

## **Pictish Symbol Stones – Case Study Dunfallandy**

**Features** – Symbol rich with people, animals, fantastic beasts etc. this Class 2 so-called “Priest’s Stone” [Clach an T’Sagart in Gaelic] is near a river and the site of an old chapel. Notably a scene alludes to a biblical story.

Reputedly located near Dunfallandy chapel (no ruins remain) and near to a private grave yard it is possible that this Stone is more-or-less in its original position. It is very close to the River Tummel (just to the east) with some similar design styles to the Symbol Stone no more than 5 miles away at Logierait (the Double Disc and Hippocamp type beasts in particular).

Another example of a transition Stone (from Mithraic to Christian) but with the Class 1 elements low key, certainly in size, with two Pictish Beasts (Capricorn shapes) plus two examples of the V-Rod & Crescent and one of the Z-Rod & Double Disc (see the Case Study for Aberlemno for an explanation). Abernethy has the only other example of the hammer and anvil objects and Rosskeen the only other tongs – their significance in terms of a religious belief are elusive, maybe they just represent the carver’s other skills (not restricted to Stone carving). Hammer and tongs also allude to Vulcan with linkages to fire – one of the four classical elements.

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).



The Cross side has five Beasts with Exaggerated Claws, two interlaced animals (facing one another horizontally head to head) and another beast ( a fish monster which looks like a form of Hippocamp) initially seems to have human legs protruding from its mouth. However, on closer inspection the beast appears to be biting or throwing up the person – maybe alluding to the biblical Jonah coming out of the mouth of the whale (or fish).

Only one other similar object exists, at Woodwrae where human legs are clearly protruding from the beast’s mouth. Also, as at Woodwrae, one of the beasts has something in its mouth but here it looks less like prey and more like a stick. 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.

Apart from the Cross with Bosses on its arms, the other clearly Christian objects are the angels alongside the lower arm of the Cross and on the reverse two people facing one another with a Cross between them – they are said to represent Saints Paul and Anthony who were contemporary and each has been stated as the founder of the monastic way of life. If indeed one of these seated figures is Saint Anthony maybe there is a tie in with some of the objects on the Cross side of the Stone which might portray the temptations of the Saint together with the story of Anthony seeing angels ascending with the soul of Paul when he died. It has been suggested there is a figure of Jonah on the Cross side – this would fit in with the above mentioned fish monster throwing up a person.