

Table 1. The changing interpretations and dating schemes for Class I Pictish symbol-stones.

Author	Publication date	Function (where specified)	Earliest date for Class I stones (cal AD)	Notes
Stuart	1856	Boundary markers?	–	Relations to manuscript sources and early Christian art
Earl of Southesk	1893	Religious symbols related to Scandinavian or Gothic population movement	5 th	
Allen & Anderson	1903	Christian monuments	7 th /8 th	Function not commented upon. Allen and Anderson note that the symbols could not have been distinctly pagan. Argued to be a general system unlikely to denote group affiliation, rank or status
Simpson	1936	System of ideographic art	7 th	Argues associations always Christian
Curle	1940	Not funerary. Animal symbols possible used in magical rituals	6 th /7 th	Short chronology in Christian era—majority 7 th century
Diack	1944	Tattoo designs linked to rank	5 th –6 th	

Stevenson	1955		7 th	Symbols devised ‘after the Picts became Christian’. No Pictish art ‘earlier than the mid-seventh century’ (p. 111)
Henderson	1958		6 th	Article concerned with possible area of origin of symbol system
Thomas	1961	Memorial stones	4 th /5 th	Symbols = a developed pictorial ‘language’
Thomas	1963	Statements associated with rank and status of the dead	5 th	But earlier tradition of tattooing
Henderson	1967	Individual and group identity	7 th	Origin probably associated with 7 th century Pictish king. Animal symbols dated to 7 th century based on manuscript parallels
Henderson	1971	Marking land ownership by social groups	7 th	
Laing & Laing	1984		4 th –5 th	
Jackson	1984	Expressing marriage alliances	7 th	
Driscoll	1988	Memorial stones	–	May be late—representing an 8 th –9 th centuries expansion of southern Pictish power into northern Pictland
Samson	1992	Memorial stones expressing names of important individuals	–	Not considered in detail

Laing & Laing	1993	Memorial stones	5 th	3 rd –4 th as tattoos, stones later
Hicks	1993	Animal symbols = religious symbols	6 th /7 th	But notes Roman animals depicted on monuments provides good stylistic and thematic parallels for Pictish examples
Stevenson	1993		7 th	Animal symbols derived from manuscript art of late 7 th century
Cummins	1999	Names of kings	5 th	
Forsyth	1997	Personal names	5 th or 6 th	Suggests may have been developed in response to ogham from 6 th century onwards
Alcock	1996	Personal names	6 th	
Carver	1999		6 th /7 th	Suggests may have been earlier non-monumental tradition of 5 th –6 th -century date
Alcock	2003	Personal names and lineages	5 th –6 th	
Henderson & Henderson	2004	Boundary markers and/or serving a funerary purpose. May have also played roles in communal transactions and ceremonies	6 th	Curvilinear art style derived ultimately from 'Caledonian metalwork'. Evangelist symbols in earlier Insular Gospel-books based on Pictish animal designs
Clarke	2007	Reaction to Christianity	–	Reaction to Christianity of 6 th –7 th centuries but may have been older non-monumental tradition
Mack	2007	Memorial stones	6 th /7 th	

Lee/Lee *et al.* 2010 Language, probably personal names

Table 2. Radiocarbon dates that have previously been used to provide a chronology for Pictish symbols. The two original Dairy Park, Dunrobin, dates appeared to be very late for a burial of this nature and were highly divergent (dates from Clarke & Heald 2008; Close-Brooks 1980).

Site	Laboratory number	Material	Context	Radiocarbon age (BP)	Calibrated date (95% confidence) cal AD
Broch of Burrian, Orkney	UB-6923	Ox phalange	Decorated ox phalange with crescent and V-rod. Antiquarian find from broch settlement. Uncertain context.	1435±29	570–655
Dairy Park, Dunrobin, Sutherland	GU-1039	Human bone	Radiocarbon dates from inhumation associated with square cairn. Possible stone socket associated with findspot of symbol stone, but disputed.	1335±40	635–770
Dairy Park, Dunrobin, Sutherland	GU-1039b	Human bone	Radiocarbon dates from inhumation associated with square cairn. Possible stone socket associated with findspot of symbol stone. Note discrepancy in date with GU-1039.	1135±100	665–1150

Table 3. Radiocarbon dates from Pool (from Hunter *et al.* 2007).

Site	Laboratory number	Material	Context	Radiocarbon age (BP)	Calibrated date (95% confidence) cal AD
Pool, Sanday, Orkney	SUERC-73735	Animal bone: bos	Ox phalange decorated with a crescent and V-rod and rectangular symbol	1570±33	410–570
Pool, Sanday, Orkney	GU-2243	Animal bone: bos	Phase 6.4 of settlement with decorated bone pin carved with a double-disc and Z-rod and rudimentary carved stone interpreted as a ‘proto’ symbol stone associated	1610±110	175–650
Pool, Sanday, Orkney	GU-2244	Animal bone: bos	Phase 6.3, <i>terminus post quem</i> for Phase 6.4 of Pool settlement	1530±110	250–680

Pool, Sanday, Orkney	GU-1999	Animal bone: bos	Phase 6.6, <i>terminus ante quem</i> for Phase 6.4 of Pool settlement	1520±50	420–635
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Table 4. Radiocarbon determinations from Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire.

Site	Laboratory number	Material	Context	Radiocarbon age (BP)	Calibrated date (95% confidence) cal AD
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-84480	<i>Alnus cf.</i> <i>glutinosa</i> charcoal	Wall—rampart construction foundation	1775±30	130–340
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-71936	<i>Corylus cf.</i> <i>avellana</i> charcoal	Wall—foundation slots for timber lacing of rampart wall	1790±30	130–330
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-71937	<i>Corylus cf.</i> <i>avellana</i> charcoal	Wall—foundation slots for timber lacing of rampart wall	1755±30	180–390
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-71939	<i>Corylus cf.</i> <i>avellana</i> charcoal	Wall—charred structural timber from rampart	1775±30	130–340

Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-71938	<i>Betula sp</i> charcoal	Lower terrace—layer above hearth of internal building	1675±30	250–430
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-84476	<i>Alnus cg.</i> <i>glutinosa</i> charcoal	Lower terrace—lower hearth of primary building on lower terrace	1685±30	250–420
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-71942	<i>Alnus cg.</i> <i>glutinosa</i> charcoal	Upper terrace—posthole fill	1825±30	80–320
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-84477	<i>Corylus cf</i> <i>avellana</i> charcoal	Upper terrace—pit with pottery and burnishing stone	1880±30	60–230
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-84478	<i>Alnus cg.</i> <i>glutinosa</i> charcoal	Upper terrace—hearth 2 of internal building on upper terrace	1690±30	250–420
Dunnicaer, Aberdeenshire	Poz-84479	<i>Betula sp</i> charcoal	Upper terrace—hearth 1 of primary internal building on upper terrace	1730±30	240–390

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