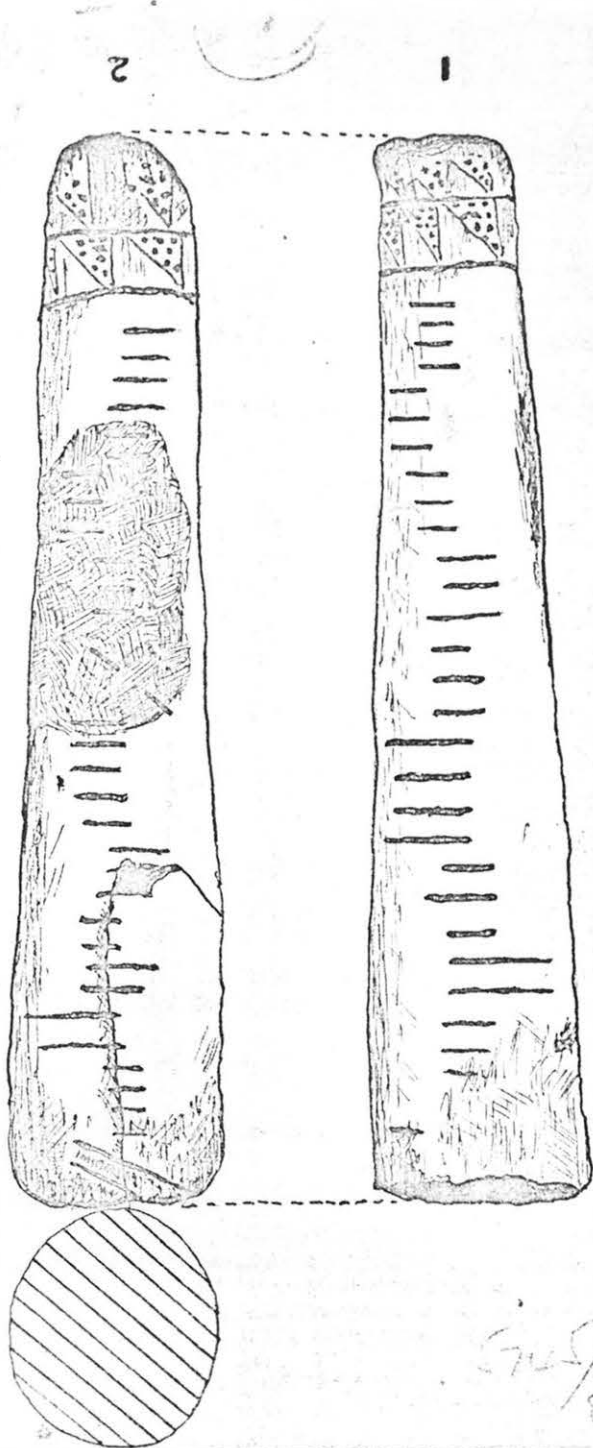
Norwich Castle Museum (Reg. No. 24. 950)

Clarke: (U)IUCUVUTE C(OVUM)ITELEG

or EVUTUSUD(U) GEDEVI(MUTO)S

This, the third of the knife-handle inscriptions, was picked up on the ground at Grid Ref. TL 758872 near a (Roman) archaeological site in 1947. It is made of antler, and apart from its decoration is very similar to those from Gurness and Bac Mhic Chonnain. Lethbridge's hypothesis that it is of earlier iron-age date and not an ogham at all (he compares other finds at illns. 1, 2, 36 on p. 27 of his article) will not really hold: the inscription resembles other oghams too strongly for that. However, there are only the two Pictish examples to make this one Pictish: otherwise (and apart from being incomprehensible) it could equally well be Irish in origin. Like that from Uist, its presence is most easily explained as being due to trade or (Viking?) raiders.

The handle has decoration of dots within triangles at its narrow (hafted) end; the inscription runs along opposite sides of it, and there is no indication which way it should be read. One side (no. 2 in Clarke's drawing) has severe wear, and the inscription is not really legible at this point. Doubt also arises throughout since there is no



WEETING: Dr. Rainbird Clarke's
 Illustration (by courtesy of the Castle
 Museum, Norwich)

fleasg, but the carving is careful and this is not a serious problem.

The two readings will be taken towards the blade (cf. Gurness, Bac Mhic Chonnain), but will be quoted in both directions.

(A) The side without wear (Clarke's 1).

A patch of wear starts this side but it does not seem ever to have contained anything. The long stroke on the H-side before it is probably not a letter (being longer than other strokes).

(1) Three short strokes across: U. Half the first is lost in the worn patch, and the letter may originally have been longer. The vowel-strokes are very short, almost of Irish type.

(2) Two long B-group strokes: L.

(3) Three vowel-strokes: U.

(4) Four H-group strokes: C.

(5) Three vowel-strokes: U.

(6) V. The first of the three strokes is longer than the next two, which would hardly cross the fleasg if it were drawn.

(7) A further U.

(8) T.

(9) E, written with gradually lengthening strokes (though on the whole the vowels, especially on this side, are quite short).

(B) The side with a worn patch (Clarke's 2).

(1) Apparently the remains of a G, being one and a half long sloping cross-strokes. However, the handle would have to have been about a quarter-inch longer to accommodate the rest of the G (it may have been longer still, though for convenience it probably was not much longer).

(2) Four short strokes, probably E, though slightly to one side of the putative fleasg. The second has a faint continuation across, probably a slip.

- (3) D
- (4) A group of four strokes, the last three clearly vowels; but the first might be either another vowel-stroke, or else a B. It is decidedly close to the other three if it is a separate letter, so E is more probable.
- (5) There are traces of three B-group strokes here, though the first two are a little cramped. A patch of wear has obliterated most of them, but V is fairly sure.
- (6) Four vowel-strokes are clear, running into the illegible patch. This letter could be either E or I therefore.
- After this R. R. Clarke's hypothetical restoration cannot be accepted, as examination of the bone showed no evidence for it, except an end of his M sticking out of the dark patch. However, even this is dubious, since it must have been at a considerably greater slope than the G if this is its end. However, it may be tentatively accepted as the sixth letter, after which comes a gap of four to five strokes.
- (7) Two H-group strokes are visible emerging from the worn patch, thus D or a longer letter.
- (8) Two vowel strokes in this still unclear part: O.
- (9) Four B-group strokes, giving S, finish the inscription.

The readings are thus:

- (A) $\overset{+}{U}L\overset{+}{L}U\overset{+}{C}U\overset{+}{V}U\overset{+}{T}E$ (or $\overset{+}{E}V\overset{+}{U}T\overset{+}{U}S\overset{+}{U}D\overset{+}{U}$ away from the blade)
- (B) $\overset{+}{G}E\overset{+}{D}E\overset{+}{V}E\overset{+}{M}....\overset{+}{D}O\overset{+}{S}$ (or $\overset{+}{C}O\overset{+}{L}....\overset{+}{M}E\overset{+}{T}E\overset{+}{L}E\overset{+}{G}$ in the other direction)

The preponderance of Us in one and Es in the other alignment is very strange, and makes one wonder how meaningful this inscription ever was (one might compare similar meaningless inscriptions from Ireland, e. g. CIIC 72, Aultagh).

In conclusion, it should perhaps be pointed out that Wrenn's

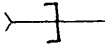
philological surmises are wholly without foundation, since, if the bone is analogous in date with the other knife-handles (seventh-eighth century?), it is unlikely to have the earlier endings **-I** or **-AS**. Moreover, the contents clearly are not Irish, and if they are Pictish they are not Celtic-Pictish. All in all, a magical formula or something analogous seems most likely.

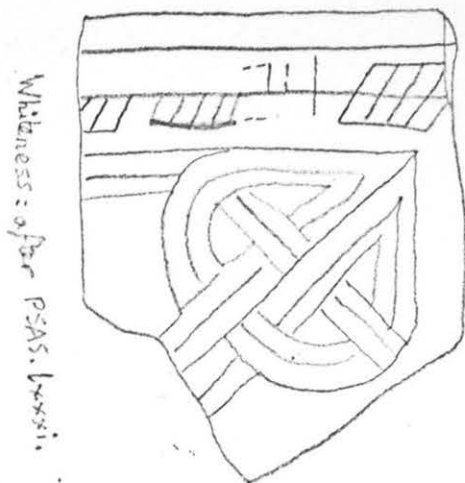
WHITENESS (Shetland)

PSAS. lxxxii. 191-193 and pl. XXII (4).

National Museum no. IB. 256.

A small fragment of sandstone, bearing interlace and a few Ogham letters. These are bind-oghams (cf. Abernethy and others), and several are quite clear. The slope of two letters shows us which way to read it.

- (1) The remains of a B-group letter which originally held at least three strokes, thus V, S or N.
- (2) A clear N. The bind stroke is slightly curved as the first stroke is a little shorter than the others; and it also appears to continue a short distance beyond the first stroke.
- (3) This letter gives every appearance of having the shape  but this would be quite unparalleled in Oghams. It could be a much-worn D, with the side strokes being attributable to wear, and further hints of a second stroke accepted as such.
- (4) An A, fairly clear.
- (5) A clear R, of which half the last stroke is lost. The binding on the left side is less clear than elsewhere. The reading is thus ...⁺VNDAR (with ...NNDAR perhaps the most probable of the possibilities, since the predilection



WHITNESS (Photograph: National Museum)

1 0 1 2 3 Inches



for doubled letters makes two Ns here a strong possibility; this would reduce the consonant cluster).

Appendix

For the sake of completeness, the early inscriptions in Roman letters from Pictland are here listed cursorily, though not all are necessarily of a date with the Pictish Oghams.

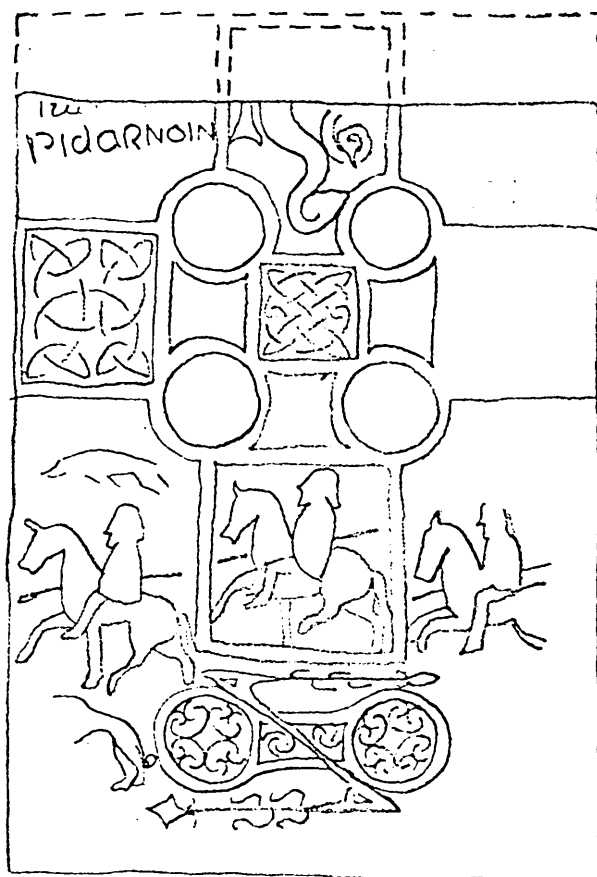
FORDOUN (Kincardineshire)

SSS. i pl. 67 (no inscrn.)

ECMS. 217.

PSAS. xxvi. 252 (Allen); xxxii. 347 (Rhys v)

Diack XVI.



Fordoun: after ECMS.

Macalister no. 6.

The stone is not now in St. Palladius' chapel but in the church of Fordoun beside it (in the village of Auchenblae), Grid Reference NO/726784. There used to be at least two lines of mixed half-uncials and capitals on this class II stone; but the upper one is almost entirely lost and nothing can now be made of it (pace Macalister's *urtesi*). However, the second line, though worn, is clearly legible, and reads *pidarmoin* as all are agreed.

This word obviously bears some relation to the *EDDARRNON* of, for example, Brodie and Scoonie. Macalister may be right that the *p* is the last letter of the previous word; but this is hypothetical. Nothing more can really be said (for the name involved see under Brodie); the temptation to see the ending *-oin* as an Irish genitive singular of nominative *-on* should probably be resisted.

Dr. Stevenson puts the decoration on this stone at the mid-eighth century, and Professor Jackson says that the lettering is probably eighth-century, too.

LETHNOTT (Angus)

ECMS. 272.

CIIC. 509.

Diack XVII (well illustrated, pl. 19)

PSAS. xix. 315.

National Museum no. IB. 132.

This stone has the remains of three lines of Hiberno-Saxon capitals; only the lower two are legible (pace Macalister), and read *fili medicii* quite clearly. The stone is class III, and Dr. Stevenson puts the



Lethnott: from ECMS.
Spiral & interlace
sculpting on the
other face.

decoration in the first half of the ninth century. Professor Jackson, however, suggests that the lettering may be eighth century.

NEWTON (Aberdeenshire)

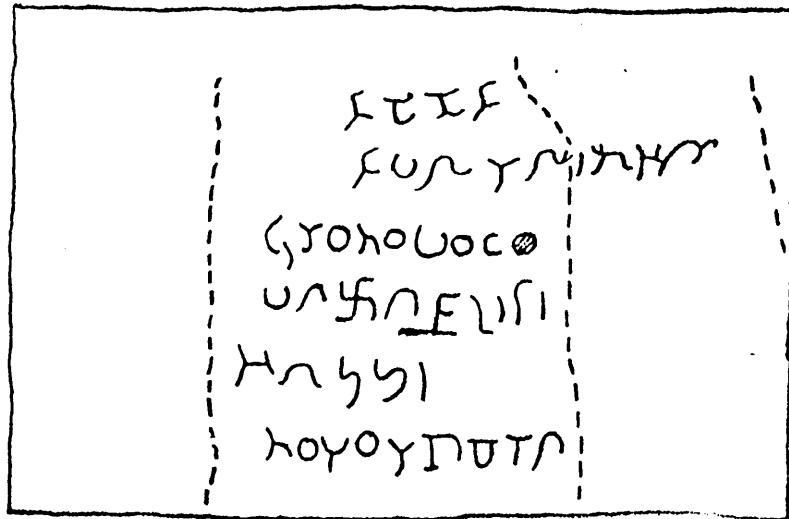
Bibliography as under Newton in the Ogham section, but especially:

ECMS. 214, 215.

Antiquity ix. 389 (Macalister)

PSAS. lxxxviii. 40 (Gordon)

Diack's bibliography, pp. 109 sqq.



Newton: Roman inscription, after Southesk.

Unfortunately I am unable to make anything of the carvings on the face of the stone, so will rest content with the following observations. First, Gordon has proved satisfactorily that they are ancient, and thus probably associated with the Ogham. Secondly, it is most unlikely that anything so elaborate would be meaningless: there is sense in it, could one but arrive at it. Thirdly, as Rhys and others have seen, the first line looks like (but may not be) ette, which is similar to IDDAI at the beginning of the Ogham. Beyond this the similarity ceases, except for the possible correspondence between the swastika and the E-forfid, for which no ready explanation comes to mind.

Even if it were decipherable, of course, the stone might not be a 'Rosetta stone for the Pictish Oghams': it is probably more like some of the Welsh oghams, which have the same inscription in two alphabets (though others, admittedly, are in two languages). But this does not detract at all from the very great interest that would arise if somebody were to decipher this most tantalising of inscriptions.

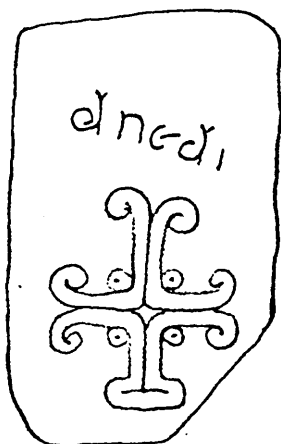
PAPA STRONSA (Orkney)

SSS. i p. 14; pl. 42.

PSAS. xxvi. 291 (Rhys 10); xxxii. 372 (Rhys xiii).

ECMS. 21.

There does not appear to be any modern information as to the whereabouts of this class III stone, last mentioned (Allen) as being in the possession of 'Mr. Heddle of Milsetter'. The museum at Kirkwall would be a likely place. Rhys reads the stone as *dne iæsu* but seems very unsure of himself; Allen appears more confident in reading *dne di*.



Papa Stronsa
after ECMS.

ST. NINIAN'S ISLE (Shetland) no. 4

Antiquity xxxiii (T. J. Brown); xxxiv. 38 (Jackson).

Picts (APP.) pl. 25.

ed. O'Dell, 'the St. Ninian's Isle treasure', p. 46.

The writing on this probable sword-chape is in a miniscule hand, considered by Professor Jackson to be eighth century or earlier ninth century, which agrees with the opinion of art-historians on the date

ST. NINIAN'S ISLE: No 4 (from Antiquity xxxiv)



Fig. 1. *Inscription (1).*



Inscription (2).

of the hoard. The two inscriptions (one on each side) read:

- (1) in nomine d s (= dei summi)
- (2) resad fili spusscio

The script of the first is slightly neater and more formal. The second is particularly interesting for giving one of the clearest examples of what are presumably Pictish names. *spusscio* is interesting as well for showing a double s, which may be a parallel to the common habit of doubling letters in the stone inscriptions (though this is of course a common practise in Irish oghams as well).

It is notable that oghams and Roman letters seem to have been used concurrently, presumably by the general populace, for chattel inscriptions (probably to indicate ownership): compare Buckquoy and the three knife-handles (and also the Hunterston Brooch and Stockrue Broch whorl for a third alphabet, not much later in date).

ST. VIGEAN'S (Angus) ('The Drosten-Stone')

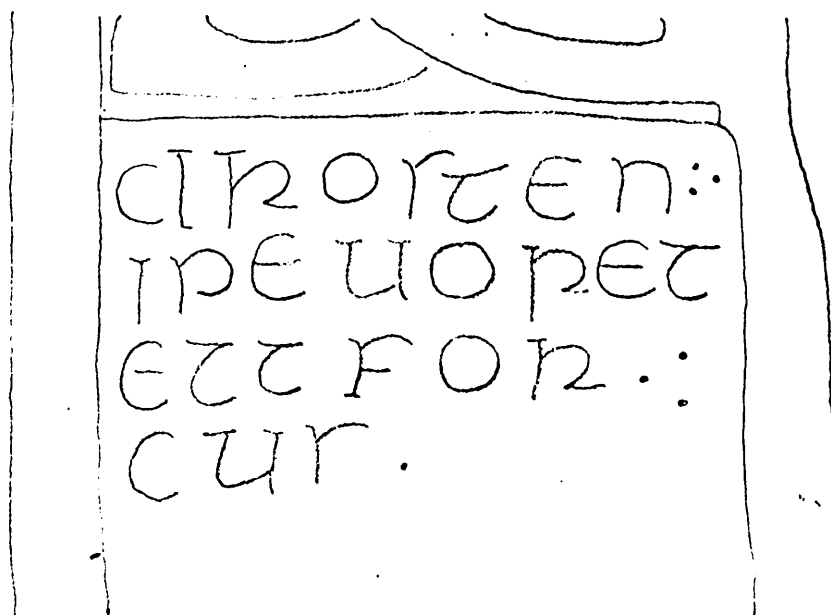
SSS. i pl. 69; ii pll. 126, 128 (p. 70).

ECMS. 250-252.

PSAS. i. 81, 294.

vii. 19 (R. Carr)

ix. 496 and pl. 23, no. 5.



• St. Vigean's : after ECMS.

xxvi. 268 (Rhys 3)

xxxii. 346 (Rhys iv)

Nicholson C

Diack XV.

Macalister 4.

'Picts' (APP.) pl. 26.

PP. 123, 140 sqq.

This magnificent class II stone in the St. Vigean's museum has an inscription in rounded miniscule at the bottom of one of its narrower sides. Professor Jackson dates the lettering to the ninth century, and Dr. Stevenson the decoration to the middle or later ninth century. Though there have been other versions, it is generally agreed that it

reads:

drosten :.

ipeuoret

ettfor :.

cus

There was considerably more space available for the inscription, had it been needed; the three dots are apparently used to fill up the line where it was not wanted to insert the next letter or two (which implies that it may fall into words largely as it appears on the stone), and thus are not comparable with the dots in the Bressay and Lunnasting oghams, which are word-dividers. According to Macalister¹ the three dots are paralleled on the Fordoun stone. I have been unable to confirm this.

There are many possibilities for identification of the names on this stone, depending partly on how one divides the words up; but Drostan is an attested Pictish name in many sources: ATig. 713, AFM. 717; AU. 718 and the Book of Deer Notes all have that form as the Nominative; there is an Irish genitive Drostein at AU. 712 (= ATig. 713; cf. Nechtain, ATig. 635, 686, etc.; Jackson, 'Book of Deer Notes' p. 42), with which Stokes compares Hübner's Drostagni (?).² He also quotes a gen. sg. Druisten on f. 92 r. of Laud MS. 610 (the Irish Nennius). There are also several kings called Drust in PKL (with a genitive Drosto at ATig. 678). The -an/-en ending is from *-agnos (cf. Hübner's reading),

1. p. 198.

2. TPS. 1888-90 p. 401. Hübner's reading is in Inscr. Chr. Brit., no. 20, from Castledor; = CIIC. 487. The reading is difficult (Macalister Cirusinius), but cf. Mrs. Bronwich, Cymmr. Trans. 1953 pp. 47-48, and TYP. 445, where it appears that the reading of Hübner is supported by Raleigh Radford and Professor Jackson.

and the forms without it may imply that -an remained a formative suffix in Pictish (cf. Talorc, Talorggan, and others). The name is the origin of the Arthurian Tristan¹, and seems also to have given rise to Trostansfjörður, the name of a fjord in Iceland which occurs in Landnámabók (it is in fact the upper part of Patreksfjörður).²

As regards the other words, there is a 'Forcus son of Mac-Erce' in Adomnan, *Vita S. Columbae* i. 7, also mentioned by Stokes. It is an Irish name (from *Worgustus 'super-choice'), and is not the same as Fergus (from *Wirogustus 'choice man'). A mixture of Irish and Pictish names is quite acceptable in a ninth-century inscription. If Uoret is a name one may compare Wrad, a name in PKL, and Old Breton Uuoret.³ In this case ett may be Latin (or possibly a Pictish inflexion of some kind, cf. Golspie ALLHALLORREDD, Keiss Bay NEHTET); alternatively it is possible that the woman's name Ete⁴ is present.

TARBAT (Ross and Cromarty)

ECMS. 96.

CIIC. 513.

'Picts' (APP.) pl. 27.

National Museum, IB.172.

This class III stone has a long and legible (though incomplete) inscription with the letters in relief, not sunken. Macalister and Allen read:

IN NOMI

NEIHUXPI

1. TYP. 329 sqq.

2. Íslenzk Fornrit I, pp. 178, 179.

3. PP. 140.

4. Book of Deer Notes, III. 1.

CRUX XPI

INCOM M

EMORAT

IONE REO

.... TII

.EQUIESC

The lettering is similar to that on Lethnott, and Kermode¹ compares that of a cross at Kirk Maughold in Man.² The relief nature of the letters is however quite unparalleled.

1. PSAS. xlv. 444.

2. 'Manx Crosses' no. 27; CIIC. 1067, numbered 1068 on pl. LXIV.