Abstract

Around AD 800, a superbly carved cross-slab was erected at Hilton of Cadboll in NE Scotland. The major part of the stone now stands in the National Museums of Scotland. This interdisciplinary study recovers the story of what happened to it in the previous 1,200 years, including the loss of the carving on one face when the slab was reused as a gravestone in 1676. Archaeological excavations in 1998 and 2001 revealed not only fragments of the missing original carved face but also the lower portion of the stone still set into the ground, and this has allowed the art history and biography of this magnificent Pictish monument to be assessed more fully than ever before. The discovery of the lower portion has also raised issues concerning the role of the stone in the local and national community, and these are fully explored.
The Hilton of Cadboll Stone is a Class II Pictish stone discovered at Hilton of Cadboll, on the East coast of the Tarbat Peninsula in Easter Ross, Scotland. It is one of the most magnificent of all Pictish cross-slabs. On the seaward-facing side is a Christian cross, and on the landward facing side are secular depictions. The latter are carved below the Pictish symbols of crescent and v-rod and double disc and Z-rod: a hunting scene including a woman wearing a large penannular brooch riding side