

Relative Positioning of Symbols

Physical positioning on a surface is a technique, in artistic terms, known as "juxtapositioning". As explored in **Associated Meanings**, placing objects side-by-side on a Pictish Stone can suggest or support a narrative - such as the upward arrow of the V-Rod & Crescent going through a hole in the Zodiac with the Pictish Beast marking that Zodiac location as Capricorn. In addition the specific physical location on the surface or medium can further reinforce or enhance that narrative, such as being near the top of a Stone and incorporating the skyward view above that Stone as part of the narrative.

In this website and the book *The Religious Purpose of the Pictish Symbol Stones* (published by Austin Macauley) there is a chapter on the Open Air Mithraeum which adds an additional aspect to relative positioning. Whilst artistic juxtapositioning refers to achieving a compare / contrast effect on a surface, the broader concept of "relative positioning" can be taken a step further when the Pictish Stone is the terrestrial element of the Open Air Mithraeum and the view to the sky would actually have been to the Planets and the stars. To those "in the know" it would have been possible to identify specific Planets, Constellations and the Milky Way.

This is a link to the page on the [Open Air Mithraeum](#)

The Celestial Sphere can be considered to contain the Milky Way – astrologically the home of the soul. Astrologically souls descend on birth through the Gate of Cancer and ascend after death through the Gate of Capricorn. This suggests that the upward arrow passes through the Celestial Sphere at the Capricorn "gate".

With the V-Rod & Crescent prompting a thought about the travel of the soul one can imagine standing in front of these Stones and looking skyward - particularly *Aberlemno Roadside* with that symbol at the very top. At *Broomend of Crichtie* the positioning of the Pictish Beast (representing Capricorn as the gateway to Heaven) complements the upward arrow of the V-Rod and Crescent further enabling a basic religious belief to be explained.



← *Aberlemno Roadside*



Broomend of Crichtie, Inverurie