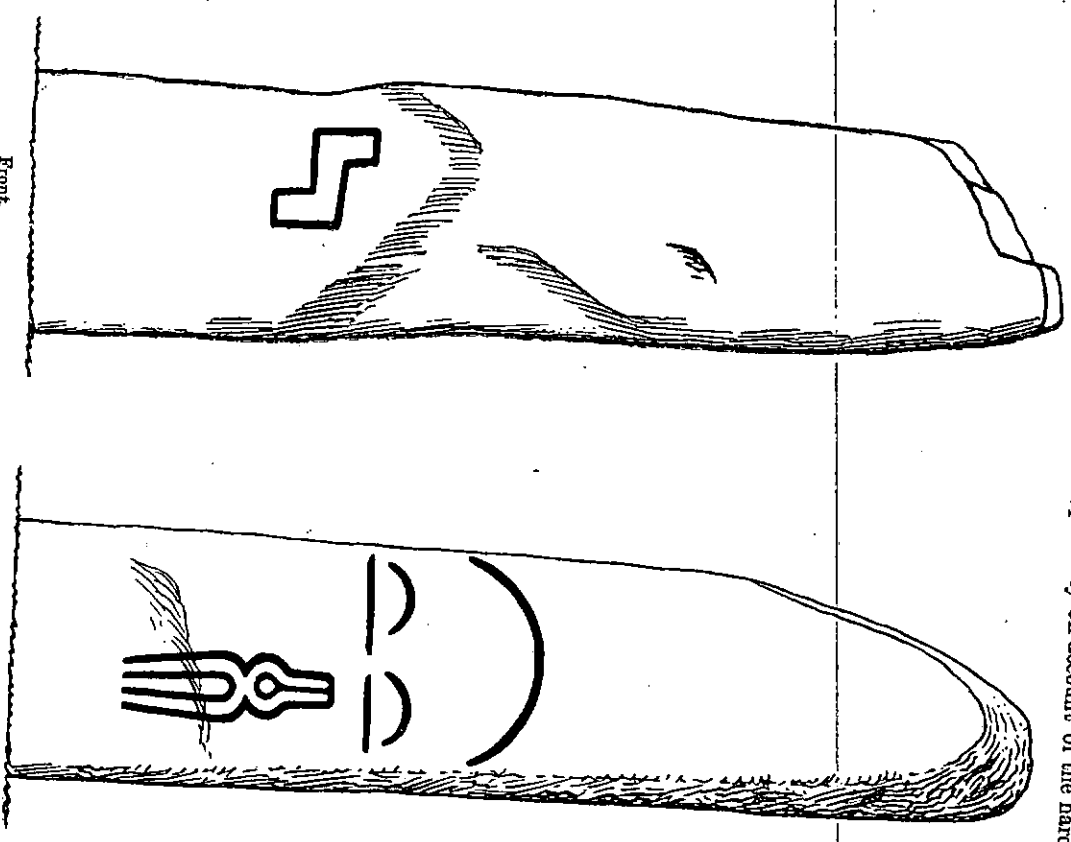


J Ramilly Alton & J. Anderson  
Vol II

The former is ornamented with curved lines and small circles and the latter with conventionalised feathers.

The sculpture is in excellent preservation, probably on account of the hardness of



Front

Left side

Fig. 58.—Pillar stone sculptured with incised symbol at Roskeen. Scale,  $\frac{1}{2}$  linear.

the stone, for it is exposed to the weather and is in no way protected against wanton injury.

This stone is accurately illustrated in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* (vol. i, pl. 108).

**Roskeen.**—The farm of this name is situated  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile W. of Invergordon railway station (Ordnance Map, 94).

The symbol stone, which is known locally by the name of the "Clach a' Mheirich," or "Thief's Stone," stands in a field about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile S. of Roskeen, between the railway and the road along the N. shore of the Cromarty Firth.

It is a square unhewn pillar of sandstone, 6 feet high by 1 foot 6 inches wide by 1 foot 6 inches thick, sculptured with incised lines on two faces thus (fig. 58)—

*Front.*—At a height of 2 feet from the ground the step symbol

of the crescent symbol and between this and the bottom of the stone what may be either a pair of pincers or the tuning-fork symbol.

This stone, which was discovered by the late Dr Sutherland, of Invergordon, has not previously been illustrated.

CLASS II.

**Hilton of Cadboll.**—The village of this name is situated on the N. side of the Moray Firth close to the sea-shore, a mile and a half N.E. of Shandwick and 5 miles W. of Fearn railway station (Inch Ordnance Map, Sheet 94).

The upright cross-slab originally stood near the ruins of a chapel, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, under the brow of the hill on which the farm-house of Cadboll is situated.<sup>1</sup> Mr C. Petley states that the slab lay near the sea-shore with the sculptured face downwards until about 1811, when Mr Cordiner discovered that there was carving on the under side and had the stone turned over. Dr Stuart<sup>2</sup> says, "The stone at Hilton has at some former period been taken down and converted into a gravestone, and it now lies in a shed, the wall of which is believed to form part of an ancient chapel." Since Dr Stuart wrote this in 1856, the stone has been removed to Invergordon Castle, 1 mile N.W. of Invergordon railway station, and now stands on a modern base in the grounds at the side of the carriage drive  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile S. of the castle. The sculpture is weathering rapidly in its present exposed position and many of the details, such as the spirals on the double disc symbol at the top, which are indicated in Petley's and in Cordiner's drawings have almost entirely disappeared. It is an upright cross-slab, of rectangular shape, of red sandstone, measuring 7 feet

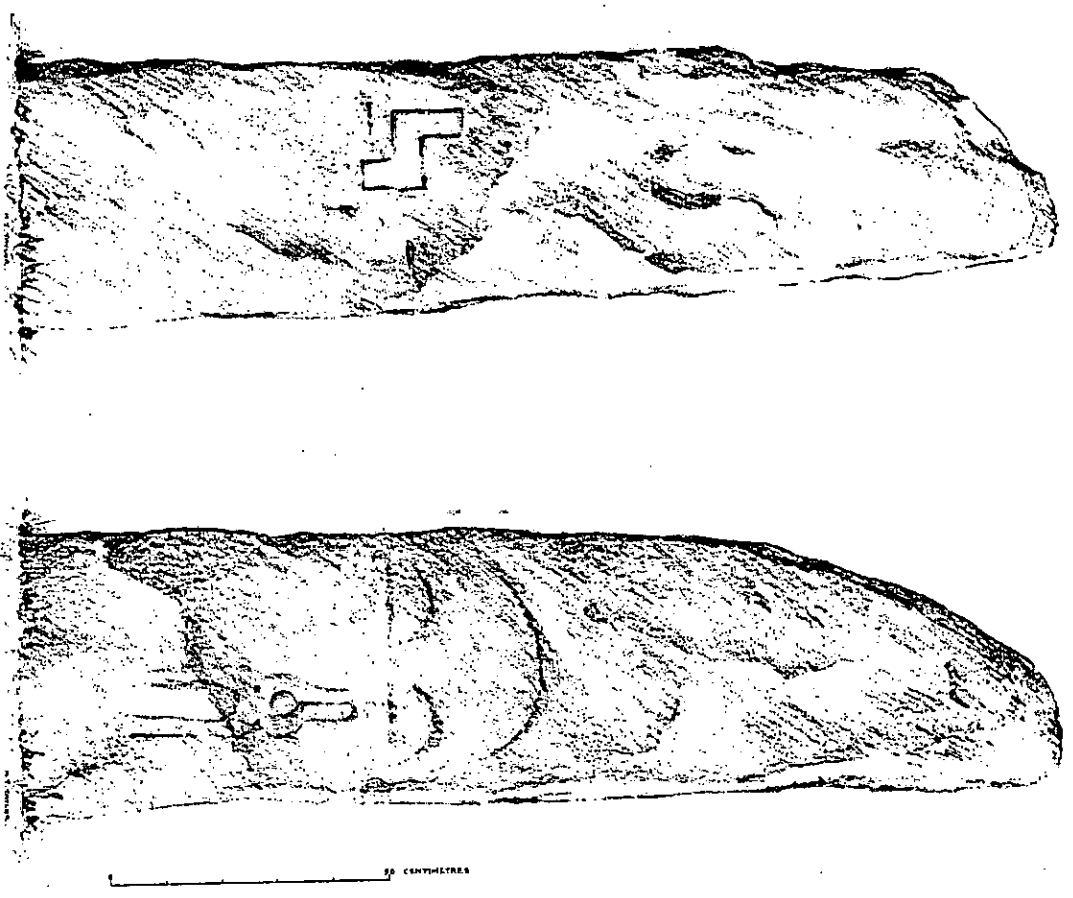
<sup>1</sup> C. Cordiner's *Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland*, p. 65.  
<sup>2</sup> *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. i, p. 10.

The Pictish Stones of Easter Ross  
 ΠΙΚΤΩΝ ΣΤΕΛΕΧΗ ΤΗΣ ΡΩΣΣΙΑΣ  
 1999

met his death there at the hands of marauding Vikings. This is said to have occurred early in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, though we do not hear of other Viking raids on the coasts of Britain until the end of that century. Then the monks of Iona suffered dreadfully, fleeing from the island in AD 806; Lindisfarne was deserted in AD 875. To the north, Shetland and Orkney were being colonised by Norsemen during the 9<sup>th</sup> century; Caithness and Sutherland were being settled by the 10<sup>th</sup> century. At Tarbat, the unusual concentration of Pictish material is likely to indicate a site of particular importance, perhaps a monastic settlement. The condition of the Tarbat stone fragments is also significant; many of them are remarkably unweathered, suggesting that the stones were not long left upright and exposed to wind or rain and some perhaps broken within a century or two of their production. This may indicate that Tarbat was a target for the Vikings, like many other monastic sites. It is worth adding that a hoard of the Viking period, consisting of silver armlets or ring-money and coins, whose deposition has been dated to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, was found in the churchyard at Tarbat in 1889.

Meanwhile the Picts faced another formidable foe. The Irish in the west, the Scots of Dalriada, were gradually expanding their power, and in AD 843 the Scot, Kenneth MacAlpine, united the royal dynasties of the Picts and the Scots and the Pictish people were henceforth ruled by Scottish kings, speaking a Scottish language, under Scottish organisation and church system. Gradually the Picts lost their national identity, a development which may fit in with the disuse of Pictish symbols on Class III stones, which, as we have seen, were being carved in the 9<sup>th</sup> and perhaps the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. By this time, Easter Ross had become a frontier land between the colonising Vikings to the north and the Scottish kingdom, and we hear in the sagas of many bloody campaigns and battles fought by land and sea within the area. Finally, the Viking settlement spread south across the Cromarty Firth and we may assume that the native style of art ceased in Easter Ross.

The *floruit* of the early Christian art in our region occurred, therefore, during the later centuries of Pictish independence, when we



⑮ ROSSKEEN SYMBOL STONE

E NCC NANCOR  
The Pictish Stones of  
Rose Ross

The Shandwick stone, the *Clach a'Charriadh* slab, still stands at the top of the brae at the southern end of the village, and is now covered by a pavilion of glass; it is in a commanding position, with a wide view over the Moray Firth, and the stone is a landmark for fishermen. It is said that unbaptised children were once buried in its vicinity. The carving is rather weather-worn, but one may see on one side a series of panels filled with a double disc, the strange Pictish animal like an elephant, spirals, and a hunting scene in which there appear also to be fighting warriors (fig. 11), while on the other is a cross, angels, and animals (fig. 12).

The Nigg slab once stood at the gate of the churchyard, but is now in a room at the west end of the church; the stone has suffered grievous damage, but it is still possible to see that the carving ranks among the finest of all Scottish cross slabs. Unlike the examples mentioned above, the top of the slab is triangular; on one side there is a cross, covered with intricate decoration, and surrounded by designs of incorporating bosses in high relief. In the space above, there are the two figures of Saint Anthony and Saint Paul, leaning towards each other and holding books in their hands; at their feet crouch two lions, while a bird descends from above, bringing a loaf to feed them in the wilderness (fig. 13). On the other side, the central figure portrays David, identified by a sheep and his harp, and seen wrestling with a lion (fig. 14). Hunting scenes also appear above and below, and there is a border filled with a series of panels, each with a complicated pattern of interlacing, executed in relief and by incision. In 1992 the stone was conserved, and is now on view as a result of the efforts of Nigg Old Trust.

At Rosskeen, close by the road to the west of Invergordon, an uncut stone, the *Clach a' Mhearithch*, stands in a field; incised symbols are just visible on the surface, including a clearly defined pair of tongs, which appears among the Pictish repertoire (fig. 15). Finally, two fragments were found built into a wall at Stittenham, two miles east of Ardross Castle. Both are now in Inverness Museum; one bears the incised outline of a wolf, and the other that of a deer, horse, or other animal. Both are exquisitely drawn and come from slabs cut from sandstone. It would be most unusual to find two animal symbols on the same slab, so the question of whether the Ardross fragments come from one or two stones must remain open (figs. 16 & 17). Lying outside our area but of great importance are the symbol stones at Dingwall and Strathpeffer, together with the fine cross slab at Rosemarkie and the other fragments from the same area, now in Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie. To the north, in Sutherland, are a cross incised on an uncut stone standing in the field immediately to the east of Creich churchyard, on the northern shore of the Dornoch Firth, and the large collection of Pictish stones gathered in the museum at Dunrobin Castle, just to the north of Golspie.

*Classification by subject and method of carving*

These monuments have been classified by their subject matter and method of carving. In the fundamental source book on Pictish stones, the great work by Anderson and Allen, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (1903), the stones were divided into three classes. Class I consists of incised stones, usually