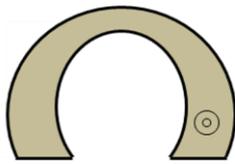


Pictish Symbol Stones – Case Study Bruceton

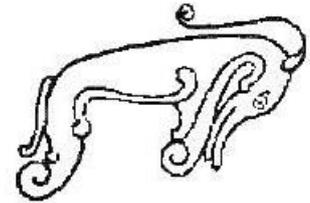
Features – this simply incised Class 1 Stone is near a river in a sloping open ground location and has two of the more commonplace Symbol designs.

There are other standing Stones in the vicinity, seemingly without carvings, so this one could be part of a set of Stones with some other significance (maybe pre-Pictish period). Human bones have been discovered nearby and cists found in the mid-1800s within 18m of the Stone. This area either side of the current Perth / Angus boundary has a concentrated collection of Stone sites the nearest to Bruceton being predominantly Class 2. However, North East and less than 20 miles away is Aberlemno Flemington Farm and a Stone with the same two carvings.

With a right angle in its course, the view from the Stone is down to and across the River Isla in the South and East. Water appears to be of significance in Pictish-Mithraism with over 15% of locations identified as adjacent to rivers and burns.



The Symbols popularly referred to as the Horseshoe / Arch and Pictish Beast are the only two visible on this Stone – the Arch uppermost. The Horseshoe is plain except for two concentric circles in the lower right.



The Arch is the view into the Roman Mithraeum with its tunnel type shape and the Arch is also the shape at the so-called Tauroctony end which would have housed the Tauroctony statue. It could also represent the skyward view to the Zodiac.

The Pictish Beast is decoded as the “sea goat” which is Capricorn – astrologically the Gate of the Gods through which the soul travels on death into immortality. In Pictish-Mithraism, the connection between the V-Rod & Crescent, the Mirror and the Pictish Beast Symbols is Capricorn. On a Symbol Stone the Pictish beast could act as a “pointer” to the Capricorn constellation and, with Reference to the V-Rod & Crescent, enable an explanation of the soul’s travel via the Celestial Sphere back to Heaven, and immortality, on death.

Being Class 1 and of a simple design, these two Symbols at Bruceton, nearby at Aberlemno Flemington Farm and also at Congash in Badenoch and Strathspey could be a reminder of Roman Mithraism to people locating to these areas.