

PICTS & KINGS & THINGS

A Study of Some Pictish Symbol Stones



**By
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Aberlemno, Angus - Scotland



ABERLEMNO, SCOTLAND





"Situated in the County of Angus. Its extent is about 6 1/2 miles long and 5 broad. The surface is various, being part hilly, and covered with heath, while the greater part is flat and fertile. It lies on the banks of the South Esk, which is sometimes apt to overflow its banks. Neither coal or lime are found in the parish. There are two obelisks which are fine pieces of antiquity; one in the churchyard, and the other on the road from Brechin to Forfar; erected to commemorate the total defeat of the Danes."

From The Gazetteer of Scotland, W Chalmers, Dundee 1803

ABERLEMNO, Angus - Extract from National Gazetteer, 1868
[Description(s) from The National Gazetteer (1868)]

"ABERLEMNO, a parish in the district and county of Forfar, Scotland, 4 miles N.E. of Forfar. There is a railway station at Aulbar. It lies at the confluence of the river Lemno with the south Esk. The district is undulating, the surface in the higher parts covered with broom and heath, that in the lower fertile, and subject to inundations from the Esk. There are several quarries of slate and stone, both for building and paving. The living, value £288, is in the presbytery of Forfar, in the patronage of the Crown and Smythe of Methven. The extensive remains of Melgund Castle, which is said to have been built by Cardinal Beaton, and to which he was accustomed to retire for purposes less innocent than mere relaxation from business, are to be seen here. The property is now in the Panmure family. Many interesting indications exist of this parish having been the scene of a battle in remote times, such as cairns, coffins and monumental stones; one of the most perfect of the stones is in the churchyard, it has on one side a curious cross in bold relief. It has been conjectured that these "Cross Stones of Aberlemno" commemorate a defeat of the Danish army which was sent into Scotland early in the 11th century. On the highest point in the parish are remains of an ancient fort, now called Camp Castle, bearing some resemblance to a summer camp of the Romans. The Castle of Auldbar, another ancient fort, is of feudal origin. There were several of these strongholds on this border-ground between the Braemen and the Lowlanders. The Arbroath and Forfar railway passes south of this parish."

"MARESTONE, a hamlet in the parishes of Aberlemno and Rescobie, county Forfar, Scotland, 3 miles N.E. of Forfar."

[Description(s) from The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (1868)]

Transcribed by Colin Hinson

INTRODUCTION



It was May 1993 when Muriel and I first went on holiday to Scotland. We were staying on a farm near Aberlemno. We could hardly miss the roadside Stones, and to our surprise found a picture of a Centaur, which together with other figures beside it made us realize that the designer

of that carving was conveying ideas with which we were already familiar.

So the hunt was on to see what we could find. To whom or what would it lead us?

Although we have been interested in the early history and origins of the British Race or Races the Picts were little known to us. What could we possibly have in common with them?

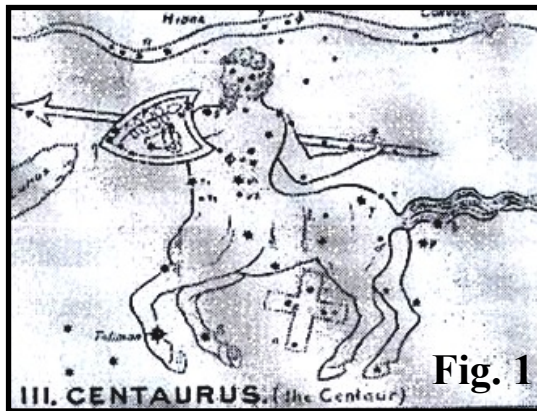
We purchased some books about the Symbol Stones not one touched upon what we discovered, and remain surprised that so few Biblical connections have been made with these early Christian monuments, we attempt to begin to fill this void.

This pamphlet is serious, but sometimes tongue in cheek, after all a symbol means what its user means it to mean nothing more or less. Ask yourself for one moment if a Pict would learn anything about our culture by looking at our road symbols, we think the answer would be, Yes. By careful observation of where and how they occur he could say for certain that we have an orderly transport system, and that without seeing a motor car.

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The figure of a Centaur, part horse and part man, carved on an ancient Pictish Monument conveys something of an important belief or historic event generally real, but possibly mythical. It is well known that centaurs are in Greek Mythology, and seem to convey the concept of contact between the Ancient Greeks and their gods. The Elgin Marbles are known with certainty for this, for we have also the Greek ancient writings. The question was, would the Pictish Centaurs be able to convey their meaning to us without the benefit of contemporary writings?

In this case it is the carved pictures alone that can speak to us, and other sources can only be regarded as valid if they conform to or are confirmed by the 'Pictish Picture Structure'. By Picture Structure the writer means that as words have meanings and in a sentence are in harmony to have a particular meaning, so the Pictish carvings must be regarded as having individual meaning, and collectively convey a message or story.

You may ask, why is an Englishman bothering himself with pictures carved on Pictish stones? The fact is that the Picture was recognised practically immediately, and I had the feeling that this picture was speaking to me, I respond to a challenge issued by the picture. It was as if it said, "You understand me, and I have not been allowed to speak for hundreds of years". The Centaur that I had in my mind's eye, was of Centaurus a Star picture in the southern sky, in fact adjacent to the Southern Cross. [Fig. 1]

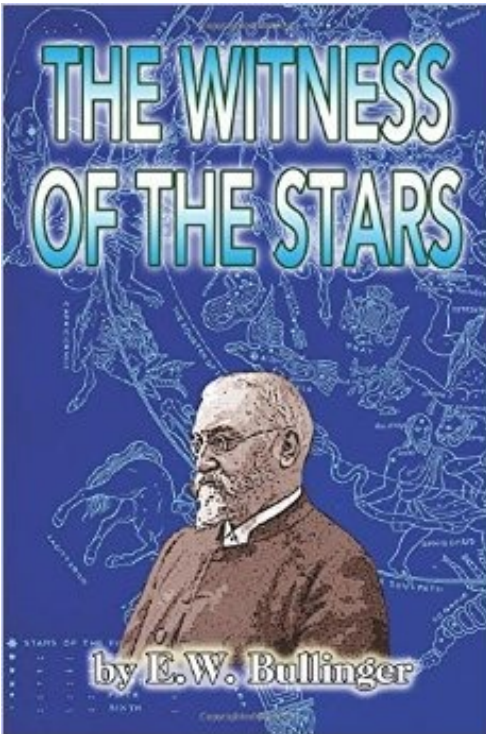
The pictures which represent the Constellations are of great antiquity, and were in use by past civilisations on their monuments, most have changed little over millennia. The original purpose or meaning of these pictures is now little known and generally misunderstood. It has nothing in common with the modern cults of fortune telling which are popular today, as found in many newspapers and periodicals.

The meaning and therefore the purpose or story portrayed by pictures that represent the constellations is not so much the actual picture, but is fixed for all time in the Names and meanings of the names of the stars that the Pictures embrace. They were readable to the ancients much as a cartoon strip is read today, we look at the pictures of characters and read a word or so in the speech balloons, a child can do it; so they would look at the group of stars within the picture, remember the names of those stars which they knew, added the meanings of those names, and you have information about the purpose of that picture. In this way in the course of the year they could read the entire story written in the heavens, provided that they lived at a latitude not too far north or south. Read as a whole, they tell the same story as the Bible, from the prophetic point of view, covering aspects of Old and New Testament teaching. An ideal form of Revelation for ancient cultures where the written word may not have been in common use.

A peculiar feature about Centaurus is that it is not and was not visible in Scotland, sorry Pictland, for a long time, no less than 2000 years, and due to the recession of the Pole Star continues to move further out of view, How did such a picture get to Aberlemno, and in use during historic time requires an answer?

The first clue is that the Star Pictures never required the written word to explain them, and those used on Pictish stones have been used by people thought not to have had a written language, at least in most cases there is no written explanation to their carvings. An exception to this rule may be the Ruthwell Cross having both Biblical text and pictures. It makes one wonder if the Picts lived in a sort of time capsule, unexposed to the development of writing, or perhaps they were travellers, nomads who never went to school.

As we searched out other Stones there were several other Centaurs and Sagittarius that came to our notice on stones at Glamis 2, the Maiden Stone, Meagle 2, Camus Cross and Ruthwell Cross. Before considering their meanings on the stones let us first look at the Originals and their meanings in their ancient celestial context. For this purpose I refer to the book:-



“The Witness of the Stars” (1) Page 40-41. “CENTAURUS The Despised Sin Offering. It is the figure of a being with two natures. Jamieson, in his Celestial Atlas, 1882, says, “On the authority of the most accomplished Orientalist of our times, the Arabic and Chaldaic name of this constellation is --- [Hebrew] Bezeh and [Arabic] Al Beze means ‘the despised’. It is the very word used of this Divine sufferer in Isa, 53:3, “He is DESPISED and rejected of men.”

“The constellation contains thirty-five stars. together with the four bright stars in the Cross make a brilliant show in southern latitudes.”

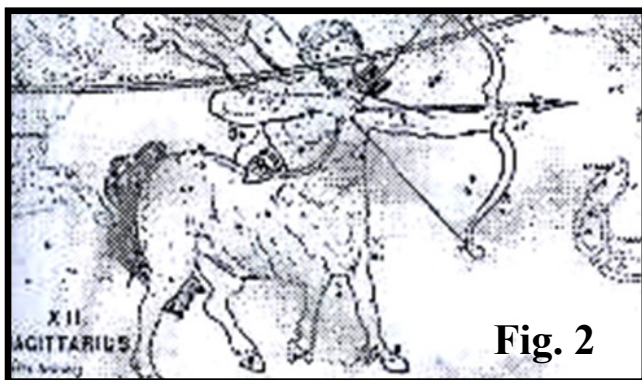
“The brightest star —[in the horses fore-foot], has come down to us with the ancient name of ‘Toliman’, which means ‘the heretofore and hereafter’, marking Him as the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come --- the Almighty” [Rev. 1.8]. Sir John Herschell observed this star to be growing rapidly brighter.

“Another name for this constellation was in Hebrew, ‘*Asmeath*’, which means a sin offering [as in Isa. 53:10].

“The Greek name was ‘*Cheiron*’, which means ‘the pierced’, or ‘who pierces’. In the Greek fables Cheiron was renowned for his skill in hunting, medicine, music, athletics, and prophecy. All the most distinguished heroes of Greece are described as his pupils. He was supposed to be immortal, but voluntarily agreed to die; —he transferred his immortality to Prometheus.”

“We can easily see how this fable is the ignorant perversion of the primitive Revelation. The true tradition can be seen dimly through it, and we can discern Him of whom it spoke, —the all wise, all-powerful Teacher and Prophet, who ‘went about doing good’, yet ‘despised and rejected of men’, laying down His life that others might live.”

And continuing from ‘*Witness of the Stars*’ pages 62-65:-



SAGITTARIUS

The Redeemers's Triumph. [Fig 2] The subject is beautifully set forth in the written Word Ps 54:3-5:-

John, in his apocalyptic vision, sees the same mighty Con-

queror going forth. “I saw [he says] a white horse, and He that sat on him had a bow, —and He went forth conquering and to conquer” **Rev 6:2.**

“This is precisely what is foreshadowed in the star-pictured sign now called by the modern Latin name Sagittarius, which means ‘the archer’.

“The Hebrew and Syriac name of the sign is ‘*Kesith*’, which means the Archer [as in **Gen 21:20**]. The Arabic name is ‘*Al Kaus*’, the arrow. In Coptic it is ‘*Pimaere*’, the graciousness, or beauty of the coming forth. In Greek it is ‘*Toxotes*’, the archer:—

“There are 69 stars—five of the 3rd magnitude [all in the bow]—

“The names of the brightest stars are significant:- Hebrew, ‘Naim’, which means the gracious one. This is exactly what is said of this Victor in the same Psalm [45], in the words immediately preceding the quotation above [v2]:-

**“GRACE is poured into thy lips;
Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.”**

“Hebrew, ‘Nehushta’, the going or sending forth.

“We see the same in the Arabic names which have come down to us:—

‘*Al Naim*’, the gracious one; ‘*Al Shaula*’, the dart; ‘*Al Warida*’, who comes forth; ‘*Ruchba er rami*’, the riding of the bowman.

The ancient Akkadian name in the sign is ‘*Nun-Ki*’, which means Prince of the Earth.

Again we have the picture of a Centaur as to his outward form, i.e. a being with two natures.

According to Grecian fable this Sagittarius is Cheiron, the chief Centaur; noble in character, righteous in his dealings, divine in his power:—

“In the ancient Zodiac of Denderah he is called [as in Coptic] ‘*Pi-maere*’, i.e. graciousness, beauty of the appearing or coming forth, The characters under the hind foot read ‘*Knen*’, which means He conquers:—

In all the pictures he is similarly represented, and the arrow in his bow is aimed directly at the heart of the Scorpion.

“In this archer we see a faint reflection of Him who shall presently come forth, all gracious, all wise, all powerful; whose arrows shall be ‘sharp in the heart of the King's enemies’.” [See also **Ps 64:7-10**]

From these two extracts we see something of the earliest meaning or message transmitted to us directly from original sources, reliable, because the same comes from several ancient cultures and languages.

It now remains to see if the Pictish versions can be shown to have the same meanings, i.e. do they convey the works or attributes or identity of Christ within, and appropriate to, the context of the ‘Picture Structure’ on the stones where they occur?



Looking at the Stone ‘Aberlemno No 3’ [Fig 3] it will be seen that the lower left panel shows a Centaur, with an axe, instead of a



Figs 4 & 5

spear, similar to Fig 1, but with the addition of a decorated or symbolic ‘Branch’ [Fig 4]. The next thing to establish is, can there be compatibility between a centaur and the branch? Since we already see that the Centaur represents Christ in the Bible, in that He is the Sacrifice for Sin. In the Old Testament a Branch is used symbolically of the coming Messiah [Jer. 23:5] “**Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement in the earth**”. And [Isaiah 11:1] “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:—

Thus it is stated that the Branch is to be a descendant of Jesse and David and to become a righteous King. In the New Testament the theme is continued, [Luke 1:32-33] 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end'. We now have the Star picture of the suffering Messiah with the additional connection to the Dynasty of David of whom it is stated [2 Samuel 7: 13-14] “—I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father and he shall be my son—“.

On the right side of this stone another picture showing David with his harp and sheep, [Fig 5] A scene from the life of David [Figs 4 & 5] the king of Israel, a real historic person to make sure that the message on this stone is understood, not only as a Spiritual concept but has also a National and / or Historic relevance connected to a real historic Dynasty. The Spiritual and Material are shown linked in Destiny



Look now at the central picture, described traditionally in 'Picts' {2} as a Hunting scene having the figure of David on foot, horsemen and two heralds with trumpets, another 'Davidic Image'. Take first the David figure. He is in the act of making a Royal Proclamation, that is why he has the heralds in the act of blowing a fanfare. Why is he doing that? Is it to indicate that he is about to throw his spear and kill the stag? The most likely result would be for the stag to see if he could be done for speeding as soon as possible, rather than hang around so that he could report to his friends concerning the accuracy of the king's aim, and almost any Pictish king, however illiterate, would know that!! So the fanfare is nothing to do with hunting. Why is this king, on foot while his escorts ride? Much more convincing if the king rode, and had beaters on foot to drive his quarry

into a suitable position. If the king is not hunting; what is going on? First we must not lose sight of the accepted fact that this is a Christian

Monument, this king's proclamation is logically in some way related to that fact. Beneath the Heraldic Symbols, or Coat of Arms of his Family he is stating that it is his Kingly Duty to walk humbly before God and uphold the Christian Faith, and in the tradition of David his Biblical Ancestor by example to so lead his Nobles and all creation within his realm. To place this series of pictures in the setting of his Coronation, makes sense of ceremonial trumpets and procession with the Spiritual and ancient Historic origins of his office. Just imagine. The trumpeters or heralds sound the fanfare and recite his credentials, the king responds by reciting before God and his Nobles the Coronation Oath, more trumpet fanfares, then off to the banquet. The correct understanding of the Centaur is the key to understanding this stone. All pictures on this stone are part of one story, and of one theme or structure.



Fig. 7

Centaur, again with a Branch under his arm, but instead of a spear he has a battle axe in each hand [Fig 7]. The suggested meaning for this variation is that it represents The Lord Mighty in Battle. Not just controlling the lions, but causing Daniel's faithfulness to God and the king to be demonstrated in such a way that the despotic Darius reversed his previous decree, which was thought to be impossible, Nobody had ever made him do that before. He then honoured Daniel and sent those who had wrongly advised him with their families to feed his lions. At the foot of this slab is a curious scene of an ox being bitten on the nose by a dragon? It looks like the origin of the saying 'being led by the nose'. A possible contrast to the rewarded faithfulness of Daniel, the ox or bull, a Biblical symbol of Ephraim a leading tribe in Israel, that was deported to Assyria for unfaithfulness to God and rejection of the Davidic line of kings, a century before Daniel went to Babylon. You would certainly be going through Hell if you were bitten on the nose by one of those things! The figure is of the just deserts of those who reject Christ and his Redemption.



Fig. 8

We move on to Glamis No 2 [Fig 8] A simple decorated cross with figures above and below the arms. The right side first, top; a Centaur, This time with the axes but no branch [Fig 9]. This is Christ, victorious over Sin and Death. Perhaps that is Satan, the beast with open jaws on the left. Beneath the right arm is the head of a lamb, to show that Christ is' ---the

Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world'. [John 1 v 29] Beneath this is the triple ring symbol, [which has been some-times shown with a straight staff passing through the small rings][Fig 10].

To understand the true significance of this symbol we need to look more closely at the Centaur symbolism and its Davidic connection, before finding its Pictish connection. We noted already that the Centaur represents Christ and His Kingly office in Israel, but now we go back to the time of Jacob the ancestor of all Israel. Jacob left home and slept rough, he used a convenient stone for a pillow, as he settled down for the night he probably wished that he had taken the trouble to join the Caravan Club. However in that place God spoke to him in a Vision. [Gen ch 28] That Vision changed his view of life, he also regarded the Stone as Sacred, a Symbol of God's Presence and Protection. Some years later he returned to his former home, not alone, but with a large family and considerable wealth, naturally he collected **HIS STONE** on the way, for he now had the manpower to carry it. His descendants continued the practice of carrying it with them, and to make it easier fastened rings to it so that a pole could be passed through them. This

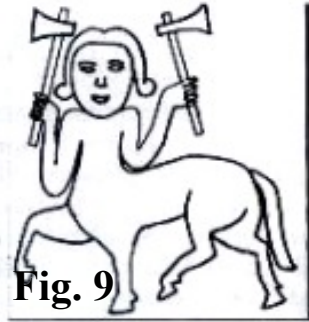


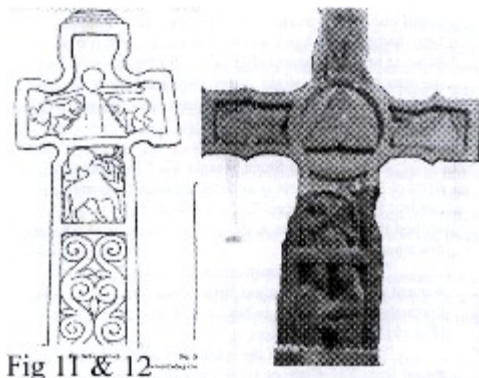
Fig. 9



Fig. 10

seemingly worthless Stone, or Rock, or, if stood on end a Pillar, accompanied The Children of Israel/Jacob in all their wanderings, and very useful it was. [Num 20 v 8] `—speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water,— [v 10-11] `—must we fetch you water out of this rock?— he smote the rock twice: and water came out abundantly—.’ The same symbolic use is in the New Testament [1 Cor. 10 v 1-5] `—or they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ—’. This is surely the same rock, stone or pillar for it followed them, and was regarded as representing the Presence and Power of God, and Christ.

A further use for this pillar is [2 Kings 11 v 14] `—the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets:—’ Now where have we seen a picture of a king standing, with his princes or nobles in full ceremonial dress with trumpeters, and claiming the honour of Davidic lineage? Of course we do not see the pillar or stone in that picture because the Picts were not in possession of it, but they had a symbol for it; the two carrying rings and the larger circular part between. They used that Symbol to convey the ideas of Kingship, Gods Presence and Protection, of the Nation, which they were declaring they had in Christ. So the right side of Glamis 2 tells us that Christ is the Victorious Son of God, the Lamb of God and the Protector of their Throne and Nation, their ultimate or coming King of Kings: the left side is the opposite:— the nasty beast, an Apocalyptic Satan, the pot with legs sticking out of it for the lake of fire, and the combat at the bottom means no peace or rest for the wicked.



There are at least two Sagittarius [should that be Sagittarii?] on the Camus Cross [Fig 11] and the Ruthwell Cross [Fig 12], the meaning of which is Christ Victorious over evil, as seen above. It is suggested that on these three Cross slabs and two Crosses, that in the star pictures of antiquity

with the meanings of their Star Names supply first the meaning of the picture or symbol itself, but some further understanding, even the key to a realistic message and description of an historic Pictish Coronation or Royal Wedding.



Those familiar with the Pictish monuments will have noticed a similarity between the Abelemno 3 central panel and the Hilton of Cadboll [Fig 13], in that it too has ceremonial trumpeters, a Davidic symbol and therefore the prominent person is of the Blood Royal. Rather than a hunting scene is it not a State occasion, say a Royal Wedding, as it unusually features a Lady of Rank, believed by some to be the meaning of the mirror and comb?

Her escort, just visible beyond her is not the king, he would be shown more prominently, more probably her father, [himself of lower rank than her mother and his daughter in the Pictish order?] who escorts his daughter to a great State occasion, even her own Coronation, with suitable pomp.

There may be a reader who feels that to make connections between the Pictish Monarchy and Nation, with that of ancient Israel and its Davidic Monarchy as recorded in the Bible, is unjustifiable for some reason. Before placing this in the shredder please take a look at “The Declaration of Arbroath 1320”(3), which makes related claims and connections. This document is of a date after both the sculpting of the Pictish stones and the unification of Picts with Scots. and is regarded to this day as highly credible, and an important landmark in the history of Scotland. The presence of the Centaur on their Stone Documents, is further evidence of their Migrations from an Easterly and Southerly land, at different times and by diverse routes. Or, please offer a more credible explanation for the Centaur, its location, and its meaning.

There is another emblem on several of these stones, 'The Harp'. It has for about 3000 years been connected to King David, who was a noted musician and poet. It is to this day a Royal Emblem, [together with the Lion, for David's Tribe of Judah] and seen from time to time flying over Castles and Palaces in England, Scotland and wherever Our Sovereign Lady goes, like other Heraldic Devices it denotes Heredity and Title, [not Her musical ability but that of Her Ancestor David], just as it does on the Pictish examples. There is another matter, like most Her predecessors, The Queen was Crowned seated on an old Stone with worn rings fastened its ends, with trumpeters and heralds and all the Great and Noble, many from beyond our shores. A word or so about the rings, very worn through much travelling, they are of iron, but not common iron, they are of Hittite Iron which means that they are the genuine originals, for secret formula is lost, and it is not possible to replicate them. The Stone therefore is no fake, as some have dared to suggest. We should be a little lenient with the Picts for the shape of their emblem, it being round rather than rectangular. They and their ancestors who devised their Symbols could not have seen it first hand, at best their knowledge except for its use and meaning may have been slight, but it kept alive the traditions of monarchy. The Symbol served them well as a representation of the Throne and Stone.



Fig. 14

At Meagle, on Stone Meagle No 1 [Fig 14] is a Symbol for which there is an interpretation from an independent Historic source. The Snake with Z-rod is described in "Tracing Our Ancestors" {4} page 49. A Sketch described:--

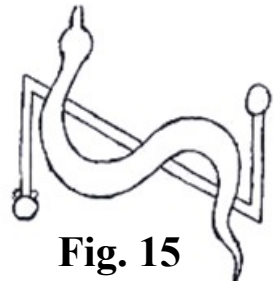


Fig. 15

"Swastika of Resurrecting Sun, transfixing the Serpent of Death on Ancient Briton monument at Meagle, Forfarshire". [as on Meagle No 1] And on pages 118-119 [Fig 15].

"—The origin of the word Scot Prof Waddell has traced from *Xat*, *Catti*, or *Gadi*, meaning `fortune seekers'—.

As early as the ninth century BC, the growing Assyrian power began to harass the people of Syria and Israel and struck terror into the inhabitants of the whole of Phoenicia. It was then that the greatest emigration of Israelites took place, to the Ionic States—.



"Of those twelve Ionic States one was Miletus (above), whose people were of the tribe of Judah and descendants of Darda the founder of Troy. It is a significant circumstance —that at an early date in the annals of Miletus there is said to have sailed from its harbours a body of adventurers. These people were led by a certain Gadelius, Gadil, or Gallam, The Gadelians are said to have boasted that they were the heroes of Spain—.

“Passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, these Milesians settled for a while in Spain and founded the city of Brigantia. The Milesian colony reached Ireland from Spain, but they were not Spaniards— they had passed from land to land, from the shores of Asia across the wide expanse of southern Europe bearing aloft, through all their wanderings,

the `sacred banner, which symbolized to them at once their origin and their mission, the blessing and promise given to their race. This celebrated standard, the “sacred banner of the Milesians”, was a flag on which was represented a dead serpent and the rod of Moses; a device to commemorate for ever amongst the posterity of Gadelius the miracle by which his, life had been saved”

It is evident from the Irish Records these were hardened travellers, passing through several lands including Spain. Why should they not go a little farther, to Scotland? Gadelius sounds like a Latin version of Gadil or Gallan that, was not in use when Gallan's clan arrived. From Ireland a likely landing place would be Galloway, perhaps they gave it the Name, moving on later to Forfarshire; that is where we find their Ensign or Symbol. We now know the origin and meaning of this Symbol, and the name and original Nationality and Tribe of the person or clan it represented, we can also name three or four localities they visited or stayed at on their way.

Can we say that the Z shape of the Z-rod is original or has it been modified? It is improbable that Moses' rod was so shaped.

A. It may have been so drawn to make it convenient on a banner,

B. It may have a meaningful purpose.

C. Both. Since it is evident that the Picts intend to tell us quite a lot in a few pictures, it is safest to assume that such a detail is meaningful. Why is Moses' rod broken in two places?



Is it because Moses banged the Rock twice, and was reprimanded by God for doing it? No, there is no record that he broke it. Moses was, and still is Symbolic of **THE LAW** and **COVENANT**: the agreement between God and Israel. They **BROKE** it. But God promised a **NEW Covenant** [**Jeremiah 31 v 31**]. If the two breaks in the Z-Rod, represent first the breaking of the Law and Covenant, the second stands for the New or restored Cov-

enant, a return to the original direction: back in line or on course with God. Then, "Swastika of Resurrecting Sun", may be an odd sort of terminology, but very close to the Christian teachings of Forgiveness, New Birth and Resurrection, and they put it on a Christian monument. Gallan's clan belied the promise, and received its fulfilment. Its alternative is death represented by the snake.

There is another Promise to which the above quotation may refer found [**2 Samuel 7 v 10**] which suggests that Gallan's clan were seeking to settle in a new homeland, and they had found it; the more reason to accept the Christian Gospel when this was presented to them. Can this help us to understand Meagle No 1.

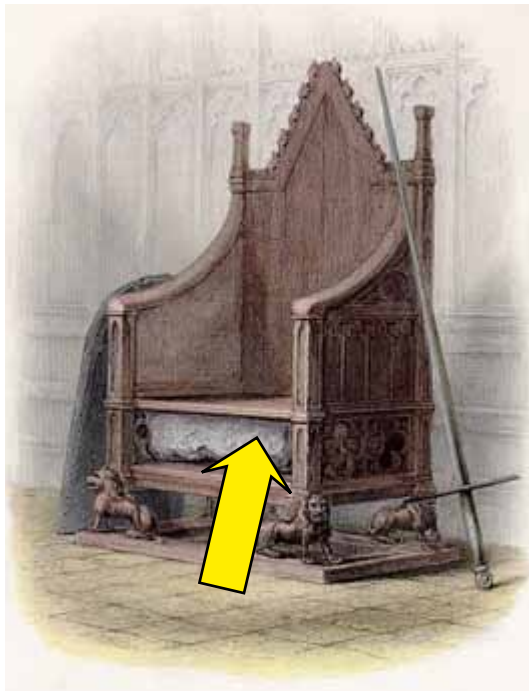
The Snake and Z-rod tell us that it concerns Gallan's clan.

The general direction of journey was NW. The figures carved face in that direction. We read it in that direction, low right to top left.

There was a high rank lady probably of the Blood Royal on the journey, [mirror/comb, who may not have gone all the way to Scotland].

They left behind all false gods [the curly thing is a Persian god?] and the camel transport system of the East. They escorted the lady to Ireland [?], guided by their guardian angel, that is to say they were fulfilling God's purpose for her, as well as seeking the promise to themselves. After that they continued their journey to Scotland, the fish may indicate that they mostly travelled by sea, as well as being an Heraldic emblem.

The question is —can this way of reading the Stone have any possible resemblance to an historic event?



In or about 588 BC [Jer 43 v 6-7] Jeremiah, the king's daughters and others left Jerusalem for Egypt. The remaining members of the royal family were killed, leaving the princesses as heirs to the throne of David. The Babylonians who sacked the city, were not interested in the girls, but Israelite Law gave them the right to inherit in the absence of brothers. So what would a man like Jeremiah, who was well acquainted with State matters do? He had in his care the Crown Princess and sister who had lost their family, Nation and Country.

He also took charge of The Stone of Jacob (above), the Babylonians took and did what they liked, but would not have regarded it as of value to them.

Where or to whom did they now belong? It was time to look up the long lost relatives. Jeremiah knew from history, that trade for British tin was established in the time of Solomon, and as we have already noted, many Israelites emigrated in 9th century BC. Trade continued, not in tin but

people. Babylon's hold over what was left of Judah made emigration attractive; if you could afford it you went. Jeremiah was a man of substance, [Jer 32 v 6-15] he could pay the fares. Against his better judgement he went with the crowd to



Egypt, he could not carry the Stone without help, but if he promised to pay their fares he could have all the help he needed. Once in Egypt a call at the shipping offices established whose ships followed the old routes, he could pick up the trail piece by piece, then restore the Crown Princess to her distant kin. In the Four Courts at Dublin is the medallion portrait of 'Ollam Fodhla' (left), this same Jeremiah, who was accompanied by a Princess and Lia Fail. But this is well known in Irish History! Not so well known

is the close resemblance of Meagle 1 to these same historic events relevant also to the Picts.

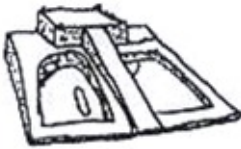
We have established to a degree of certainty the origin and meaning of the Z-rod. The Picts used it in conjunction with at least three other Symbols:-

- A) Snake**
- B) Double disc**
- C) Notched Rectangle,**

The two former were seen on Stones already considered. An example of the 'Z-rod with Notched Rectangle' is found on Aberlemno No 2 [Fig 16] above a scene representing the Battle of Nechtansmere AD 685. The Triple Ring Symbol already discussed is adjacent. What may the rectangle mean?

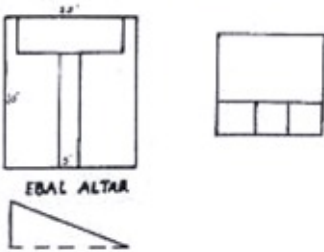
In the Readers Digest (5) was an account of an Archaeological discovery, by Adam Zertal, with sketch, of an Israelite Altar, which if the identification is correct was built by Joshua at Mt. Ebal [Josh 8 v 3-31]. A squareish structure with a ramp [not steps] leading up to a hearth area.

Beyond the Bible account and this example little is known about Israelite Altars. But, if the Picts had a Symbol for Jacobs Stone it is also possible they had something to mean an altar, priesthood or sacrifice.



ZOSHUA'S M.T. EBAL ALTAR?
R.D. SEPT '02

Fig 17, 18 & 19



EBAL ALTAR



It is the intention to show in this series of sketches how the actual construction may be simplified to produce the emblem suitable for a banner or stone carving. The Stages are:- A representation of the sketch in R.D., A plan, an indication of the steepness of the ramp, and simplification of the plan., The combined Symbol with 'S' spirals to indicate smoke, as of Incense, as well as being decorative, in the Aberlemno No 2 example. [Figs 17,18 & 19].

If the Notched Rectangle does represent the concept of altar, offering, or commitment [as in giving or thanksgiving] or sacrifice, such as we understand by a War Memorial or religious ceremony, then it will fit into the structure of the Battle scene with the other relevant adjacent symbol.

The Battle of Nechtansmere was a victory over invading Northumbrians, its purpose was protecting the Pictish kingdom. The sculpture graphically describes the course of the battle, the Triple Ring seen without carrying staff indicates the Throne remaining secure and unmoved. [Where the staff is shown in the rings it possibly indicates the loss of the king, or the throne passing to another branch of the Blood Royal.] The Altar [Notched Rectangle] recognizes the cost and loss of valiant men, and thankfulness for security gained and a time of peace. The Z-rod declares the faithfulness of God, [or theirs to Him] a reminder of the Covenant upholding their Constitution. The whole Stone is a proper and moving tribute to commemorate the fallen, and the victory.

The remaining Z-rod combination is with the Double Disc, as on Aberlemno Numbers 1 and 3, it is an imposing Symbol, demanding attention with or without the Z-rod. It may convey the regal status, or that the stone was made to a royal command, rather than the name of a king, whose personal mark may be within the 'decoration'. Decoration to the modern mind is for a pleasing or artistic effect, rather than being functional, sometimes these are all combined as in old hand made watches. The decoration as we see it on Pictish Symbols may have been first, comparatively far more meaningful, and second, skilfully executed to please the eye.

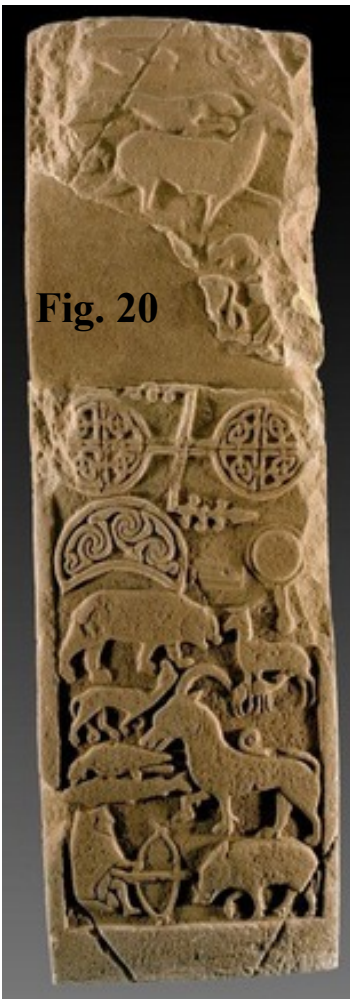


Fig. 20

The Unicorn also appears as a Pictish Emblem, as on St Vigeans No 1, [Fig 20] we know this from ECMS page 46. The fact of the horn being bent backwards is a matter of artistic interpretation, the most modern being a straight, forward pointing horn [actually two horns twisted together as strands of a rope to look like one]; also, although having the general shape of a horse, it is commonly shown with cleft hooves, and is therefore by the feet and horn[s] much more a bull than a horse, as seen at Falkland Palace.

The origin of the Unicorn is at least as far back as Moses where we find [Deut 33 v 17] that it says of Joseph, 'His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh'. So, we have bullocks and unicorns connected to Joseph and his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, after whom Tribes were named. Because the Bible contains no original artwork it is not possible to know the

exact form of these Tribal Emblems; the fact remains that the Bull and Unicorn are the Heraldic Emblems of Ephraim and Manasseh. The pushing together of people to the `ends of the earth' seems to suggest that the migration to literally the extreme known North West limits, was urged on by those using the Bull and Unicorn Emblems; at the very least some of them made the journey, and were united by or with representatives of their Royal Line.

Whilst on the subject of Unicorns, and the known fact that the form has changed with time or fashion, leaves us with another possible form. The Pictish Beast, sometimes referred to as `an elephant' [full marks for humour to whoever thought of that] could have been more aptly called a `Unicorn', it has a single horn severely bent backwards, a shape suitable for urging forward without injury, [but not any more unnatural than the modern twisted type] and the feet distorted to look like a scroll, a totally symbolic form, to convey the illusion of the hoof giving a blurred flick back and up on leaving the ground when travelling at speed. See, The

Maiden Stone. [Figs 21&22]

The Biblical attribute of pushing is not reduced by the horn bent back, as anyone experienced with goats, cattle or sheep will know, and may reflect the pastoral lifestyle of Manasseh's folk who originally used this



Fig. 22

Symbol. This Emblem captures mobility and agility in Stone. It is therefore in keeping with the theme of Meagle No 1, [look again at Fig 9] where we saw the story of migration. It implies that the migration was to meet, or join, or be guided to the `Unicorn Pictish Beast People', or other kindred tribes in the new homeland.



Fig. 21

The Crescent, with, [or without] 'V' Rod occurs frequently as on Aberlemno No 3, [Fig 3] also with the other 'Z' Rod emblems. Judging by the manner in which it is often placed, it would seem to be conveying an element of high importance, and near to the Throne.

Soon after the death of Solomon, King of Israel, the Nation became divided as a result of rebellion leaving only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin loyal to the Davidic Dynasty. Jerusalem being their Capitol, was in Benjamin's Inheritance so it was a logical Union in **1 Kings 11 v 6**, is God's reason for it, '—that David my servant may have a light always before me—'. Presumably God regarded the kings to be 'hot heads' who needed light or guidance from a loyal and trusted source. So Benjamin —a light? He never knew his mother, Joseph was his full brother, the other ten were half brothers. Jacob grieved much at the loss of Rachel, his first love. [See **Genesis chs 29** - on] Joseph had the birthright as the elder son of Jacob's first love, and would have told his little brother Benjamin about their mother for he was a good communicator, being trained in administration to succeed, and represent his father; hence his coat of many colours, embroidered with some suitable emblem to convey his identity and status. In the Heraldic sense literally a Coat of Arms.

Why else would his half brothers have been filled with such jealousy? Such training paid off after he was sold into Egypt, and his half brothers faked his death. They didn't dare let him keep that coat, for their wickedness would have been obvious to the traders to whom they sold him. No wonder Jacob was uneasy about Benjamin leaving home, there was so much to teach young Benjamin, he didn't need the trauma of Simeon being held hostage to force the lad's journey to the presence of the great man in Egypt. But Joseph was more than his father's deputy, he was a visionary whose dreams had caused concern and ill feeling in the family.

[**Gen ch. 37**] In a few years they were to come true. His father's interpretation shows that his and Benjamin's mother was [symbolically] the moon, imagine the effect on Benjamin, who was the only person in the family who didn't remember his mother, now he knew she was like the moon, it was his! The moon was not Benjamin's tribal emblem, that seems to have been a 'Wolf', [seen on Ardross Stone - left]) but, the 'moon' would be suitable and obvious for an individual or



group exiled from the tribe. As Gadil although of the tribe of Judah, used his own emblem related to an event in his experience when away from his homeland, instead of Judah's Lion; as an individual, not the head of his Tribe, he would not be entitled to use that.



Fig. 23

We now see on Aberlemno No 3 [Fig. 3] the crescent or Moon close to the Royal [?] Double Disc and Z-Rod, which the carved pictures tell us is about that monarch's Davidic origin; exactly in confirmation of the Biblical statement concerning the link between David's Dynasty and Benjamin's tribe. A similar link can be found on the Arms of Dokkum [Fig 23] in the Netherlands, where a Crescent with

3 Stars of David occurs; this was not a uniquely Pictish custom, for other Heraldic devices with a Biblical description occur in other Celtic and Anglo Saxon connections. The V-Rod may be a mark or token showing the integrity or esteem of the king's advisers or visionaries; as in Joseph's case, who passed to Pharaoh God's message in a dream, Pharaoh liked it and honoured him, and gave him a task which required his wisdom and integrity.

If we go back and take another look at St Vigeans No 1 [Fig 20] there is at the bottom the figures of a Bowman and a Boar, which coupled with the Highland name of Caledonia, reminds us of a Greek Legend, described in Ovid, Meta., Bk. VIII. The Caledonian Boar Hunt is related with suitable acts of



Fig. 24

heroism, and a king Caledon is mentioned. Whatever the origin of this legend, there is a link between Greece and Caledonia, and it matters not if the event that has passed to us in writing or pictures occurred in Greece and was brought by emigrants to Pictland where the Boar was once a royal emblem, or, less probably, if it concerned some event among the Caledonians the fame of which caught the fancy of a Greek writer. St Vigean's No 1 like Meagle No 1 is telling us about migrations, via Greece, and is decorated on the Cross side with the camel and Nile crocodile [Fig 24] to indicate the Geographical location from whence they started, and the Unicorn shows who made the journey.

Are we ready to test this hypothesis to see if it gives an explanation or interpretation to another Stone? The Maiden Stone [Fig 21] is on the back a simple array of emblems each in its own section, arranged vertically.

Fig 25



From the top;- A Centaur [head, forearms and bow or spear eroded and uncertain] with legs well extended to convey motion or speed [Fig 25]. Next, the Notched Rectangle or Altar [Fig 19]. Third, the Pictish Beast or Unicorn or Elephant [Fig 22]. And the Mirror and Comb in the lowest section which has the curious feature of the corner being angled away; [a facet noticed elsewhere presumably having a meaning]. In this case there is no pictorial message to help or guide us.

Placing these pictures and related symbols in the context of the growing threat of the Scots from the West it may have been an attempt to convince the Scots that they, the Picts were just as noble, and had the same origins as the Scots, with related Royalty. Possibly in the hope that they would be regarded as something like equals or allies rather than enemies, and be left to get on with their unique culture. They must have known this was a forlorn hope, so they tried to fix for all time the meanings of Symbols by coupling them to pictures, so that something would remain for posterity in case they were overcome by the Scots. They knew this to be inevitable as the Scots had the Stone, not like their Triple Ring emblem that was just a memory of it, and the Scots kings were crowned seated on it. They

probably felt that their form of the Christian Faith was also in danger, and believing that they had integrity before God and men, were making a sort of last-ditch statement or appeal to God. The Maiden Stone is a sort of nationalistic statement of faith, a Prophetic or Apocalyptic view of what to them may have seemed to be the end:-

1st, The Centaur, represents Christ returning quickly to take charge or rescue His people [**Rev 22 v20**].

2nd, The Notched Rectangle, or Altar, reminding of worship, suffering, commitment and sacrifice. `--- if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' [**Rom 8 v17**]

3rd, The Pictish Beast, or Unicorn, tells of the tribe or kingdom and its origin. There were several Pictish kingdoms, and this may not apply to all.

4th, The Mirror and Comb, a special lady. There are two Biblical explanations, either fits this `Picture Structure'.

A) The O. T. shows that Israel [of which we see the Picts claimed to be some part] was the Wife in a Spiritual or Symbolic sense of God, but often unfaithful. [**Isaiah 54 v 5-10**]

B) The N.T. shows a similar form, for the `end times', the Bride being ready for her husband. [**Rev 21v1-3**]

Simply, they were saying `We are God's people, we have served Him the best we can, only He can save us now'. This message, together with the messages of the other Stones discussed, is, not that far removed from that of the Declaration of Arbroath, except that the Scots appealed to the Pope instead of God.

By being called the 'Maiden Stone' this monument has actually retained the shadow of its message for a millennium during which its symbols have not been understood, quite an accomplishment for folklore and local tradition.

Finally this Englishman believes that if the Scots had treated the Picts with the dignity that they deserved, they together would have been in a position to have had a better deal from the English. If we could rerun history and do it with civility, these symbols even if not much used would, like Gaelic and Welsh be part of a living language; but then where would be the intrigue, or several interesting and enjoyable holidays?



Quotations or information from:-

- 1) Witness of the Stars**, by Ethelbert W. Bullinger, D.D. Third edition. 1911. Eyre and Spottiswood. #
- 2) Picts.** by Anna Ritchie. H.M.S.O.
- 3) Declaration of Arbroath and Translation.** H.M.S.O.
- 4) Tracing our Ancestors.** by Frederick Habenman. Second edition 1962. The Association of The Covenant People, Vancouver. #
- 5) Readers Digest. September 1992.**

Obtainable from **Covenant Publishing Co.:-** 121 Low Etherley, Co Durham. DL14 MA

Illustrations are from own photographs or drawings except as indicated:-

Fig 1 Centaurus. from 'Witness of the Stars' #.

2 Sagittarius.# “ “ “ “#

3 Aberlemno No 3

4 Centaur with lance & branch

5 David with harp & sheep

6 Meagle No 2

7 Centaur with axes & branch

8 Glamis No 2 from E.C.M.S.*

9 Centaur with axes

10 Lamb's head & Stone with carrying rings, or Triple rings

11 Camus Cross From E.C.M.S.*

12 Ruthwell Cross

13 Hilton of Cadbol

14 Meagle No 1 from E.C.M.S.

15 Snake & Z-Rod

16 Aberlemno No 2

17 Adam Zertal's discovery

18 Sketches to show transition from Adam Zertal's discovery to Aberlemno No 2 Emblem.

19 Altar or notched rectangle

20 St Vigeans No 1 back

21 The Maiden Stone

22 Unicorn or Pictish Beast

23 The Arms of Dokkum, from 'Symbols of our Celto-Saxon Heritage', W.H.Bennett.#.

24 St Vigeans No 1 front

25 Sagittarius [Maiden Stone]

Stones so covered with dirt or growth so that own photographs could not be used.

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Inverurie Location Guide

The Maiden Stone

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