

# The Collection of Rubbings of West Highland Funerary Monument Carvings in the Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle Archive: A Description of the Catalogue

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The collection of life-sized rubbings of West Highland funerary monuments from across Argyllshire compiled by Lord Archibald Campbell and preserved in the Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle, is of significant interest for research into West Highland monuments themselves, how they were recorded and as a collection in their own right. The rubbings, made between 1892 and 1912, include those of monuments on Iona and other locations across Argyll which have since disappeared or become so degraded as to become unreadable or unrecognisable. The Collection has recently been catalogued to make it accessible for current and future research.

Lord Archibald Campbell's collection (henceforth, the Collection) comprises 179 life-sized rubbings of late medieval West Highland funerary monuments, grave-slabs and early Christian burial stones in twenty bound volumes.

The twenty volumes of rubbings are broadly organised by geographic location: each volume generally contains rubbings from the area indicated by its title, with some noteworthy exceptions. The volumes are: Ardochattan (rubbings from Ardochattan priory); Argyllshire Monuments volumes I–IV (including rubbings from, but not limited to, Kintyre, Lorn, Nether Lorn and Iona); Dalmally (rubbings from Dalmally and Glenorchy church); Iona Monuments volumes I–VI (all the rubbings are from Iona, from the Abbey, Nunnery, St Orans chapel and Reilig Odhrain, the burial ground of the kings); Kilbride volumes I–II (from Kilbride kirkyard, except for the rubbings of the Campbell Lerags Cross which is located on an adjacent hill); Kilchrenan (rubbings from Kilchrenan churchyard); Kilmhairie and Kilmhairie and Scoor (rubbings from the Kilmhairie churchyard); Strachur (rubbings from Strachur); Mull etc. (rubbings of memorials in Mull, Pennygown and Kirkapol, Tiree); Inch-Kenneth, Mull, Pennygown, Lismore (rubbings from Mull with five from Canna provided by Susan Russell). There are also a small number of drawings of grave-slab features, Pictish stones from Pitlochry (Dunfallandy) and several paintings. The majority of the rubbings are 170–220 cm long and 45–55 cm wide, with some 80 cm wide, making the bound volumes heavy and unwieldy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A short illustrated summary of the Collection has been published in (ed.) R. Irving and A. Diamond, *The Argyll Papers Funerary Monument Rubbings Collection* (Inveraray, 2019), available from the Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle.

The collection was created by Lord Archibald Campbell, second son of the 8th Duke of Argyll, brother of the future 9th Duke and father of the future 10th Duke. The earliest rubbings in the Collection, of stones on Iona, were made in 1892 by Lord Archibald himself.<sup>2</sup> Further rubbings were made by Mr James Jack, schoolmaster in Oban, who was commissioned by Lord Archibald.<sup>3</sup> The five rubbings of stones on Canna were made by Susan Russell, a friend of Lord Archibald.<sup>4</sup>

Lord Archibald Campbell (1846–1913), known as Lord Archie to his friends and family, has been described as ‘a veritable Sir Galahad on behalf of the rights and the language and the traditions of his country’.<sup>5</sup> He had a deep interest in the language, folklore and history of the West Highlands;<sup>6</sup> and researched and published a number of books: *Records of Argyll* (1885); *The Children of the Mist* (1890); *Notes on Swords at Culloden* (1894); *Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition* (2 vols, 1889); *Highland Dress, Arms, and Ornaments* (1899); *Armada Cannon* (1899); *Reveries, Poems* (1902); *Argyllshire Galleys* (1906).

Lord Archie’s father, George, 8th Duke of Argyll, was a ‘polymath’, with wide-ranging interests and knowledge. As well as being a successful politician (he was a Member of Parliament and served in Gladstone’s government as Secretary of State for India), the 8th Duke was interested in archaeology, history, natural history, science, philosophy, theology and folklore.<sup>7</sup> He shared many of these interests with his two eldest sons: John, Marquis of Lorne (later 9th Duke of Argyll) and Lord Archie.<sup>8</sup> Lorne (as he was known throughout his life) and Lord Archie purchased artefacts found by tenants on the Argyll estates which they

<sup>2</sup> Argyll Papers (hereafter AP) ARG/10/6/9/1, 2 and 5, Iona, vol. 3, nos 1, 2 and 5, with a further six rubbings annotated to confirm that they were completed by Lord Archibald on Iona.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from James Jack are mounted in volumes of the Collection: AP ARG/10/6/5, Ardchattan; AP ARG/10/6/16, Kilmhairie; AP ARG/10/6/19, Mull etc.

<sup>4</sup> AP ARG/15/2/1, Lord Archibald’s diary. Entries record receipt of the rubbings, 22 April 1903, and a visit from Susan Russell, 26 May 1904, as well as a visit to her ‘store’ at Fionnphort, 18 August 1905.

<sup>5</sup> G. Campbell, ‘Lord Archibald Campbell’, *The Celtic Review*, 9:33 (1913), 65–70.

<sup>6</sup> I. Bradley, *Argyll the Making of a Spiritual Landscape* (Edinburgh, 2015) places Lord Archie within the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Celtic Revival movement, with John Francis Campbell and John Gregorson Campbell (1836–1891).

<sup>7</sup> Publications by George, 8th Duke of Argyll included *The Reign of Law* (London, 1867), *Iona* (London, 1870), *The Unity of Nature* (London, 1884), *Scotland As It Was And As It Is* (Edinburgh, 1887), and his *Autobiography and Memoirs* (London, 1906) published posthumously. He also commissioned the collection of Gaelic tales and history, the Dewar Manuscripts (1862–72).

<sup>8</sup> Publications by John, 9th Duke of Argyll, included a biography of his mother-in-law, *VRI Queen Victoria Her Life and Empire* (London, 1902). He also commissioned the translation of the Dewar Manuscripts by Hector Maclean, an Islay schoolmaster.

added to their ‘Inveraray Museum of W[est] Highland Curios’.<sup>9</sup> The ‘Museum’ included a wide range of artefacts, from fossils to stone axes, pins and brooches, dirks and sporrans.

Gillespie Campbell, in his obituary for Lord Archie, points to the influence on him of family friend and relative, John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–1885):

Unquestionably the unseen influence was that of that prince of Highlanders – John Francis Campbell of Islay, popularly known in Gaelic circles as Iain Og Ile. Lord Archibald was a near kinsman of John of Islay, and at an early age the young Gael formed a life-long friendship with the renowned Gaelic scholar.<sup>10</sup>

J. F. Campbell certainly drew Lord Archie’s attention to monument stones as a source of evidence of Highland dress, writing in a letter of 3 October 1882, ‘a blanket of various colours *breac* ... was the old garment worn by the Scotch highlanders as proved by Books, Acts of Parl[liamen]t, traditions, pictures & a few sculptured stones, besides many Gaelic songs’.<sup>11</sup> In his introduction to *Argyllshire Galleys*, Lord Archie wrote:

Compared with the glorious monuments of the knights to be found throughout England ... those to be found in the west and other parts of Scotland are somewhat rude and lacking in grace; but they have records that are very precious, and contain the proofs of fashions that were ... wholly peculiar to the Celtic race.<sup>12</sup>

The evidence collected for each of his publications was preserved by Lord Archie in scrapbooks, which largely predate the collection of rubbings.<sup>13</sup> These include drawings of figures from English and Scottish tombs, by himself and others.<sup>14</sup> If his purpose in studying the monuments was to inform his knowledge of the history of Highland dress, arms and armour rather than to record the monuments per se, this may explain why Lord Archie does not appear to have published any rubbings from his Collection. Even in his examination of carved birlinns, *Argyllshire Galleys*, he used drawings from Drummond, White and Graham for illustrations rather than his own rubbings.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> APNRAS 1209 bundle 3701, Letter from Lorne to Lord Archie, 22 August 1892, ‘I have written to Mr Cameron, the ground officer at Buessan begging him to let it be known that I will pay as much as anyone for antiquities found, for the Inveraray Museum of W[est] Highland Curios. There are some very good things there now – some that are unique.’

<sup>10</sup> Campbell, ‘Lord Archibald Campbell’, 68.

<sup>11</sup> AP ARG/5/LAC/1, Letter from J. F. Campbell to Lord Archibald Campbell, dated 3 October 1882, in a volume of autograph letters bound for personal use.

<sup>12</sup> Lord Archibald Campbell, *Argyllshire Galleys* (London, 1906), 11.

<sup>13</sup> AP ARG/10/2/3, Scrapbook for *The Children of the Mist; Notes on Swords at Culloden; Highland Dress, Arms, and Ornaments*; AP ARG/10/2/2, Scrapbook for *Records of Argyll*.

<sup>14</sup> Examples include: AP ARG/10/2/3, Detail of tombs at Oransay Priory by William Galloway; AP ARG/10/3/6, Sketches of monuments near Campbelltown and in Norfolk.

<sup>15</sup> The majority of drawings in *Argyllshire Galleys* are from J. Drummond, *Sculptured Monuments in Iona and the West Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1881), a few are from Capt. T. P. White,

Lord Archie's selection of drawings for *Argyllshire Galleys* and the contents of the libraries at Inveraray Castle, suggest that he was aware of the various methods of recording West Highland monuments: drawing, rubbing and photography.<sup>16</sup> By the 1890s, records of late medieval carvings and inscriptions had been published as written descriptions by Pennant, Graham and Macalister, and in drawings by White, Lhuyd, Graham and Drummond, with the last producing particularly comprehensive and detailed drawings.<sup>17</sup> This is by no means an exhaustive list. Rubbings were made from the mid-nineteenth century in an attempt to capture 'extreme accuracy in delineation' rather than 'picturesque effect', to restrain the artist's imagination, and to combat the changing light throughout the day.<sup>18</sup> Lord Archie's Collection and Christian Maclagan's rubbings of, in particular, Pictish stones in 1895 and 1898 are examples of this approach.<sup>19</sup> When J. Romilly Allen set out to compile 'a complete register of every such monument or fragment now existing in Scotland', he sought to use photography for illustration 'as far as possible, together with detail drawings, and rubbings or squeezes when these were desirable'.<sup>20</sup>

Potentially, making rubbings was the most readily available option for an amateur artist seeking to record details of costume, armour and weapons in his spare time. This motivation is supported by letters from Lord Archie to Mr McDiarmid, the Duke's factor on Tiree, making arrangements for his proposed visit there in 1897. In addition to employing a cook and stocking the wine cellar, Lord Archie asks McDiarmid, 'kindly send me a list of ancient Burial places at Tiree I want to make rubbings – all I need is a boy, a spade and coarse scissors to cut Grass & a coarse old Boot Brush to clear away the moss'.<sup>21</sup> It is

*Archaeological Sketches in Scotland, Knapdale and Gigha* and *Archaeological Sketches in Scotland, Kintyre* (Edinburgh, 1873) and one from H. D. Graham, *Antiquities of Iona* (London, 1850), with one drawing unattributed.

<sup>16</sup> The libraries at Inveraray Castle include T. Pennant, *Tour of Scotland*, 3 vols (1776); R. Graham, *The Carved Stones of Islay* (Glasgow, 1895); E. Beveridge, *Coll and Tiree* (Edinburgh, 1903); J. Romilly Allen, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1903). There are also various other volumes featuring drawings and photographs of monuments.

<sup>17</sup> Pennant, *Tour of Scotland*; Graham, *Antiquities of Iona*; White, *Archaeological Sketches*; Drummond, *Sculptured Monuments*; R. A. Macalister, 'An inventory of the ancient monuments remaining in the Island of Iona', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 38 (1913–14), 421–30; (ed.) J. L. Campbell and D. Thomson, *Edward Lhuyd in the Scottish Highlands 1699–1700* (Oxford, 1963), Plate XVIIa.

<sup>18</sup> P. Chalmers, *The Ancient Sculptured Monuments of the County of Angus* (Edinburgh, 1848) quoted in J. N. G. Ritchie, *Recording Early Christian Monuments in Scotland* (Rosemarkie, 1998), 11.

<sup>19</sup> British Library Add. MS 34798, C. Maclagan, 'Rubbings of Sculptured Stones of Scotland'; C. Maclagan, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the British Museum Collection of Rubbings from Ancient Sculptured Stones* (Edinburgh, 1898).

<sup>20</sup> Romilly Allen, *Early Christian Monuments*, Introduction, v and vi.

<sup>21</sup> AP 1209/2527, Letter from Lord Archibald Campbell to Mr McDiarmid, Factor, Tiree, 30 July 1897, writer's emphasis.

interesting that Lord Archie seems to have been unaware of the location of the burial places on Tiree.

Annotations on several rubbings assist in the dating, location, identity and subject matter of the carvings from which they were made and, in some cases, indicate the rubbing process. Charcoal on canvas or linen was used to copy the carvings, which needed the use of a fixative to prevent the charcoal from coming away, and the annotations on the rubbings suggest an element of experimentation in fixing. Several rubbings have annotations indicating the use of a fixative and those which were unfixated lack definition. The rubbings accurately provided the shapes, relative positions and dimensions of features while an inking-in process copied the fine detail and anything missed by the rubbing. Plate 1 shows a comparison of rubbing alone with an inked-in rubbing of the same carving, demonstrating that inking-in provided better clarity.

Letters written by Mr James Jack to Lord Archie are mounted in three of the volumes and indicate both process and progress made in collecting rubbings. From these letters, it appears that Lord Archie commissioned Jack to visit specific sites to search for monuments to rub, was sent a resulting report and the rubbings made,<sup>22</sup> and occasionally followed up with specific enquiries about details that were unclear from the rubbings.<sup>23</sup> The success of these trips depended on local conditions as some monuments proved to be inaccessible without ‘pick and shovel’ to remove fallen material (slabs and masonry) of no interest or ‘six feet of bracken and depth of soil’.<sup>24</sup> Issues of weather, availability of transport such as steamships, limited time and supplies are also noted in these letters.<sup>25</sup> No accounts for the work done by James Jack in making rubbings have yet been found, but Jack was also commissioned to record the design of a tartan in a portrait in 1908 which is charged to Lord Archie at 20s., including 5s. for bicycle hire.<sup>26</sup> The Collection includes only a small number of rubbings given the large

<sup>22</sup> AP ARG/10/6/16, Kilmhairie, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 22 September 1906, ‘Kilmhairie burial place contains more Celtic carving than any burial place in Lorne that I have visited ... the seven sheets I am sending ... contain rubbings of the very best stones’.

<sup>23</sup> AP ARG/10/6/5, Ardchattan, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 27 September 1902, ‘This morning I went to Ardchattan and examined the fragments regarding which your lordship made inquiries’; AP ARG/10/6/16, Kilmhairie, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 26 September 1906, ‘I do not seem to have made myself understood in connection with the “cists” in Kilmhairie Church’.

<sup>24</sup> AP ARG/10/6/19, Mull etc., Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 3 September 1906.

<sup>25</sup> AP ARG/10/6/16, Kilmhairie, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 28 August 1906, ‘I shall go and prospect the first dry day. My route must be by rail to Loch Awe station and by steamer to Ford. The coaches passing this way are too late in going and early in returning to give any time for work’; Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 22 September 1906, ‘I shall go to Salen first week, weather permitting’.

<sup>26</sup> AP NRAS 6, box 8, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 28 March 1908.

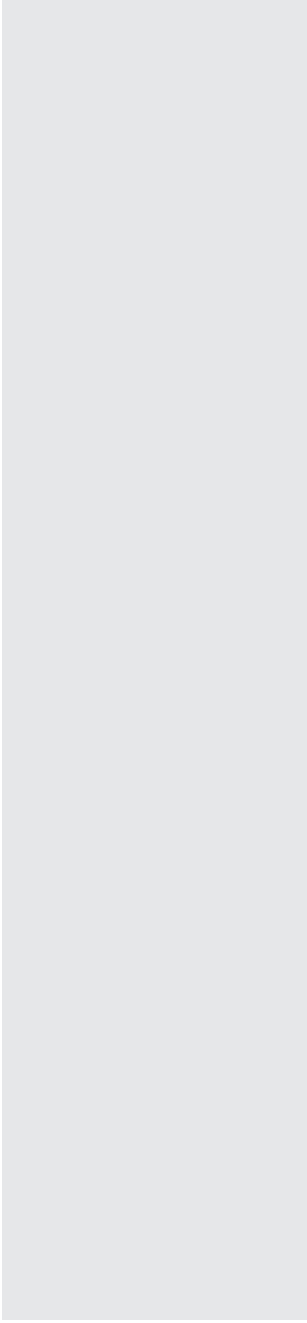
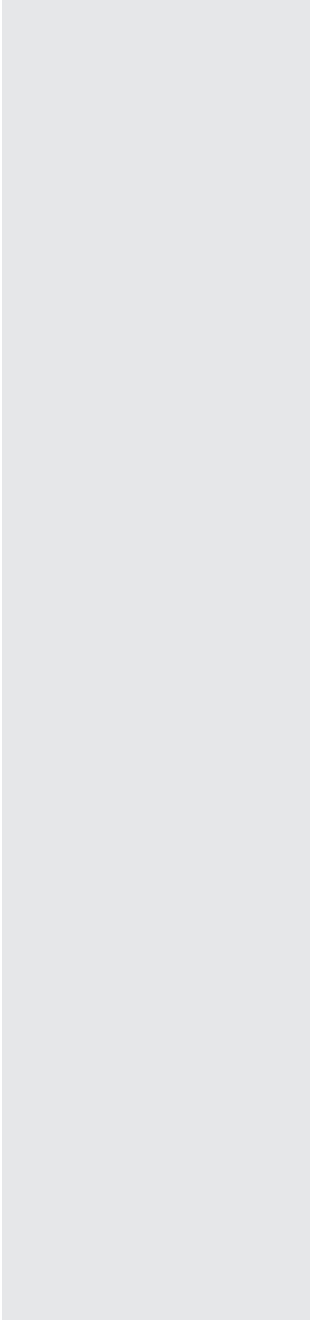


Plate 1 Comparison between rubbings of carvings without (top) and with (bottom) inking-in of the grave-slab rubbing at the Iona nunnery in about 1892, currently located at the Iona Abbey museum.

amount of tombstones in Argyllshire and it is currently unclear as to when and why Lord Archie decided to stop making rubbings at any particular location.<sup>27</sup>

The volumes have recently been catalogued to enhance understanding of and access to the Collection.<sup>28</sup> The catalogue details the volume and item number for each rubbing, the date when the rubbing was made and fixed (where known), and any annotations. Each entry also includes a description of the lettering and iconography of the rubbing, its dimensions and, where identified, references to other published records of the monument have also been noted.<sup>29</sup>

Annotations on the rubbings may include details of the location of the monument, who it commemorated and/or its date, as well as the manner of preparation of the rubbing and by whom it was made (usually Lord Archie or Mr James Jack). The annotations focus on the icons and images of the carving rather than the material composition of the stone/slab, and have been recorded in the catalogue as they appear on the rubbing.

An attempt has been made to identify rubbings without any obvious markings or annotations by comparison with published images and descriptions in the RCAHMS *Inventory*, in Drummond, Lhuyd and Canmore, and with reference to other texts such as Pennant, Graham, Macalister, and Steer and Bannerman.<sup>30</sup> Many of the same sources were used for assistance in deciphering inscriptions for the catalogue. In particular, Steer and Bannerman, with its wealth of information on relevant inscriptions and texts from memorials and grave-slabs.<sup>31</sup>

It is intended that the rubbings will be digitally imaged and PDF images included in the catalogue. Given the physical size of the images and the camera equipment available, the rubbings will need to be imaged in sections and the images stitched together.

Photography has been used to capture the images of carved stones since the 1880s<sup>32</sup> but accurate details of carvings were difficult to reproduce due to, for example, interference from shadows and loss of clean edges, and also

<sup>27</sup> AP ARG/10/6/5, Ardchattan, Letter from James Jack to Lord Archibald Campbell, 27 September 1902, 'I am in receipt of your lordships wire which intimates that no more rubbings are required'.

<sup>28</sup> See the Argyll Papers online catalogue, <http://www.argyll-papers.com>.

<sup>29</sup> Reference sources include RCAHMS, *Argyll An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments*, 7 vols (London, 1971–1982); Canmore, <https://canmore.org.uk/collection>; Drummond, *Sculptured Monuments*.

<sup>30</sup> RCAHMS *Inventory*; Campbell and Thomson, *Edward Lhuyd*; Pennant, *Tour of Scotland*; Graham, *Antiquities of Iona*; Drummond, *Sculptured Monuments*; Macalister, 'Inventory of the ancient monuments'; A. K. Steer and J. W. Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1977).

<sup>31</sup> Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*.

<sup>32</sup> J. Anderson, *Scotland in Early Christian Times, Second Series* (Edinburgh, 1881), vi, quoted in Ritchie, *Recording Early Christian Monuments*: 'I have thought it necessary that some examples should be represented with that absolute truthfulness which is only obtained by Photography, and have therefore preferred the rugged realism of these reproductions to illustrations more picturesque in character.'

their three-dimensional nature. More recently, further effort has been applied to photography techniques with improved outcomes, but this has required rigorous attention to set up and execution.<sup>33</sup> Studies on three-dimensional (3D) digital modelling of Scottish medieval sculptured stones describes and evaluates the use of 3D technologies and their application with a focus on virtual reality (VR) and photogrammetry to provide detailed high-resolution images.<sup>34</sup> Although not yet in common use, photogrammetry is the simpler technique requiring only multiple digital photographs from all sides of the object, and subsequent image processing by appropriate software to produce a detailed apparent 3D image.<sup>35</sup> The images collected in this way can also be used to provide the data necessary for the fabrication of 3D replicas of monuments and carvings, a process gaining approval and support as analogue replicas gain popularity.<sup>36</sup>

The Collection can be considered to comprise an archive at various levels. First, it provides a record of commemorative carvings of funerary monuments from across Argyllshire as they existed between 1892 and 1912, including a record of their location and their condition at that time. Secondly, the detail recorded in the rubbings themselves provides a further source of evidence of the origin and creation of the stones. Thirdly, the Collection has value not only as a record of the physical monuments but also as a collection of rubbings, created by and for a late-nineteenth-century antiquarian.<sup>37</sup>

After 1560, the Reformation changed the ways in which the deceased were commemorated and depictions of Christ, the saints and other religious imagery were defaced or erased. The Marquess of Argyll, a devout supporter of the National Covenant, is believed to have carried out the instructions of the Argyll Synod to destroy crosses and memorials of the saints.<sup>38</sup> In 1906, Lord Archie wrote ‘That there were immense numbers of crosses at Iona is well known; it is also known that large numbers of these were destroyed at the time of the Reformation; tradition says many were thrown into the sea and others broken up.’<sup>39</sup> Many stones were certainly lost or reused for other purposes, for

<sup>33</sup> T. E. Gray and L. M. Ferguson, *Photographing Carved Stones, A Practical Guide to Reading Scotland's Past* (Balgavies, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> S. Jeffrey, ‘Three Dimensional Modeling of Scottish Early Medieval Sculpted Stones’ (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> M. Westoby, J. Brasington, N. F. Glasser, M. J. Hambrey and J. M. Reynolds, ‘“Structure-from-Motion” Photogrammetry. A Low-Cost, Effective Tool for Geoscience Applications’, *Geomorphology*, 179 (2012), 300–14.

<sup>36</sup> S. Foster and S. Jones, *New Future for Replicas, Principles and Guidance for Museums and Heritage* (Stirling, 2020), <https://replicas.stir.ac.uk/principles-and-guidance/>; (ed.) S. Foster, K. Forsyth, S. Buckham and S. Jeffrey, *Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland* (published online 2014), <https://scarf.scot/thematic/future-thinking-on-carved-stones-in-scotland/>.

<sup>37</sup> Replicas have their own history, intrinsically related to but separate from the originals, described as ‘relatedness’ by Dr Sally Foster and Professor Sián Jones of Stirling University, see <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/blog/rethinking-replicas/>.

<sup>38</sup> R. K. Marshall, *Columba's Iona, A New History* (Dingwall, 2014), 89.

<sup>39</sup> Campbell, *Argyllshire Gallies*, 10.



example, as hearthstones, lintels and doorsteps, or to mark other burials, with or without modification to the carving or inscription. Reporting on a visit to Iona, Drummond castigated the ‘sale’ of historical monuments to tenants to mark new burials,<sup>40</sup> although Bradley suggests a natural process of reuse, whereby local people carried off stones and grave-slabs for building purposes.<sup>41</sup> The reuse of monuments is illustrated in the Collection, with an example in the Dalmally volume where an additional inscription of ‘1819 James M Nichol’ has been added to a slab.<sup>42</sup>

Annotations on some of the rubbings identify the location of monuments when they were rubbed, potentially providing significant information about what may have been their original site or, at least, that at the time of recording.<sup>43</sup> And several of the ‘rubbed’ monuments have since been moved: for example, the grave-slabs at Strachur were moved from the churchyard to the church in 1974. Moving grave-slabs from their original positions, either to a new location on the same or a different site, kirk, museum or elsewhere, impacts on both the integrity of the site and the ability to fully understand the context or the community associated with it. As Drummond suggested, however, once a stone has been moved from its original location, moving it again, particularly for reasons of preservation, is perfectly acceptable.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, not moving stones may leave them exposed to worse damage, as noted in the following correspondence with the 8th Duke of Argyll concerning the tombstones on his island of Iona.

In 1858, John Campbell, factor, wrote to the Duke of Argyll:

it will not be possible to have the stones in Iona put under cover without a considerable outlay. it would be better and much cheaper to have them railed in and placed in their original position by which means they would be completely defended from any injury, look neat, and I think more satisfactory to tourists.

Some of the stones were then moved, as John Campbell reported a month later:

All the stones within the building which remain have been placed along the walls; the whole ones placed upright, and the broken on their sides, and replaced with sand and green turf.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> J. Drummond, ‘Notes of Early Monumental Art in the West Highlands’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 9 (1871), 24–8, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Bradley, *Argyll*, 182.

<sup>42</sup> AP ARG/10/6/6/1, Dalmally, reproduced in Irving and Diamond, *Argyll Papers*, 33–4. The RCAHMS *Inventory* recorded just the date ‘1819’, suggesting the remaining inscription had been lost during the intervening period.

<sup>43</sup> Many stones may have already been removed or reused prior to 1892: see J. Drummond ‘Notes made during a Wandering in the West Highlands’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 8 (1869), 117–20; Drummond, ‘Early Monumental Art’, 24–8.

<sup>44</sup> Drummond, ‘Early Monumental Art’, 26.

<sup>45</sup> AP NRAS 1209 bundle 1523d, John Campbell to the 8th Duke of Argyll, 1858.

Others remained exposed, however, as reported by the Earl of Stanhope, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, when he visited Iona in 1867:

The curiously carved tombstones of the churchmen and chivalry of the Isles lie for the most part in the grave yards, or in the buildings, and from their position are necessarily trodden upon by the multitudes who in the summer season almost daily rush across them to inspect the ruins – the consequence being that their sculptures are in the rapid process of being effaced.<sup>46</sup>

Since Drummond reported in 1870 that the tomb to the four priors was ‘missing’ and then discovered that it lay where ‘every tourist now walks on his way to the chapel’, it is questionable how effective John Campbell’s efforts to move and protect the stones were.<sup>47</sup>

A key contribution that the Collection can make is to provide a record of monuments that have since gone missing, and it was used for this purpose in the preparation of the RCAHMS *Inventary*.<sup>48</sup> The comment, ‘the stone was not found but described from the rubbing in the Collection’, is followed by a written description based on the rubbing.<sup>49</sup> For example we note here three rubbings in the Collection, from Kilmhairie, Ballachulish, and Kilbride.<sup>50</sup> This evaluation of loss is an ongoing process, as there are grave-slabs recorded in the RCAHMS *Inventary* which could not be found at the time of a measured survey at Kilbride kirkyard in 2013.<sup>51</sup>

The Collection has a part to play in understanding the creation of the monuments themselves, and in particular their iconography and inscriptions. Where monument carvings have been damaged and weathered through the passage of time, the details of the original carving can be better understood from comparison with the rubbings in the Collection. One such example is a carving on a recumbent fifteenth-century slab in the Kilbride Lerags kirkyard, where a rubbing in the Collection from c.1908 had captured the detail of the carving

<sup>46</sup> AP NRAS 1209 bundle 1763, The Earl of Stanhope, secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, report on his visit to Iona, 1867.

<sup>47</sup> Drummond, ‘Early Monumental Art’, 24.

<sup>48</sup> A two-volume index of the Collection compiled by Lady O’Malley with associated papers is preserved in the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) archives, MS 7446. No date or further information was available at the time of writing although copies have been requested to inform the new catalogue.

<sup>49</sup> RCAHMS *Inventary for Argyll*, vol. III, 156–7, (12) and (14) at ARG/10/6/3/10, and ARG/10/6/3/12.

<sup>50</sup> RCAHMS *Inventary for Argyll*, vol. VII, 123, (18) at ARG/10/6/15/5; not reported in RCAHMS *Inventary for Argyll*, vol. III for Ballachulish but at ARG/10/6/19/5; and RCAHMS *Inventary for Argyll*, vol. II, 143, (14) at ARG/10/6/13/2.

<sup>51</sup> RCAHMS *Inventary for Argyll*, vol. II, 142, (1) at ARG/9/4/14, p. 5; B. Irving, ‘Kilbride Kirkyard’, *Discovery and Excavation Scotland*, 15 (2014), 49–50. Not found at the time of the measured survey ‘adopt a monument’, 2013; B. Irving, ‘Kilbride Kirkyard’, *Discovery and Excavation Scotland*, 14 (2013), 53–4.

with a single-handed sword as its main feature, contrasting with the weathered grave-slab as it appeared *in situ* in 2013.<sup>52</sup>

Rubbings in the Collection demonstrate the great variety in iconography used in funerary monuments, with the most common being recumbent grave-slabs bearing symbols such as the sword, axe, Bible, shears, as well as agricultural implements, hunting scenes and galleys or birlinns; full-size representations or effigies of the deceased; and crosses on stepped bases.

The symbols used on grave-slabs appear to represent the rank and social identity of the person(s) commemorated.<sup>53</sup> For example, swords were associated specifically with knights or ‘warriors’ (as Lord Archie described them), whereas shears, regarded as the second most common emblem, have various interpretations. They can be seen as evidence of a cloth-worker or wool-merchant; to represent the severance of life with death (cutting the thread of life); or as symbols of female identity from wealthy and high-status individuals and households, especially in conjunction with other symbols such as a mirror.<sup>54</sup> The rubbing of the broken, incomplete slab commemorating Anna MacLean, shows a mirror and comb, and a Black Letter inscription which translates as ‘sometime prioress who died in the year 1543’.<sup>55</sup>

Annotations of rubbings indicate a particular interest on the part of the ‘rubber’ to ensure that they could be recognised even when the rubbing was unclear. Annotations include ‘rider’, ‘horseman’ and ‘priest’, the ‘hunter’ or ‘bowman’ and the identification of the animals being hunted. Due to the extent of the Collection, it is possible to compare and determine which symbols were more commonly used by each of the carvers and for which family, clan, and institution.

Lord Archie was particularly interested in understanding the various representations of galleys and birlinns, and their possible connection to the family of the deceased. Variations include furled or unfurled sails, pennons to left or to right or situated on which side of the mast, rigging, prow size and ornamentation, bow and stern posts on which there may be heads of animals as well as the direction in which these are facing, location and type of rudder, number of oar slots and strakes comprising the hull. He published a comparative study in 1906, in which he concluded ‘that the Galleys of the various chiefs and chieftains differed is proved’.<sup>56</sup> More recent research suggests that there may be other reasons for these differences: whether the carvers were

<sup>52</sup> AP ARG/10/6/14/1, Kilbride, vol. 2, no. 1; see also Irving and Diamond, *Argyll Papers*, 4, which shows a photograph of the weathered stone alongside the rubbing to highlight the detail lost over time.

<sup>53</sup> L. Butler, ‘Symbols on Medieval Memorials’, *Archaeological Journal*, 144:1 (1987), 246–55.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*; Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*; Irving and Diamond, *Argyll Papers*; Foster *et al.*, *Future Thinking on Carved Stones in Scotland*.

<sup>55</sup> AP ARG/10/6/9/6, Iona, vol. 3, no. 6.

<sup>56</sup> Campbell, *Argyllshire Galleys*, 9.

copying actual vessels or using obsolete patterns of older designs; whether the changes differentiated individuals or whether late-medieval carvers had their own repertoires of galley-carving styles; even whether it is significant that the galleys are not identical in appearance.<sup>57</sup>

Although determined partly by the styles of the various carving schools, the choice of symbol, detail and quality of the carving was frequently a reflection of the composition of the stone and its resistance to chisel, wear and weather. Following his petrographic examinations, Caldwell concluded the stone used would, most likely, be a local one whose properties thus dictated the style of carving.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, he concluded despite the fact there are few carvings of the axe and the bow, that they were the popular fighting weapons at that time rather than the sword, which would indicate that the carved sword was chosen as a mark of status. As noted above, the grave-slab at Ballachulish with a carving of claymore, tuagh (highland battleaxe) and battleaxe, for which there is a rubbing in the Collection from about 1906, was not found or recorded by the commissioners for the RCAHMS *Inventory*.

According to Steer and Bannerman, the late-medieval West Highland schools of masons or carving styles were generally centred on religious institutions, with the exception of the Loch Awe school;<sup>59</sup> but this has been disputed by Caldwell.<sup>60</sup> However, irrespective of the organisational aspects of masons, the carving styles and the icons used, the Collection contains rubbings across the styles or schools of carving with the points of differentiation evident. Iona carvers used the floriated cross and full-size effigies; Kintyre carvers frequently favoured the single-handed sword on the left- or right-hand side of the slab. Animals were a feature of memorial carvings by the Loch Awe carvers: for example, a lion and unicorn in combat; a winged and long-beaked creature pecking at a quadruped; and a pair of opposed beasts standing *en passant guardant* attitudes. There are three full-size effigies at Saddell Abbey, which are believed to be the work of Iona carvers, raising the question as to whether stones were made locally and moved or whether carvers were itinerant.<sup>61</sup>

The rubbings also frequently include letters picked out from the inscriptions, which were usually in Latin. In several cases it is easier to see the surviving texts in the rubbings than on the original stone today, due to continued wear and weathering. At the time of the compilation of the RCAHMS *Inventory*,

<sup>57</sup> Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*, 183.

<sup>58</sup> D. H. Caldwell, F. M. McGibbon, S. Miller and N. A. Ruckley, 'The Image of a Celtic society: medieval West Highland sculpture', in (ed.) P. O'Neill, *Celts in Legend and Reality* (Sydney, 2010), 13–59.

<sup>59</sup> Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*, 50–2.

<sup>60</sup> Caldwell *et al.*, 'Image of a Celtic society', 13–59; D. H. Caldwell, 'Oronsay's Sculptural Heritage', *History Scotland*, 15:5 (2015), 25–8.

<sup>61</sup> For illustrations of the features of the carving schools, see Irving and Diamond, *Argyll Papers*.

some texts were difficult or impossible to read, but the same was true in the late nineteenth century. A letter from George Forrest Browne, Bishop of Bristol in 1902 demonstrates Lord Archie's desire to clarify the reading of an 'Erse inscription on the stone within the railings by Columba's grave'.<sup>62</sup>

The rubbings in the Collection meet the definition of 'replicas' as defined by Foster and Jones, as they are accurate copies made 'to act in some way as a proxy for the historical original'.<sup>63</sup> As such, they raise questions about their own history and provenance: why were they made and how? What were they originally used for and how have they been used since? In the preparation of the catalogue of the Collection and for this article, the authors have started to consider some of these questions. Initial findings suggest that Lord Archie's interest in the monuments grew out of his particular interest in the history of Highland dress and weaponry, but he continued to make and commission rubbings beyond the publication of his research in 1899.<sup>64</sup> Entries in his diary for 1908 contain continual references to his 'celtic tomb work'.<sup>65</sup> But, as mentioned above, he does not appear to have 'used' his rubbings, not even in his publication on *Argyllshire Galleys*. In fact, there is currently no evidence of the Collection being 'used' until the preparation of the RCAHMS *Inventory* in the 1970s.

In summary therefore, the Collection provides an under-exploited resource for the understanding of the creation and survival of funerary monuments in the West Highlands, in particular, the details of missing and decayed monuments. The nature and quality of carvings may provide evidence of the community at a particular location, perhaps enabling a view on its importance in relation to other significant sites and features, e.g. Iona Abbey, Ardchattan Priory, Inveraray Castle, coffin roads and ferries. The rubbings raise further questions about recording: for example, a grave-slab, formerly in Reilig Odhrain and now in the Iona Abbey Museum, was rubbed by Lord Archie in 1902. Believed to commemorate Reginald MacDonald, Lord of the Isles and founder of the Abbey Church of Iona, it includes a two-headed bird, presumed to be a phoenix, which is not mentioned in earlier descriptions of the grave-slab.<sup>66</sup> As yet, there

<sup>62</sup> AP NRAS 1209 bundle 393, Letter from George Forrest Browne, Bishop of Bristol (1833–1930) to Lord Archie, 26 October 1902.

<sup>63</sup> Replica: 'an accurate copy made for heritage and museum contexts to act in some way as a proxy for the historical original. The copying process is likely to involve "direct" contact with and/or measurement of the historical original (including scanning)': see S. Foster and S. Jones, *New Futures for Replicas: Principles and Guidance for Museums and Heritage* (Stirling, 2020) available at <https://replicas.stir.ac.uk/principles-and-guidance/>.

<sup>64</sup> Campbell, *Highland Dress*.

<sup>65</sup> AP ARG/15/2/2, 21 January 1908, 'I stayed in all day and did celtic tomb work'; 10 February 1908, 'Worked at my celtic work'; 29 February 1908, 'Very hard at the celtic tombs all day'; 19 December 1908, 'Horrible damp cold day did copying the Marquis of Argyll's notes made for his trial 1661 also my celtic tombstones worked all day nearly.'

<sup>66</sup> Drummond, *Sculptured Monuments*, Plate xxviii, 1, shows a blank defaced or decayed area where the bird is included in Lord Archie's rubbing.

is no explanation for this omission or inclusion. The new catalogue will enable greater access to the Collection, allowing it to be used to explore both the monuments themselves but also enabling an investigation into Lord Archie himself, his interests and purpose in creating it.