

Investigation 4 - Mithraic, Celtic and Christian beliefs

Each of the 24 Stones in the listings below variously has carvings of animals, birds and fish which are known to have been revered in Celtic beliefs - some may have Roman associations, Pictish-Mithraic Symbols plus Christian Crosses and other carvings suggesting a Christian belief meaning. The intent is to determine whether the animal, bird and fish carvings may represent Celtic beliefs or prospectively have a Roman context (military or mythology) - or otherwise - then to assess if the meaning of an object is complementary to the Mithraic decodes and/or the Christian belief objects or if the Shared Space is based on acceptance of two or more beliefs.

In addition, 19 of these Stones have carvings noted as "People / Scene" and 19 as "Undecoded / Ogham" objects - adding to the complexity of selecting what relates to a belief and what does not. Investigation 4 covers the most diverse collection of carvings on the Symbol Stones.

Stone Name	Types of Carved Objects					
	Pictish - Mithraic	Animal / Bird / Fish		Christian Cross	People / Scene	Undecoded / Ogham
		Celtic attributes	Roman context			
Cossans, St Orlands	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dunfallandy	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Eassie	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Fowlis Wester	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Glamis Hunter's Hill	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Glamis Manse 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Golspie (Class 2)	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Inchbrayock	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Kirriemuir 2	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Logierait 2	Y	Y		Y		Y
Meigle 1	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Meigle 5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Meigle 6	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Monifieth 2	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Nigg	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
St Vigeans 1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
St Vigeans 2	Y	Y	Y	Y		
St Vigeans 4	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Shandwick	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
Skinnet Chapel	Y	Y		Y		Y
Strathmartine Kirkyard 5	Y	Y		Y		Y
Tealing	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Ulbster	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Woodwrae	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Analysis and Evaluation for Each Stone

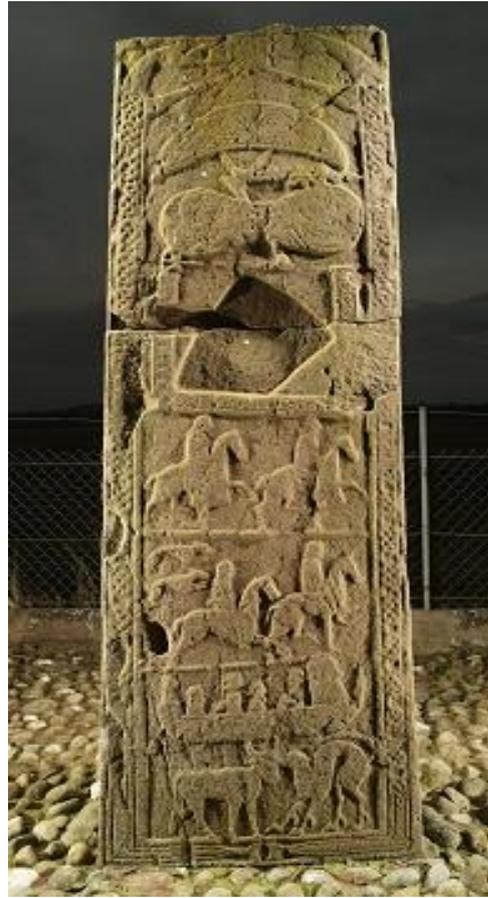
Each of these 24 **Stones** has carved objects indicated in italics.

Note:- P-M = Pictish-Mithraic as decoded in [Mithraic Symbols Identified and Decoded](#)

Cossans, St Orlands

Pictish-Mithraic	<i>V-Rod & Crescent, Z-Rod & Double Disc</i>
Animal, bird or fish	<i>Bull (cow?)</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scenes, 6 figures in a boat</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws attacking a bull or cow, interlaced animals with Cross</i>

Connections between P-M belief (the V-Rod reinforced by the Double Disc representation of the earth, planets and celestial sphere to heaven and the travel of the soul) and Christianity alluded to by the Cross (the hereafter etc.) are strong. Prominence is given to these two P-M symbols being at the top of one side of the slab with the hunting scene, six figures in a boat and a beast with exaggerated claws attacking a bull or cow arranged in registers beneath. The Cross occupies the whole of other side. Because of the clear connection between P-M and Christian beliefs this tilts the evaluation to "complementary" despite the different carvings not being adjacent as in other less crowded Stones.



Cossans, St Orlands - contd



detail of 6 figures in a boat

The bull has Celtic attributes - fertility, wealth, status, strength & strong will - and a Roman context - emblem of I Germanica, III Gallica, III Parthica, IV Macedonica, VI Ferrata, VI Victrix, VII Claudia, VIII Augusta, IX Hispana and X Gemina legions. A VI Victrix inscription on a roof tile at Carpow suggests a presence there. Like XX Valeria Victrix this legion was also involved with the construction of Hadrian's wall and the Antonine Wall. Because of the timing for a Christian belief context the likelihood of any direct Roman influence for this Stone can be eliminated (not least legion presence is in Hadrian and Antonine times) - this leaves the bull to be considered prospectively with a Celtic connection which cannot readily be seen. Therefore, any Christian / Celtic relationship is not likely leaving an interpretation or reason for the bull (possibly cow) carving unsolved.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Dunfallandy

Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast x 2, V-Rod & Crescent x 2, Double Disc Alone</i>
Animal, bird or fish	<i>Stag</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, two angels, bosses on Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Two people sitting, mounted figure, beast with human legs protruding from mouth</i>
Undecoded	<i>Hammer, anvil, pincers or tongs, beasts with exaggerated claws x 5, interlaced animals with Cross, fish monster x 2</i>

Although a Roman meaning for the stag (or deer) is not known there are several Celtic attributes - messenger/guide from otherworlds, vision, thorough, patient, life, power, virility and longevity. Investigation 1 considered Stones with prospective Celtic and Mithraic beliefs, Investigation 3 prospective Celtic and Christian beliefs - no Stones in these investigations has a deer or stag carving. For Dunfallandy the conclusion is that a Celtic belief is not specifically represented by what seems to be a stag which is carved with other (less easily identifiable) quadrupeds.

With the 5 P-M symbols carved only on one side there is an immediate suggestion that the Share Space is more acceptance of Christian and P-M beliefs than the carvings being complementary but the meaning of the P-M symbols makes the relationship with Christian symbolism complementary. There is a full account of the carvings as a Case Study in P-M book and website. Christian context is reinforced by biblical stories - Jonah and the whale plus St Paul & St Antony. Like Cossans, there are two creatures with heads opposing at the top of the reverse of the Stone connecting to fish style tails at the bottom— they appear to be pulling on either side of an animal with long ears (the eyes and nose like a dog are apparent). Other animals on this Stone are a stag and a horse (with rider) which are unconnected – one on the Cross side the other the reverse. This Stone has one of the most complex mixes of carvings of any across Pictland.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Eassie

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog/hound x 2, stag</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast, Z-Rod & Double Disc, Horseshoe/Arch</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angel</i>
People / Scene	<i>People walking (some holding?) x 2, cloaked/robed figure x 3</i>
Undecoded	<i>Tree in container, cattle x 3</i>

Celtic attributes for dog/hound include strength, ferocity, companionship, protection, loyalty and good luck, none of which directly relate to a belief as such. Stag attributes are outlined in the entry for Dunfallandy. Collectively these animal carvings appear to have neither Celtic belief nor Roman context but the stag and hound(s) might have some hunting connotation.

With the Pictish Beast representing Capricorn marking the return of the soul to heaven upon death, the Double Disc showing the earth, planets and celestial sphere plus the Horseshoe/Arch representing the view from and into a Mithraeum, there are strong resemblances to not only Christian belief but where it might be practiced. This places the evaluation into the complementary category because of strong symbolic connection.

Christian belief is reinforced with the inclusion of two angels (considered to be intermediaries between God or Heaven and humanity). Perhaps the tree on the reverse has religious meaning.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic relationship is not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Fowlis Wester

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Eagle (large bird?)</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>V-Rod & Crescent, Z-Rod & Double Disc, Double Disc Alone</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, bosses on Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scene, group of warriors</i>
Undecoded	<i>Cow with bell round its neck</i>

With a spiritual meaning for an eagle there can be a possible association with some P-M carvings; it also has several Celtic attributes. However, this carving is noted in Canmore as a "large bird" so arguably not Celtic. What appears to be a hunting scene is mixed in with a group of warriors. With Christianity coming to Pictland after the withdrawal of the Roman army there is no case to suggest the eagle could prospectively relate directly to a Roman presence. Although the P-M symbols are on the reverse together they complement the Christian belief i.e. travel of the soul and a pathway to heaven.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic relationship is not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Glamis, Hunter's Hill (aka Glamis 1)

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Serpent Alone</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Mirror, triple disc</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angel</i>
People / Scene	<i>Bird-headed man</i>
Undecoded	<i>Flower, seated deer, undefined animals</i>

This could be a re-used Class 1 Stone i.e. it has had the Christian Cross and an angel added making it into so-called Class 2 - a similar background is apparent for Glamis Manse 1. Two diverse interpretations can be made of the serpent - P-M and Celtic. There are 10 examples of a "serpent alone" on Pictish Stones. As a set of Constellations (principally Hydra) the serpent forms a connection between Cancer and Capricorn (the gateways of the soul); it is usually carved with either a Z-Rod or Straight Rod. Its Celtic attributes include long / eternal life, curious and communicator; because it casts its skin annually it was considered to be a symbol of regeneration. In Roman context snakes (serpents) were seen as tokens of life beyond the grave.

Apart from the angel having a direct linkage with the Cross the meaning of the carvings on that side of the Stone are unclear except for the triple disc - arguably P-M. Complementing other key Mithraic Symbols on the Pictish Stones, the Triple Disc represents the Zodiac with Cancer and Capricorn Constellations (the gates from and to Heaven) 180° apart. They coincide with the summer and winter solstices.

What is difficult to assess is whether the Triple Disc symbol would have been on the Stone when it was wholly Class 1 or if it was added when the Cross was carved - then there is the complication of deciding if that might have been added to support the original P-M symbol of the serpent on what appears to be the "original side". This leads to the more challenging question of the reason why the serpent is on the stone.

In deciding whether the serpent represents P-M, Celtic or other belief and whether additionally there could have been a Roman context, the positioning of the Mirror (overall the second most numerous P-M symbol) needs consideration and it may be the key. Portraying the Zodiac therefore having an association with the serpent because of it, in turn, portraying the gates from and to Heaven, there is a strong case that these two symbols complement one another leading to the suggestion that they were deliberately carved in the same time period i.e. as part of the original Class 1 Stone. This makes a strong case for the serpent carving being P-M. Arguably it could also have been of significance to a Celtic believer - and in a Roman context there is the aspect in belief in life beyond the grave. Maybe a straightforward choice is the wrong outcome - this could be, in Class 1 form, a Stone with a symbol that encompasses three beliefs - P-M, Celtic and Roman mythology. The style of carving on that side of the Stone is incise, on the Class 2 side it is relief - maybe suggesting that the P-M Triple Disc carving is of a later date compared with the Class 1 side.

Glamis, Hunter's Hill - contd

Added to the foregoing complexity, is the relationship or relationships with the Latin Cross and complementary angel. In Christian belief there is a life here-after with the soul residing in heaven. This is theologically the same as the Celtic, P-M and Roman mythology beliefs mentioned above leading towards the carvings on this Glamis Stone serving several beliefs in a complementary manner albeit in what appear to be two time periods.



Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian** beliefs. Additionally, there is **Roman mythology context**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are also accommodated.

Glamis Manse 1

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Deer's (maybe hound's) head, salmon, serpent alone</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Triple disc, mirror</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Cauldron and protruding legs, axe-wielding people x 2</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws, centaur with axe(?)</i>

As with Glamis, Hunters Hill this could be a re-used Class 1 Stone i.e. it has had the Christian Cross added making it into so-called Class 2. A Roman context for the deer's head and salmon is not apparent but there is for the serpent. However, two of these objects - the salmon and serpent have Celtic attributes. As stated in Investigation 1, the salmon in Celtic mythology can represent wisdom and esoteric knowledge; maybe this can be associated with physical aspects of the Salmon's travel and life cycle (from birth to death) giving a complementary linkage with both P-M and Christian beliefs. A serpent is on seven other Stones being considered in this Investigation (No 4) - prospective associations across all of P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs are outlined in the Glamis, Hunter's Hill section above plus a possible link to Roman mythology.

Glamis Manse 1 - contd

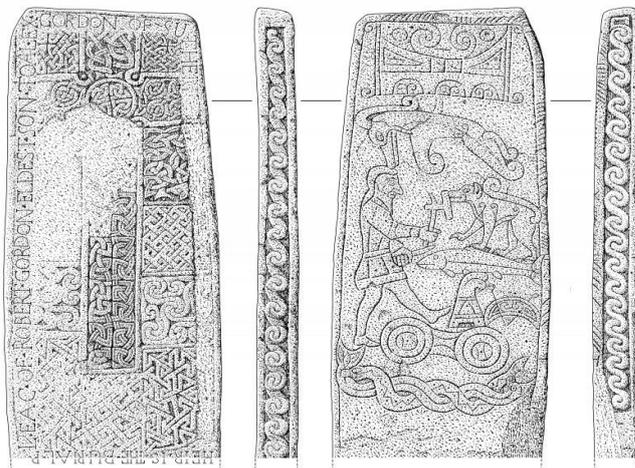
Overall there are very significant similarities between these two Glamis Stones. Both, it is suggested, started as Class 1 then were reused and in effect "upgraded" to Class 2 extending the use of the slab material into the era of another belief. Dependent on the decode or interpretation for the serpent there is a prospect of the slab being a Shared Space for at least two beliefs, maybe three plus a prospective connection with Roman mythology. A similarity with Glamis, Hunter's Hill is the inclusion of a P-M symbol - the triple disc - on the Latin Cross side.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Additionally, there is **Roman mythology context. Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are also accommodated.

Golspie (Class 2)

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Salmon, dog/hound/(cat?)</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast, V-Rod & Crescent, Double Disc Alone</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Axe-wielding person</i>
Undecoded / Ogham	<i>Decorated rectangle, linear Ogham, intertwined snakes, flower, interlace not within cross</i>

A Roman context for the dog/hound is not known - there is an interpretation that the animal may be a wild cat being confronted by the axe-wielding man on this slab. Celtic attributes for dog/hound include strength, ferocity, companionship, protection, loyalty and good luck, none of which directly relate to a belief as such. As stated in Investigation 1, the salmon in Celtic mythology can represent wisdom and esoteric knowledge; maybe this can be associated with physical aspects of the Salmon's travel and life cycle (from birth to death) giving a linkage with both P-M and Christian beliefs.



Strong associations can be made between the belief that is represented by the Latin Cross and Pictish Mithraism - the V-Rod shows the path of the soul from heaven on birth and its return on death, the Pictish Beast as Capricornus marks the Zodiac point where the soul passes into heaven and the Double Disc (unusually without the Z-Rod) is a three dimensional construct of the earth, planets and celestial sphere. With the Ogham inscription not having been decoded there is no evidence to consider it having a religious meaning - it appears to be a later addition.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Inchbrayock

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog/hound</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Decorated disc (maybe or could be undecoded)</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, Biblical story</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scene</i>
Undecoded	<i>Tree - "of life"?, creature eating, interlaced animals with Cross</i>

As with Golspie above there is no Roman context or relevant Celtic attribute, in "belief" terms, for the dog/hound -only "physical" or "softer skills". Sometimes the decorated discs are interpreted as symbols - there is nothing similar in any of the P-M decode material. In terms of belief, the Cross and Biblical scene interpreted as Samson smiting the Philistine with the jaw bone of an ass suggest this is more a so-called Class 3 than Class 2 stone.

Evaluation - Not a Shared Space for different beliefs - **Christian** only. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Kirriemuir 2

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Stags x 2, dogs/hounds</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Z-Rod & Double Disc</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angels</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scenes x 2, cloaked person holding a shield</i>
Undecoded / Ogham	<i>Indecipherable bird, linear Ogham (perhaps), 2 facing quadrupeds</i>

Similarly with Dunfallandy and Eassie, Celtic attributes for dog/hound and stag do not directly relate to a "belief" as such nor do they have Roman context. They most likely have a hunting connotation therefore tying in with the hunting scene on the reverse of the stone. An Ogham inscription might be on one narrow side but it more looks like a diagonal pattern. A kneeling angel is on either side of the upper arm of the Cross. This Christian symbolism arguably links with the Z-Rod & Double Disc but as a stylised representation and the only P-M object on this stone the evaluation more implied acceptance than complementary.

Evaluation - a Shared Space with implied acceptance of **P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is not apparent. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Logierait 2

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog/hound, horse x 2 (portions)</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Double Disc, Serpent & Straight Rod</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
Undecoded	<i>Hippocamp pair, interlace not within Cross</i>

Having Celtic attributes including sovereignty, political power, stamina, endurance and faithfulness the horse does not appear to represent a "belief", as such, nor does the dog/hound (as seen in comments above). A relevant Roman context is not known for these animals. A hunting scene seem likely. Explanations for elements of P-M belief can be given by the Serpent and Double Disc. As a set of Constellations (principally Hydra) the serpent forms a connection between Cancer and Capricorn (the gateways of the soul); it is usually carved with either a Z-Rod or Straight Rod (as in this example). Its Celtic attributes include long / eternal life, curious and communicator; because it casts its skin annually it was considered to be a symbol of regeneration.

Logierait 2 - contd

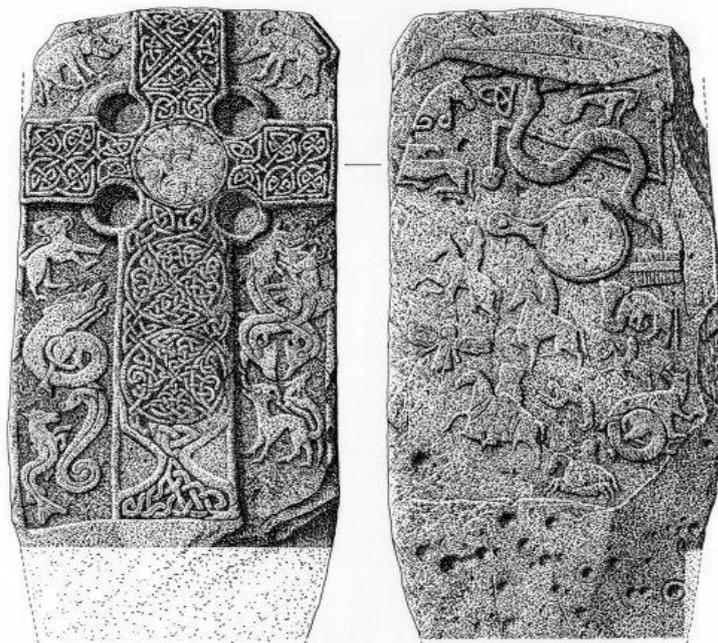
In Roman context snakes (serpents) were seen as tokens of life beyond the grave. This gives three contexts relevant to the Investigation. However, because of the Straight Rod the greatest likelihood is P-M so the Celtic relationship is less likely. Taking the Serpent interpretation plus that of the Double Disc (the structure of the universe from earth to planets to celestial sphere and beyond) there is a case for a complementary relationship with the Latin Cross.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary** P-M and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. Additionally, there is **Roman mythology context**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are also accommodated.

Meigle 1

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Horse lying down, horse's head, salmon</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Z-Rod & Serpent, Mirror, Comb, Pictish Beast</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angel</i>
People / Scene	<i>Persons on horseback x 5</i>
Undecoded	<i>Hippocamp pairs [x 2 single - facing; 1 pair interlaced], Triquetra x 2, indecipherable quadruped x 3, beast with exaggerated claws x 4, cup marking</i>

A Roman context for the horse, horse's head and salmon is not apparent. There is a complex mix of objects from different beliefs across the two faces of the Stone - for Christianity the Cross on the front, an angel on the reverse; a P-M Comb, Mirror, Serpent & Z-Rod and Pictish Beast on the reverse; aspects of the Salmon's travel and life cycle (from birth to death) gives its Celtic attribute on the reverse; a triquetra (with Christian and Celtic relevance) on each side. "Fantastic beasts" on the front and reverse do not represent any known beliefs but add to the range of objects that have coexisted on this unmarked slab for in excess of 1000 years.



Meigle 1 - contd

Collectively the P-M objects give a strong complementary relationship with Christianity and the travel of the soul - the Comb as the steps to heaven, the Mirror in portraying the Zodiac, the serpent marking the gates from and to Heaven, the Pictish Beast at the Capricorn gate on the soul's return. If the salmon's interpretation is its life cycle (from birth to death) then a Celtic connection is made suggesting this slab has three complementary beliefs reinforced by the inclusion of the triquetra.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian** beliefs. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Meigle 5

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Eagle</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast, Mirror Case</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Facing animal heads alone, person on horse</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws, interlaced animals with Cross</i>

With Christianity coming to Pictland after the withdrawal of the Roman army it is unlikely that the eagle carving could prospectively relate directly to a Roman presence based on its use on the ubiquitous Roman Army Standard. However, with Celtic attributes - wisdom, long life, swiftness, strength, keen sight, knowledge of magic - plus the wider belief of it being man's connection with the divine, there could be a P-M linkage with the Pictish Beast as Capricornus indicating the gate to heaven on the soul's return after mortal death. Perhaps the Mirror Case (decoded as Mithras's birth from the rock) has a symbolic relationship with the Latin Cross and the birth of Christ. Considering the physical location of the P-M objects on a narrow side of the slab and that they are incised while the front and reverse are relief this would perhaps suggest an after-thought or specifically secondary importance - in effect this could reduce the complementary prospect to implied acceptance. This last point will be further explored in Observations and Conclusions for Investigation 4.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian** beliefs. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Meigle 6

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog/hound</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Crescent Alone, Double Disc</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Person on horse</i>

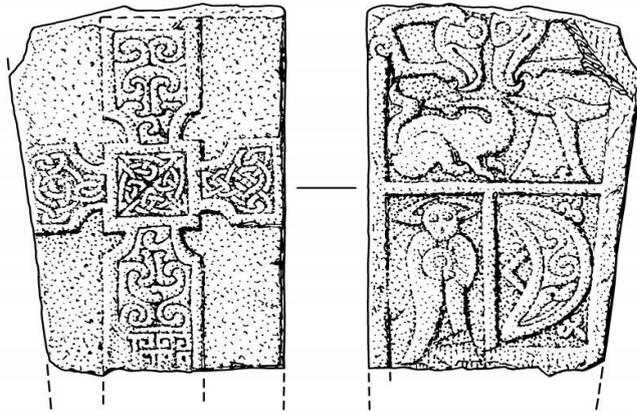
Celtic attributes for dog/hound (strength, ferocity, companionship, protection etc.) do not directly relate to a belief as such nor do they have Roman context; this example may not have some hunting connotation with the horse above as the rider is holding a round shield. Both the Double Disc and Crescent are relief carved in the same style as the rest of the slab and neither has the usual directional arrows i.e. lacking the "Z" and "V".

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **implied acceptance** of **P-M and Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is not apparent. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Monifieth 2

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Deer's head</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>V-Rod & Crescent</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Cloaked / robed figure</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws, bird-headed monster x 2</i>

Whilst there are Celtic attributes for a deer - messenger/guide from otherworlds, vision etc. - nothing specific has been found for a deer's head.



Perhaps, due to the size of the animal and the similarity of its body with a horse, it was sufficient to include only a head on a Stone. A prospective linkage between Christian and P-M beliefs can be made between the meaning of the V-Rod & Crescent (soul travel) and the Cross. Maybe the robed figure was part of a larger scene.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Nigg

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog/Hound, Eagle</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angel, harp (?), biblical story</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scene</i>
Undecoded	<i>Sheep</i>

With Roman and Celtic meanings the context of the eagle may be understood by its possible association with the P-M carvings and any "overspill" from the hunting scene. With Christianity coming to Pictland after the withdrawal of the Roman army there is no case to suggest the eagle could prospectively relate directly to a Roman presence. However, with its Celtic attributes plus the wider belief of it being man's connection with the divine, there could be a P-M linkage with the Pictish Beast as Capricornus indicating the gate to heaven on the soul's return after mortal death. St Paul and St Anthony meeting in the desert and scenes from the story of David reinforce the primarily Christian message purpose for this slab. P-M belief is represented by the Pictish Beast (marking the Capricorn gate to heaven). This is a clear example of the Class 2 Stones having a "transitional" purpose between P-M and Christian beliefs.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

St Vigean 1

Animal, bird or fish
Pictish-Mithraic
Christian
People / Scene
Undecoded

Boar, Stag, Eagle, Salmon
Z-Rod & Double Disc, Mirror, Comb, Crescent Alone
Latin Cross
Hunting scene, kneeling/crouching person, hooded figure
Beast with exaggerated claws, interlaced animals with Cross,
cow/calf/cattle X 2, rabbit, intertwined snakes/serpents



Latheron is the only other Stone with both an eagle and a salmon which are Celtic objects and may be complementary to one another - e.g. wisdom, esoteric knowledge, knowledge of magic. With Christianity coming to Pictland after the withdrawal of the Roman army there is, as with Latheron and Mortlach 1, no case to suggest the eagle could prospectively relate directly to a Roman presence. The boar and stag could be an overspill from the hunting scene. More with Celtic attributes of royalty, bravery, prowess in battle, cunning and ferocious nature than some religious belief the boar is not seen here as a contender for either complementary or implied acceptance. P-M carvings on this slab complement one another and Christian beliefs - e.g. travel of the soul and hereafter.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M, Celtic** and **Christian** beliefs. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

St Vigean 2

Animal, bird or fish
Pictish-Mithraic
Christian

Eagle
Z-Rod & Serpent, Mirror, Comb
Latin Cross

With Roman and Celtic meanings the context of the eagle may be understood by its possible association with the P-M carvings and being beside the carving of a Christian Cross (such as man's connection to the divine because it flies higher than any other bird). With Christianity coming to Pictland after the withdrawal of the Roman army there is no case to suggest the eagle could prospectively relate directly to a Roman presence. As with St Vigean 1, the P-M carvings on this slab particularly complement one another (from which many P-M beliefs can be explained) and also Christian beliefs - e.g. travel of the soul and hereafter. The back is totally worn - there are no carvings.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **complementary P-M, Celtic** and **Christian** beliefs.

St Vigeans 4

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Dog's head</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Double Disc</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, Triquetra</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hooded figure</i>

Only small parts of this slab exist making analysis of its content difficult - speculation has been avoided. Sufficient material shows upper parts of a Cross and triquetra - a shape with Celtic heritage (sometimes used as infill with more complex compositions) and the Christian "trinity" meaning. Celtic attributes for a dog/hound do not directly relate to a belief as such. A very simple Double Disc symbol does not lead to any strong P-M relevance. When there are other slabs whose carvings have readily identifiable Celtic attributes, P-M carvings and Christian meaning the evaluation for this slab is not strong - but it does have justifiable elements for two beliefs.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Skinnet Chapel

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Horse</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>V-Rod & Crescent</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
Undecoded	<i>Hippocamp pair, Triple Oval</i>

Style-wise the incised horse on this Stone and Inverurie 4 are very similar and contrast with the usual relief horses on Class 2 Stones. Although having a Celtic attribute, the horse does not appear to represent a belief. With the Cross representing Christianity and its beliefs and the V-Rod & Crescent the travel of the soul from and to heaven in Pictish Mithraism there is a pair of complementary beliefs.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Strathmartine Kirkyard 5

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Horse</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Z-Rod & Double Disc</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>
Undecoded	<i>Interlaced animals with Cross</i>

Although the current location is now unknown, sketches of a fragment in the RCAHMS Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland book show part of a floriated Z-Rod & Double Disc and legs with the lower body of a horse. As noted elsewhere in these Investigations the horse does appear to represent a Celtic belief but the Cross and P-M symbol are complementary.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Shandwick

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Stags</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Double Disc Alone, Pictish Beast</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross, angel</i>
People / Scene	<i>Hunting scene</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws x 2, interlaced animals with Cross, creature eating</i>

On this register layout slab the stags are clearly in a hunting scene so are not considered to be representing any Celtic attributes. Double discs are usually associated with a Z-Rod but still considered to be a P-M symbol. Large compared with other animal carvings on this slab, the Pictish Beast is given prominence.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** with **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Tealing

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Serpent (overlaid by fish monster)</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Pictish Beast (part)</i>
Christian	<i>Latin Cross</i>

Celtic attributes for the serpent are long / eternal life, curious, communicator; because it casts its skin annually it was considered to be a symbol of regeneration. There is also a Roman context - snakes were seen as tokens of life beyond the grave. One text suggests the fish monster and serpent are intertwined but, in fact, one overlays the other.

Considering how the objects were relief carved the fish monster has not been added to obscure the serpent - a relationship, if any, is uncertain but the obscuring of the serpent makes its impact representing Celtic attributes doubtful. On the reverse of the fragment are the head and fore leg of a Pictish Beast - this symbol as the marker of the Capricorn gate into heaven gives a complement of soul travel / life hereafter with Christianity.

Evaluation - a **Shared Space** for **complementary P-M** and **Christian** beliefs. A **Celtic** relationship is **not apparent**. **Seemingly-non-religious** carvings are accommodated.

Ulbster

Animal, bird or fish	<i>Horse, Salmon, Serpent</i>
Pictish-Mithraic	<i>Double Crescent, Double Disc Alone, Pictish Beast, V-Rod & Crescent</i>
Christian	<i>Greek style Cross</i>
People / Scene	<i>Kneeling / crouching person</i>
Undecoded	<i>Beast with exaggerated claws x 3, cow/calf/cattle, stepped rectangle</i>

A Roman context for the horse and salmon is not known; the serpent does have Roman context but not relevant in the time period of this Stone. There are Celtic attributes for all three - in particular the salmon and serpent could tie in with beliefs. Of the four P-M symbols the clearly relevant ones are the V-Rod and Crescent and the Pictish Beast both having meanings that complement what is represented in Christianity by the Crosses.

Ulbster - contd

There is a wide range of carvings on this Stone, The V-Rod & Crescent on the Ulbster Stone. but perhaps more notable is the deep incise carving - typically for a Class 2 Stone the majority of the carving is relief not incise.

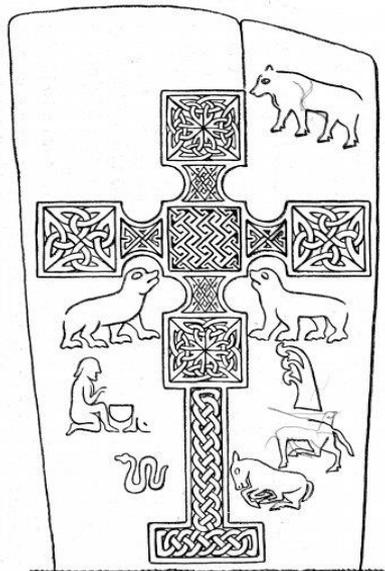
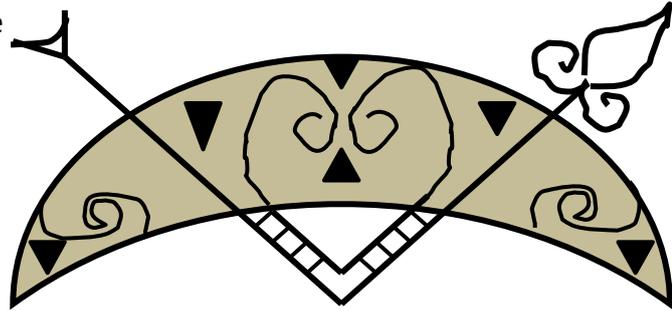


Fig. 31.—Front.

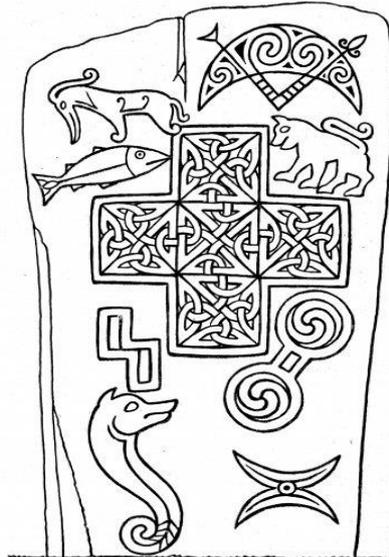


Fig. 31A.—Back.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Woodwrae

Animal, bird or fish

Bull, Dog/Hound x 2

Pictish-Mithraic

Double Disc, L-Shaped Rectangle

Christian

Latin Cross

People / Scene

Beast with human legs protruding from its mouth, person on horseback X 2

Undecoded

Beast with exaggerated claws, interlaced animals with Cross

Although the bull and dog have Celtic attributes they are not really in the context of beliefs; likewise the bull has a Roman context but is unlikely to be applicable considering the other carvings on this slab. It looks as if there is a hunting scene on the reverse side with the bull prospectively mixed in with other animals - damage to the surface limits evaluation. One of the beasts on the front side seems to be chasing a person - this could be allegorical. Three concentric circles are apparent in the Double Disc with the P-M allusion to the structure of the universe and heaven beyond - this links with that part of Christian belief concerning the soul and life hereafter.

Evaluation - a Shared Space for complementary P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.

Evaluation Outcomes

From the analyses by Stone, there are 7 Evaluation Outcomes :-		No. Stones
A	Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs.	1
B	Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.	7
C	Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian beliefs. Additionally, there is Roman mythology context . Seemingly-non-religious carvings are also accommodated.	2
D	Shared Space for complementary P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent . Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.	10
E	Shared Space for complementary P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent . Additionally, there is Roman mythology context . Seemingly-non-religious carvings are also accommodated.	1
F	Shared Space with implied acceptance of P-M and Christian beliefs. A Celtic relationship is not apparent . Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.	2
G	Not a Shared Space for different beliefs - Christian only . Seemingly-non-religious carvings are accommodated.	1

Observations & Conclusions

The easiest objects to research and assess are the Pictish-Mithraic and Christian ones - the presence of both types is confirmed on 23 of these 24 Stones (all except Inchbrayock).

Having a common "belief" thread is what was sought to enable an evaluation of "complementary". For example, the Ulbster Stone - there are Celtic attributes in the salmon (they generally are born and die in the same place) and serpent (long / eternal life; because it casts its skin annually it was considered to be a symbol of regeneration) that could tie in with beliefs, the P-M V-Rod and Crescent and the Pictish Beast both have meanings (soul travel, heaven and hereafter) that complement what is represented in Christianity by the Crosses. Assuming a correct interpretation of those carvings that portray a Celtic belief, 10 Stones have symbols from all three beliefs so they are evaluated as "Shared Space for complementary P-M, Celtic and Christian "beliefs".

On all but 1 Stone (St Vigean's 2, whose reverse is totally worn) there are additional objects which are not considered to represent a known belief or religion. Typically they form hunting or military "Scenes" and have been evaluated as "Seemingly-non-religious". Their inclusion on 23 of the 24 Stones in this Investigation adds another use for the Shared Space that seems to have been quite acceptable compared with the, arguably, primary purpose which was to show belief-related objects.

Complementary versus Implied Acceptance? Initially it seemed that when evaluating the relationship (or not) between carved objects the preferred option would be to classify as Complementary only those objects representing different beliefs that were placed on the same side of a Stone e.g. a Latin Cross and a V-Rod & Crescent. As such those same two objects but on different sides would then be classified as Implied Acceptance. Despite that classification being straightforward and basically easy it added a constraint in interpretation that might not reflect what the carver intended so was not pursued.

By considering what each object represents, by Stone and perhaps in varying context, a more meaningful evaluation is possible. So the Cross on one side of a Stone - representing Christian belief and after-life - can be complemented by a V-Rod & Crescent representing the travel of the soul to heaven and immortality on the other side of the Stone. This approach could possibly give different degrees of "complementary" with, arguably, relevant P-M and Christian symbols on the same side of a Stone as "strong complementary". Having thought this through there was a need to check this assessment was applied across all of the Investigations - and it has been.

Mixed carving methods - implications? As so-called Class 2 stones have been defined (with Class 3) as relief versus incised for Class 1 it was anticipated that in Investigation 4 all stones would be relief. For Meigle 5 this is not the case - the front and reverse are relief and the side face that is carved is incised. An example that truly tests the "Relief" rule is Ulbster where the Stone has carvings relative to several beliefs including Christian and all are incised - deep incised more in the way of a mason carving than surface "scratches" as on some Class 1 Stones. Maybe this is insignificant and a function of physical practicality - space constraint, potential undercutting carvings on main faces, impact damage etc. Conversely it could be significant for the reason stated in the analysis above. This prompted a check through all Class 2 stones to see if there are other cases of mixed carving - yes, clearly Glamis Hunter's Hill and Manse (seemingly re-used Class 1) and Golspie 2.

Animals, birds and fish - Celtic or Roman belief or part of a Scene? As with the other Investigations where there has prospectively been a Celtic belief the first step has been to decide whether the object with Celtic attributes could represent a belief and whether that object might have a Roman context (or neither or both). Almost all the slabs considered in this Investigation (actually 23 of the 24) have what is labelled "seemingly-non-religious" carvings - in other words, secular. Of the 10 Celtic symbols in Chapter 3, the deer, eagle, salmon and serpent could relate to "belief" the rest are generally attributes a person could have. When a "Scene" is present - typically hunting or military - the majority of what are listed as Celtic symbols are variously included. With this choice for the use of Celtic symbols interpretation relies very much on understanding context.