

CAMBUSKENNETH BELL TOWER, STIRLING



A SURVEY OF MASONS' MARK'S 2015

The next group of masons used the number '7' or parallel lines as the basis of their mark, **Masons 4, 8, 20, 68 and 76**. **Mason 4** worked only on the ground floor where 6 of his marks were recorded. His mark is a simple 7 with a slash across the upright.



Mason 4 – Mark record 0062



Mason 4 – Mark record 0078



Similar to Mason 4 but in reverse, so may be related.

Mason 20 – Record mark 0072 on ground floor only.

Mason 8 only worked on the ground floor where 12 of his marks were recorded. His mark was two parallel lines with a horizontal from middle of one side across the other.

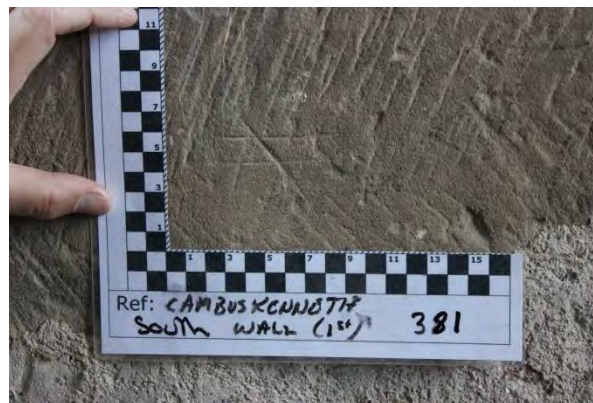


Mason 8 – Mark record 0014



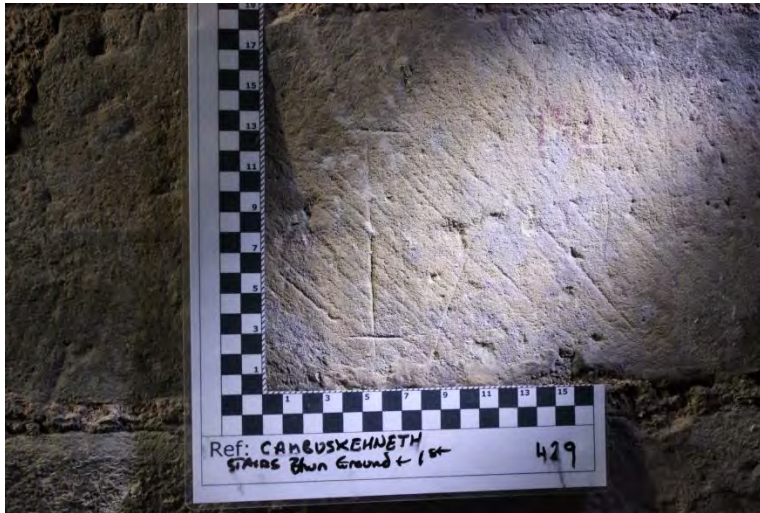
Mason 8 – Mark record 0070

Mason 68 had a similar mark as Mason 8, but the line across the parallel lines was on the diagonal and extended beyond both lines. Only one of his marks was recorded on the 1st floor.



Mason 68 – Mark record 0381

Only two marks were recorded of **Mason 76**, who worked only the spiral stair and the area at the foot of the stairs. His mark is a single upright with two small parallel lines across it near the ends of the upright.



Mason 76 - Mark record 0429



Mason 76 – Mark record 0480

Later scoring on the block of record 0480 made it more difficult to distinguish the mark clearly but the mark was allocated to this mason as it appeared similar enough to be his.

Three masons used an asterisk as the basis for their mark, **Masons 6, 22 and 27**. All worked on the ground floor, with **Mason 22** also working on the 1st floor. **Mason 6** was also one of the few masons who worked on the ribbed vault of the ground floor roof. 44 of his marks were recorded on the ground floor. Only 3 marks of **Mason 22** were recorded and 1 mark of **Mason 27**.

Mason 6 chose 3 straight lines crossing each other in the centre forming a simple asterisk.



Mason 6 – Mark record 0015



Mason 6 – Mark record - 0199



Mason 6 – Mark record 0237 on the ribbing of the roof vault.

A George Cross with a St Andrews cross superimposed formed the mark for **Mason 22**.



Mason 22 - Mark record 0144

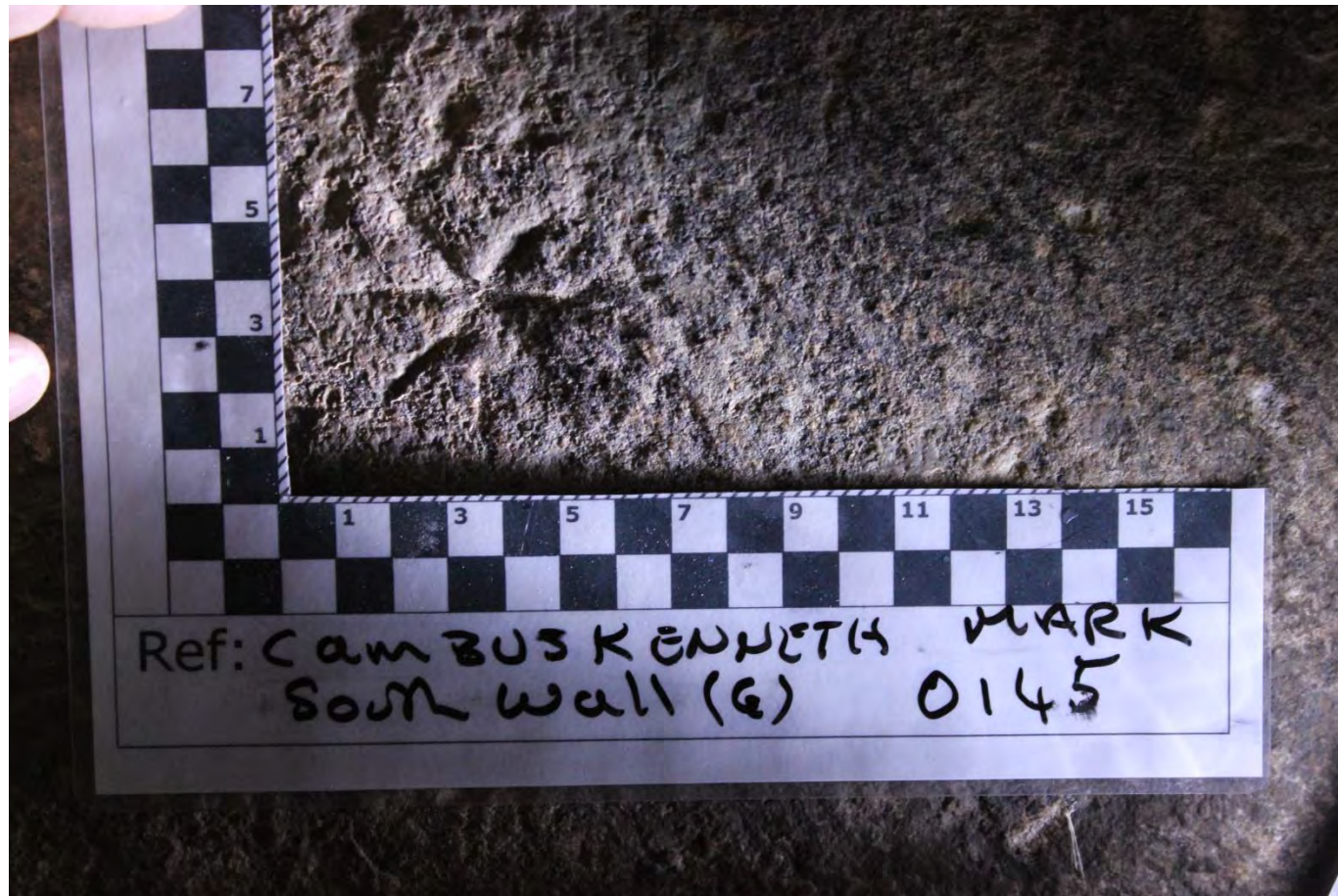


Mason 22 – Mark record 0413



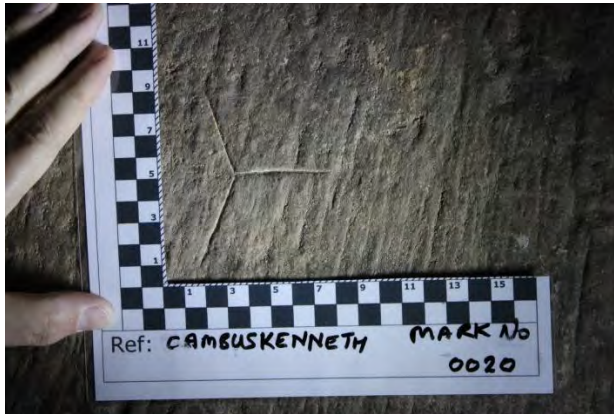
Mason 22 – Mark record 0423

Only one mark was found of **Mason 27** on the ground floor. His mark is very similar to Mason 6 but has an extra line inserted on one side only. Again this may suggest some possible relationship with Mason 6.

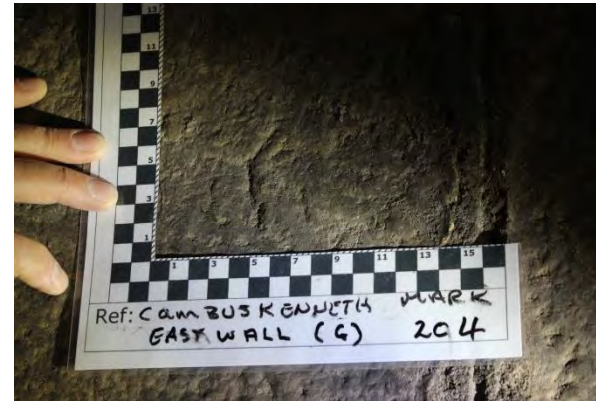


Mason 27 – Mark record 0145

Twelve masons used the shape of a letter Y or T as the basis of their marks. **These were Masons 9, 10, 11, 35, 37, 38, 40, 53, 55, 67, 70 and 77. Mason 9** worked on the ground floor only where 4 of his marks were recorded, this being a simple Y shape.



Mason 9 – Mark record 0020



Mason 9 – Mark record 0204

Mason 53 had a similar mark but less wide spread as Mason 9. He only worked on the 1st floor where 3 of his marks were recorded.



Mason 53 – Mark record 333



Mark 53 – Mark record 0377

Masons 10 & 11 only worked on the ground floor, on both the walls and the ribbing of the roof vault. Both have a very similar mark to each other but in reverse. It is a small Y with a cross bar on the leg. **Mason 10** has 27 marks recorded and **Mason 11** with 20 marks recorded. Due to the similarity of their marks it is most likely that they were related in some way, or had been trained by the same Mastermason.



Mason 10 – Mark record 0206



Mason 10 – Mark record 0250



Mason 11 – Mark record 0208



Mason 11 – Mark record 0252

Also similar to the marks of Masons 10 and 11 is that of **Mason 40**, who only worked on the ribbing of the roof vault. However, only one example of his mark was recorded. His mark is very similar but with an extra kick, or leg, added to the side, giving a sort of '3-legged cross' shape.



Mason 40 – Mark record 0293

Another mason with only 1 mark recorded on the ground floor is **Mason 35**, who also has a slightly similar mark to Mason 40, in that it had '3 legs'. However the extension from the legs forms more of a 7 than a cross. Unfortunately the mark was not a really clear example of his mark.



Mason 35- Mark record 0201

Two masons who worked only on the ribbing of the roof vault of the ground floor are **Mason 37** and **Mason 38**, of which 25 marks were recorded of the former and 17 marks of the latter. Again these masons appear to be related in some way as each is a reverse of the other.



Mason 37 – Mark record 0238



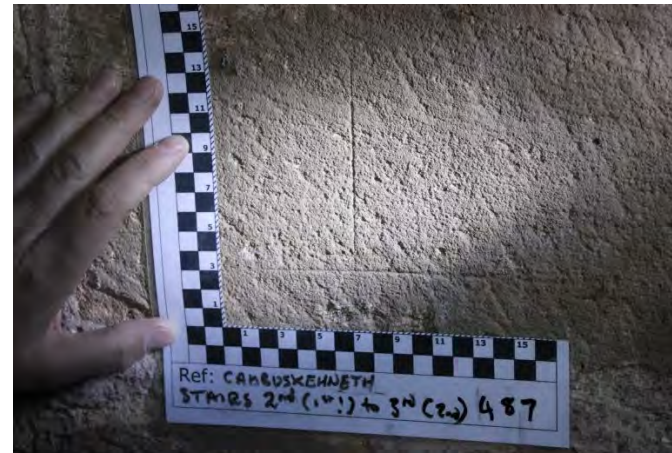
Mason 38 – Mark record 0290

As can be noted, while the central Y-shape is similar, the arms point in a different direction, forming basically a mirror image. This has been noted on a number of previous marks, such as Masons 10 and 11.

Masons 55, 67, 70 and 77 base their marks on the letter T. All worked on either the stair or the 1st floor. **Mason 55** keeps the basic shape of the letter as his mark, of which 17 examples were recorded on both the 1st floor and the spiral stairs.



Mason 55 – Mark record 0371



Mason 55 – Mark record 0487



Mason 55- Mark record 0404

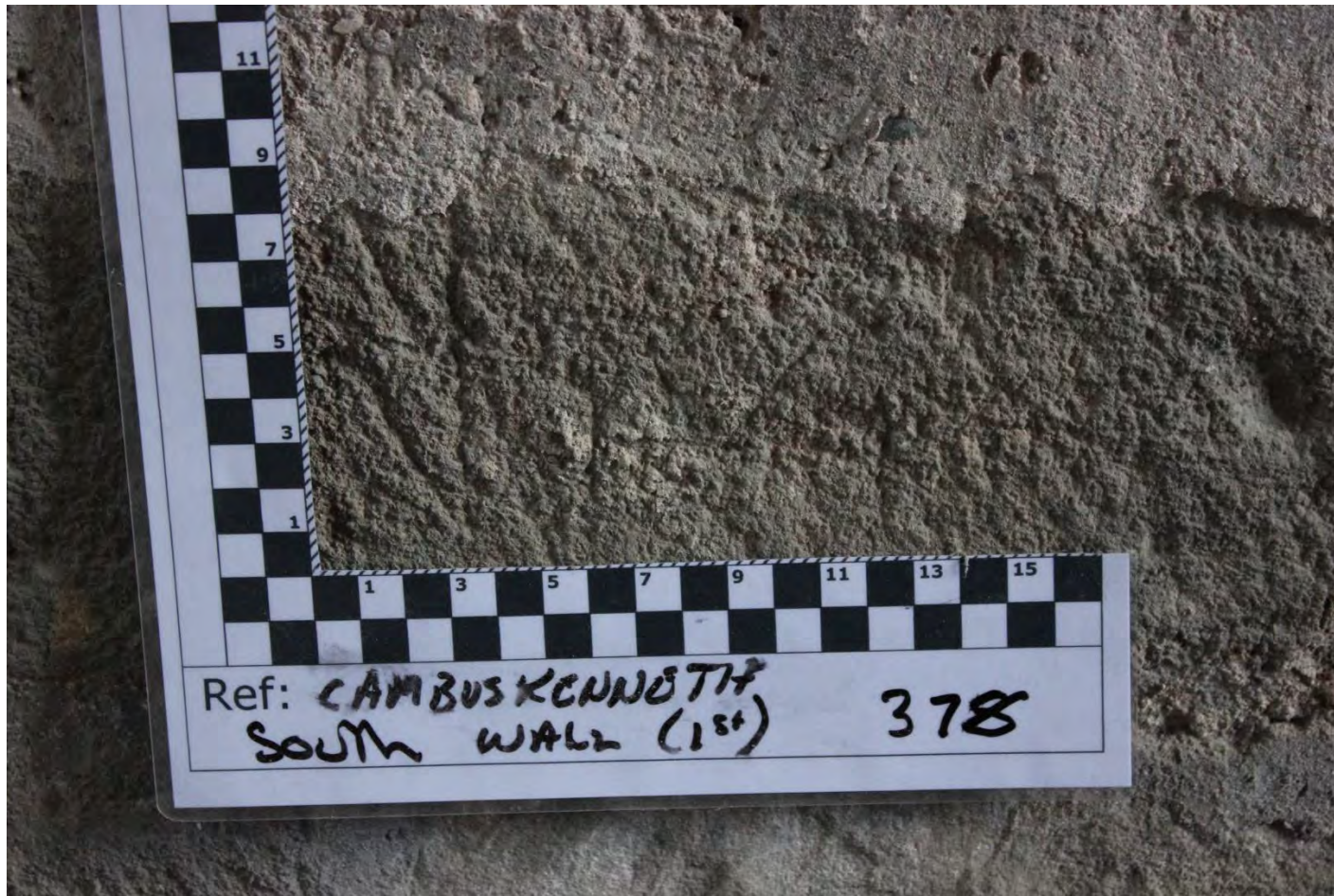


Mason 55- Mark record 0340



Mason 55 – Mark record 0367

Only two examples of the mark of **Mason 67** were found on the 1st floor and unfortunately neither is particularly clear. The one below was on a block with another possible different mason's mark on it. His mark is faint but shows a letter T on its side with an angled leg from it.



Mason 67 – Mark record 0378

Only one mark was found of Mason 70 on the 1st floor. Its shape is very close in style to Mason 67 but the T is more angled. There is of course a possibility that this is actually the same mason but just cut his mark slightly different for some reason.



Mason 70- Mark record 0383

Mason 77 only worked on the stairs where two of his marks were recorded. He also uses the letter T but adds 3 parallel diagonals to the left side of the upright. There are also two later marks cut into the same block.



Mason 77- Mark record 0437

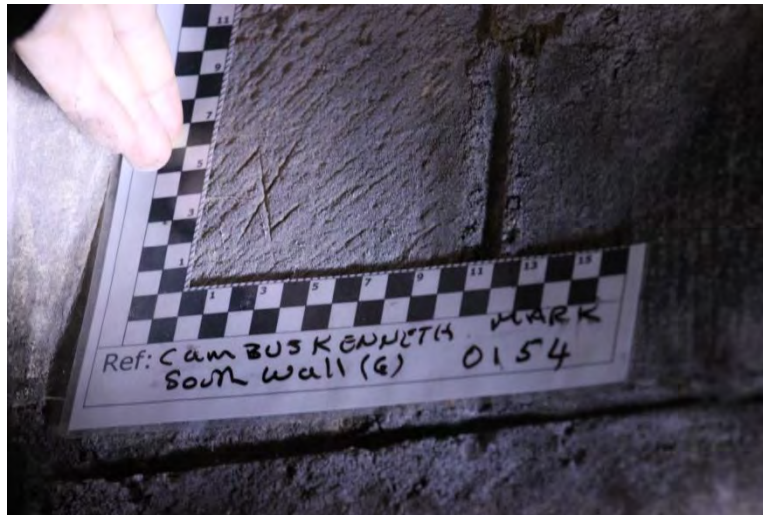
The next groups of masons used the letter N or Z for their marks, some with a slight addition. These are **Masons 16, 17, 19, 24, 26, 56, 58, 62, 65, 71 and 80.**

Mason 16 only worked on the ground floor where 9 of his marks were found on the walls, at the base of the stairs and on the ribs of the roof vault. His mark is a back-to-front Z with a slash across the middle.



Mason 16-Mark record 0092 Mason 16-Mark records 0279 on the rib of the vault

Similar to **Mason 16**, but a mirror image, is **Mason 19** worked on the ground floor and the 1st floor with 10 marks recorded.



Mason 19- Mark record 0154



Mason 19-Mark record 0069

Also very similar to **Mason 19** is a mark given the number Mason 17 as it is more of a cross with a small cut at either end roughly making a Z. Only one mark was recorded on the grounds floor.



Mason 17-Mark record 0052

Two other masons used a similar mark with a narrower Z and only half a bar starting from the central line. These were **Mason 62** and **Mason 65**



Mason 62- Mark record 0362



Mason 65 – Mark record 0317

Again these were mirror images of each other. Both worked on the 1st floor with Mason 62 also working on the stairs. Thirteen marks were recorded of Mason 62 but only one of Mason 65.

Two masons had a simple N for their mark but again mirror images. **Mason 80** used an N while **Mason 24** used it in reverse. Only 2 marks of **Mason 80** were recorded on the stairs, whereas **Mason 24** worked on the ground floor, 1st floor and the stairs with 4 marks recorded.



Mason 24-Mark record 0171



Mason 80-Mark record 0464

Three other **Masons**, **56**, **58** and **26** also used the letter N but each extended a leg. Two of them **Mason 56** and **Mason 58** were mirror images of each other but **Mason 26** added a line across the extension, making a cross. **Mason 26** only worked on the ground floor where two of his marks were recorded. Both **Masons 56 & 58** worked on the 1st floor only, where five marks were recorded of **Mason 56** and three marks of **Mason 58** (see below).



Mason 20- Mark record 0168



Mason 56- Mark record 0345

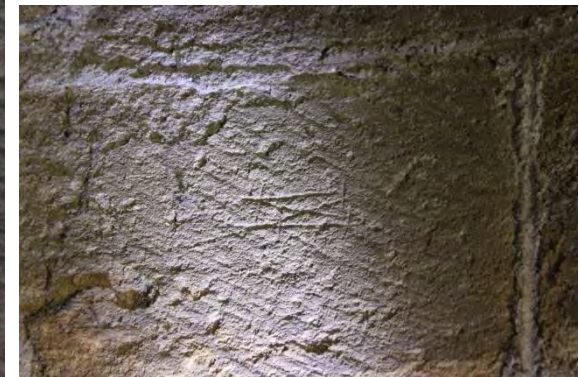


Mason 58 – Mark record 0346

One other mason, **Mason 71**, appeared to use the letter N but with short lines across at either end of the verticals. However, given the similarity to Mason 82 they may in fact be the same but one line may not be quite as visible as the others. Only one mark of Mason 71 was recorded on the 1st floor where as 82 was found on the stair.



Mason 71 – Mark record 0408



Mason 82- Mark record 0468

The next small group of 3 masons used the letter V for their mark, **Mason 12**, **Mason 44** and **Mason 73**. **Mason 12** only worked on the ground floor where 5 of his marks were recorded. **Mason 44** worked on the 1st floor and stairs where 12 of his marks were recorded. **Mason 73** has two marks recorded, one on the 2nd floor and the other on the stairs.

Mason 12's mark is a double V joining at the top of the legs, whereas Mason 44 has a simple thin V. Mason 73's mark is a V with one side having a double line forming another V within.



Mason 12 – Mark record 0041



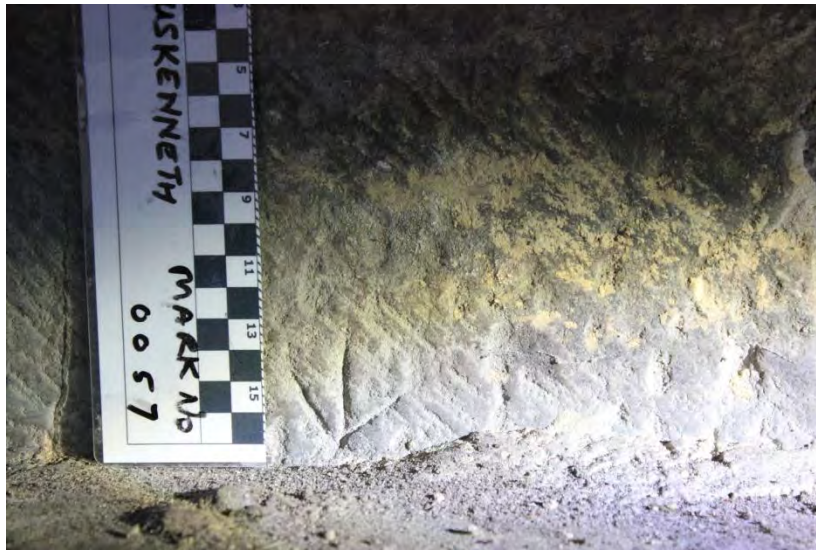
Mason 44 – Mark record 0490



Mason 73- Mark record 0460

Five masons used an arrow shape, some with additions. These are **Masons 18, 28, 32**, who all worked on the ground floor, and **Masons 69 and 81**, who both worked on the stairs, although **Mason 69** also worked on the 1st floor. Unfortunately the recorded marks of **Mason 69** are not very clear. Eight marks were recorded of **Mason 18**, three marks of **Masons 28** and **69**, and one each of **Masons 32 and 81**.

Mason 18 had a simple 3-line arrowhead, whereas **Mason 28** joined the two outer lines to make a triangle.



Mason 18 – Mark record 0057



Mason 28 – Mark record 0151



Mason 32 had a simple arrow with a bar across the shaft

Mason 32- Mark record 0178



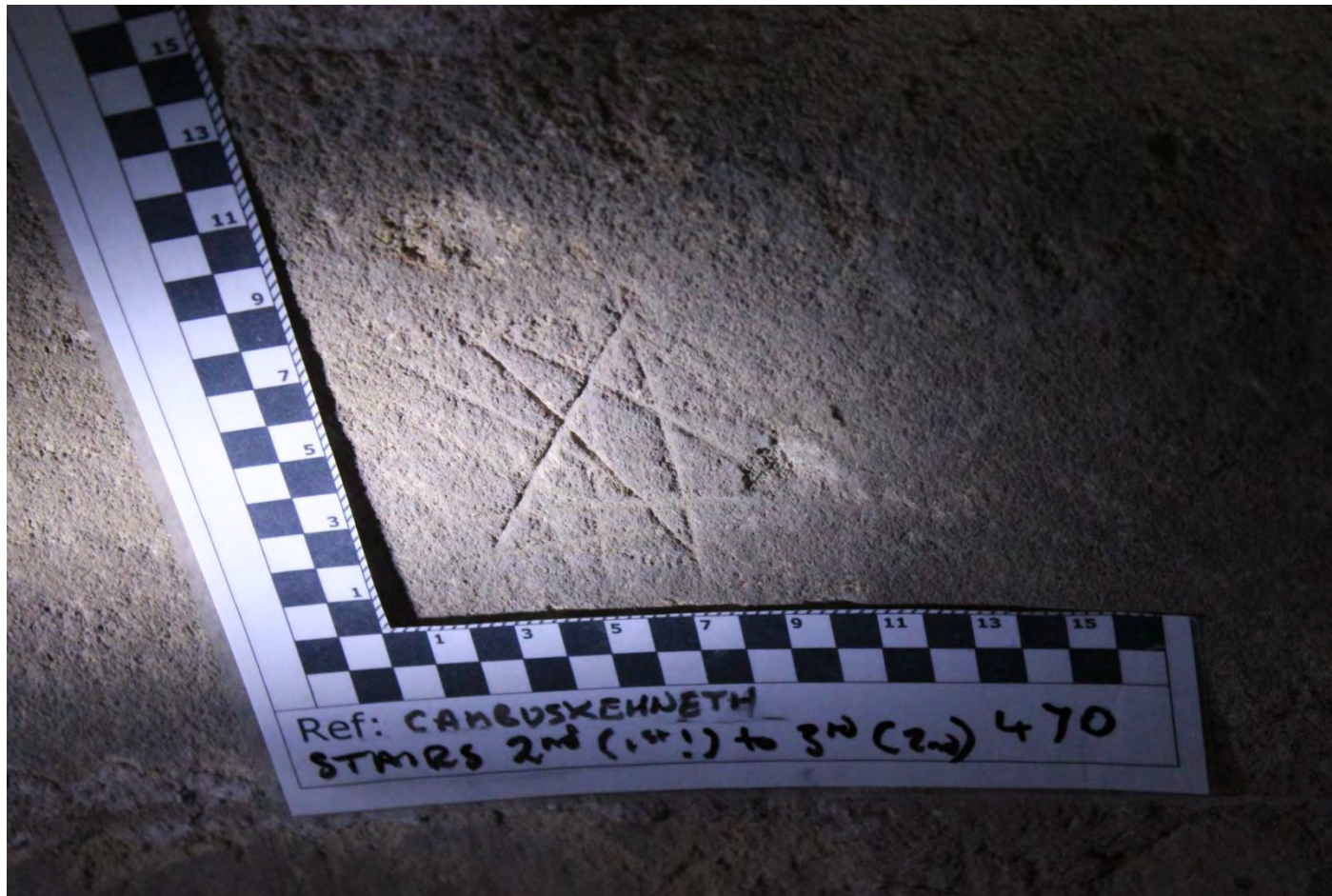
Mason 69- Mark record 498



Mason 81- Mark record 467

Mason 69's mark was a triangular arrowhead with a shaft & crossbar. Mason 81 an arrowhead with a cross bar on the shaft and a V overlying the arrowhead.

Only one mason used a star shape for his mark. This was mason 45 who worked on the stairs and 1st floor, with 15 of his marks recorded.



Mason 45 Mark record 0470

A number of marks would appear to belong to a later period as the way their marks are cut is different from the earlier marks. This is in reference to **Masons 15, 29, 31, 34, 41, 42, 47, 50, 51, 52, 72 and 86**. Three records of **Mason 15** were found on the ground floor walls. One mark of each belonging to **Mason 29, 31 & 34** were also found on a wall of the ground floor. One mark each of **Masons 41, 42, 47, 50 & 51** were found on the 1st floor. One mark each was also found of **Mason 72 & 86** on the stairs. Two marks were found of **Mason 51** on the 1st & 2nd floors.



Mason 15-Mark record 0050



Mason 29- Mark record 0167



Mason 31- Mark record 0169



Mason 34- Mark record 0193



Mason 41- Mark record 0307



Mason 42- Mark record 0311



Mason 47-Mark record 0321a



Mason 50 - Mark record 321c



Mason 51-Mark record 420



Mason 52 - Mark record 0332



Masons 15, 69 & 72 – mark record 496



Mason 86 – Mark record 0493

While some of these marks are obviously later a few may be earlier, such as 47 & 50 .

Several blocks bear more than one mark such as that with 15, 69 & 72 which is found on the newel of the stairs.



On newel of Stair (15, 69, 72)



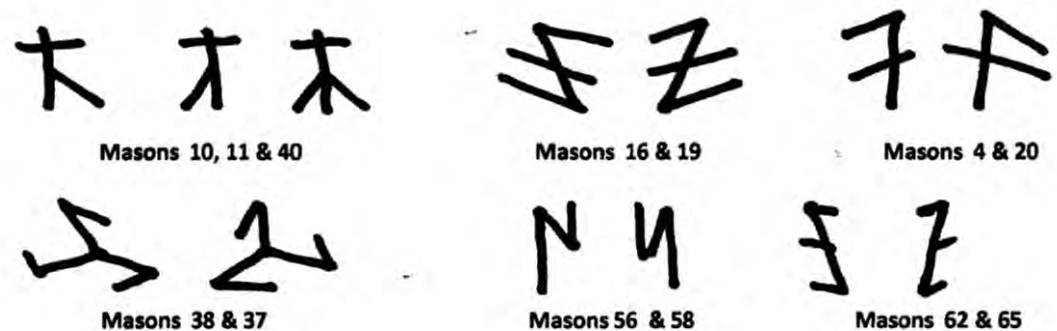
Ground floor North wall (7, 29, 30)



This block has at least four marks, some of which are older than others, as well as other indistinct marks & graffiti, noted on the wall of the 1st floor.

Family Groups

From a number of the marks it can be seen that there are either definite family groups working together, or possibly from the same yards. These are reflected in mirror images of the mark such as these below.



Builders Marks

Two features were recorded are possible building instructions from the Mastermason. One, which was given a mark number (23), is most likely to be instructions on how the window was to be built, as it was noted on the left window recess of the North wall on the ground floor.



Instructions? Originally recorded as Mason 23 – Mark record 0120

The other possible Builders mark was found in the corner of the 1st floor, although it may simply be coincidence that 2 similar marks are pointing towards each other. They could however be an instruction on how to lay the two blocks.



Photo 1514

Discussion

The Bell tower of Cambuskenneth Abbey is said to have been built in the 13th Century but it is not clear if all that survives today belongs to that period. Certainly a considerable amount of renovation work was carried out in the 19th century and this may have been when a number of alterations took place, mainly on the 2nd floor.

From the recording and subsequent studying of the stonemasons' marks it is fairly evident that at least three different phases of building were undertaken, although how long a period between is not clear. There is a definite group of 32 masons who only worked on the ground floor, which includes the area at the bottom of the stairs, Masons 1-17, 20, 21 & 25-40. Of these 32 masons 4 of them worked only on the ribbing of the roof vault (Masons 37, 38, 39 & 40) with 6 of the others also working on the ribbing as well as the walls (Masons 3, 6, 10, 11, 13 & 16). We then have only 3 masons from this group carrying on to work on the 1st floor (Masons 19, 22 & 24), although five of the others did some work on the spiral stair (Masons 14, 18, 24, 25 & 30).

Another definite group of 25 masons then come for the building of the 1st floor (Masons 43-46, 48, 49, 53-71), some of whom also worked on the spiral stair (Masons 44-46, 49, 55, 60, 62-64, 66, 69). There is also then a group of 9 masons who only worked on the spiral stair (Masons 76-81, 83-85). However, from the recording work it is fairly obvious that something changes above the 26th course as no marks are recorded above it on the 1st floor, which goes up to 38 courses. This continues on the 2nd floor where only one possible mark (73) was found on one wall, with 2 possible later marks or graffiti (74 & 75). (See below.)



73



74



75

It is possible that the method of payment was changed for some reason. Previously, from the number of marks found, the masons were being paid 'Piece work' ie paid by the number of stones they had cut by the Paymaster, thus the reason for marking their stones. There could be several reasons for the change. Perhaps the building was not progressing as fast as desired, so it was decided to bring in Contract work instead. This would mean payment at a set rate for a set amount of work. This would cut the requirement for marking all blocks. Another possibility is that the monks may have taken over the building work themselves. Unfortunately no documentary evidence appears to survive to give an idea of why we have these 3 different phases.

We also have a group of 12 later masons marks coming in (Masons 29, 31, 41, 42, 47, 50-52, 72, 82 and possibly 34 & 86), which are scattered throughout the building, so they don't give much idea of repairs undertaken, as some are marked on blocks that have earlier marks on them.

Journeyman

There are a number of Masons where only one of their marks was recorded. This is the case in 25 of the marks. There are two possible explanations. One could simply be that there are actually more of their marks, but they are built in so are no

longer visible. Another explanation is that they were Journeymen, who had served their apprenticeship but decided to move around more and pick up work here and there as they travelled.

Conclusion

From the survey of marks at Cambuskenneth we can say that 85 masons worked on the building, along with their apprentices. Evidence from the location of the marks would also suggest that at least 3 different groups of masons worked on different parts of the building, with an obvious group working only on the ground floor, another group only working on the 1st floor and another group working on the spiral stairs. What was marked was that no group worked on the 2nd floor.

Unfortunately the survey cannot identify a specific mason by name or his mark, as this would require documentary evidence to back it up, nor can we date a structure by a mark alone, as similar marks can be found over a wide date range. However we can say that it appears to have been built in 3 different phases.

Moira Greig

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank firstly Historic Scotland, now HES, for giving me permission to undertake the survey and to their Curator for opening up the premises on a daily basis for us. I also want to thank Murray Cook for brining the Tower to my attention. Lastly my grateful thanks to Jim Roche and Iain Kirkman for volunteering to help me to record the marks.

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