

NOTES OF REFERENCE

TO THE

SERIES OF DELINEATIONS

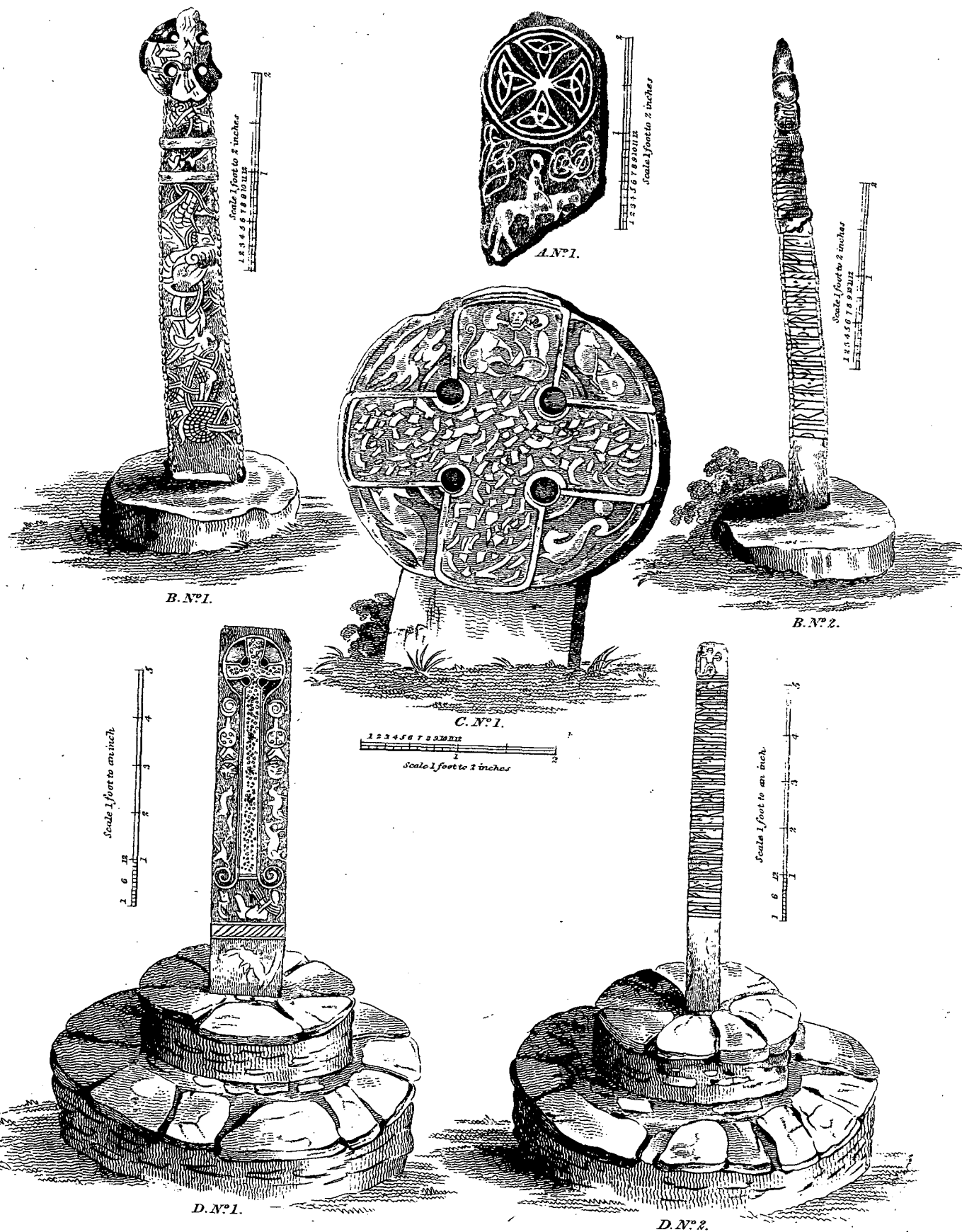
OF THE

RUNIC AND OTHER ANCIENT CROSSES FOUND IN THE
ISLE OF MAN.

Communicated by Mr Oswald.

THE carved stones in the island are all found in or about the burying grounds of the parish churches. We have no account in what manner they were placed there. It is generally understood, in the neighbourhood of some of them, that originally they occupied other situations; but what these were is uncertain. The traditional belief, however, is confirmed by two or three facts: *First*, By the stone A having been found several miles distant from any of the present churches. *Second*, By the cross at Port-le-Vullin, which stands by the side of the way leading from Kirk Maughold to Ramsey; and, *third*, By a pillar about seven feet





high, which is seen at the crossing of the roads near Port-Erin, in the parish of Rushen. It is evidently Runic; but the carving is so much effaced as to be hardly recognised; and it has, therefore, not been copied into the following series. Had these three ever been erected at the parish churches, the veneration of the natives for things sacred is so tenacious, that they would have never been removed. The existence to this day of the fonts used by the Roman Catholics before the Reformation, is a proof of this. Waldron, who lived about a hundred years ago, in his account of the superstitions of the natives, mentions, that there existed in his time a cross, in a wild and barren field, at a considerable distance from the church of Braddan, which the neighbouring people were desirous of removing; to what place, or to what purpose, he does not inform us; but it was very probably one of those to be seen at present in the church-yard.

A. This small stone is only the top part of a flat pillar broken off. It is a slab of green stone, and is exceedingly hard. It is intended that the figures should appear in the drawing as by no means deeply cut. I found this stone on the headland south of Port-soderick, near a small mound of ruins called simply "The Old Chapel." It is now in my possession; and is chiefly interesting as an illustration of those that follow. It is worthy of notice, that the cross, a feature so prominent in most of the others, is not on this stone. It may, therefore, be supposed, with much probability, that it belongs to the earliest age of carved stones in this island. The mounds called "The Old Chapels" are so numerous throughout the country, that three or four of them may be seen in some parts within an extent of as many miles. Some of them are more like a species of barrow than any thing else; as an instance of which, I may mention the "Cronk

“na killain,”* or the “Hill of the Bell,” near Peel. They are almost all of a small size, and are surrounded even yet for the most part by an enclosed burying-ground of very limited extent, but filled with stone graves; and it may be added that, in the mounded parts about them, urns have sometimes been found.† Several of them are denominated after Saint Patrick, as the “Kil-Patrick a Drumnia,” *i. e.* “Kirk-Patrick on the Hill,” a mile and a half south from Kirk-Michael. No connexion can be traced between them and the parish churches, the oldest register of which begins in 1598. They are supposed to have been a kind of baronial chapels for the domestic use of the first Christian inhabitants; and, when we consider the manner in which the Druidical and Christian forms of burying the dead seem mixed up together in them, it is by no means improbable that they belong to the immediate period when the latter religion succeeded to the former in this island.

Plate xviii.

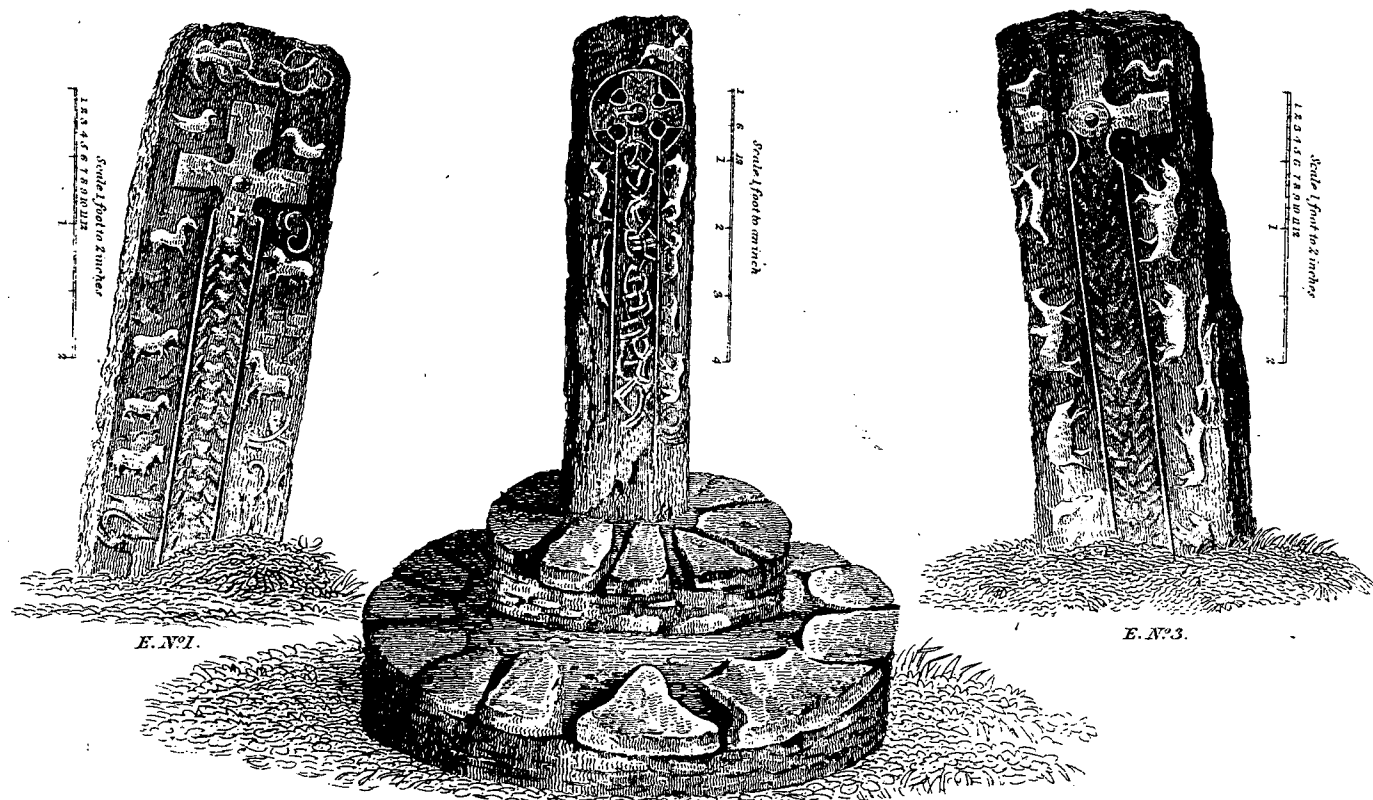
B. No. 1. South front of the pillar in Braddan Church-Yard. It is broken below the cross part, and is over-clamped with iron.

— *ib.* No. 2. West Edge, with the Runic inscription. The other sides are also cut, but exhibit nothing in particular. There are other crosses with Runic carvings lying about here, as well as at Kirk-onchar and the other churches; but they are so much mutilated as not to be worth delineating. Their principal feature is being covered by a convoluted and intricate net-work of engraving.

* The Manks say to this day, “We have had neither clag nor killain to-day,” when they mean to remark, “There was no service at church to-day.” *Clag* signifies a bell, *killain* a little or hand-bell.

† *Vice versa*, druidical altars or circles, with mounds, have been found, with stone graves in their vicinity, as at Ballewn, near Castletown.





C. Large cross, lying against Braddan Church. It also exhibits, in a considerable degree, the Runic style of ornament.

D. 1st, South face of the pillar in the village of Kirk-Michael, standing in front of the church-yard gate. 2d, Western Edge, with the inscription. 3d, North view.* The writing has been variously expounded. By Sir John Prestwick it has been read,

“Walter, son of Thurulf, a knight right valiant, Lord of Frithu, the Father, Jesus Christ.”

By Mr Beauford,

“For the sins of Ivalfir, the son of Dural, this cross was erected by his mother Alfride.”

Professor Thorkelin, who, I am informed by Vicar-general Cubbon of this diocese, visited the British Islands upwards of thirty years ago, by command of the King of Denmark, in search of antiquities of the northern nations, interpreted it,—

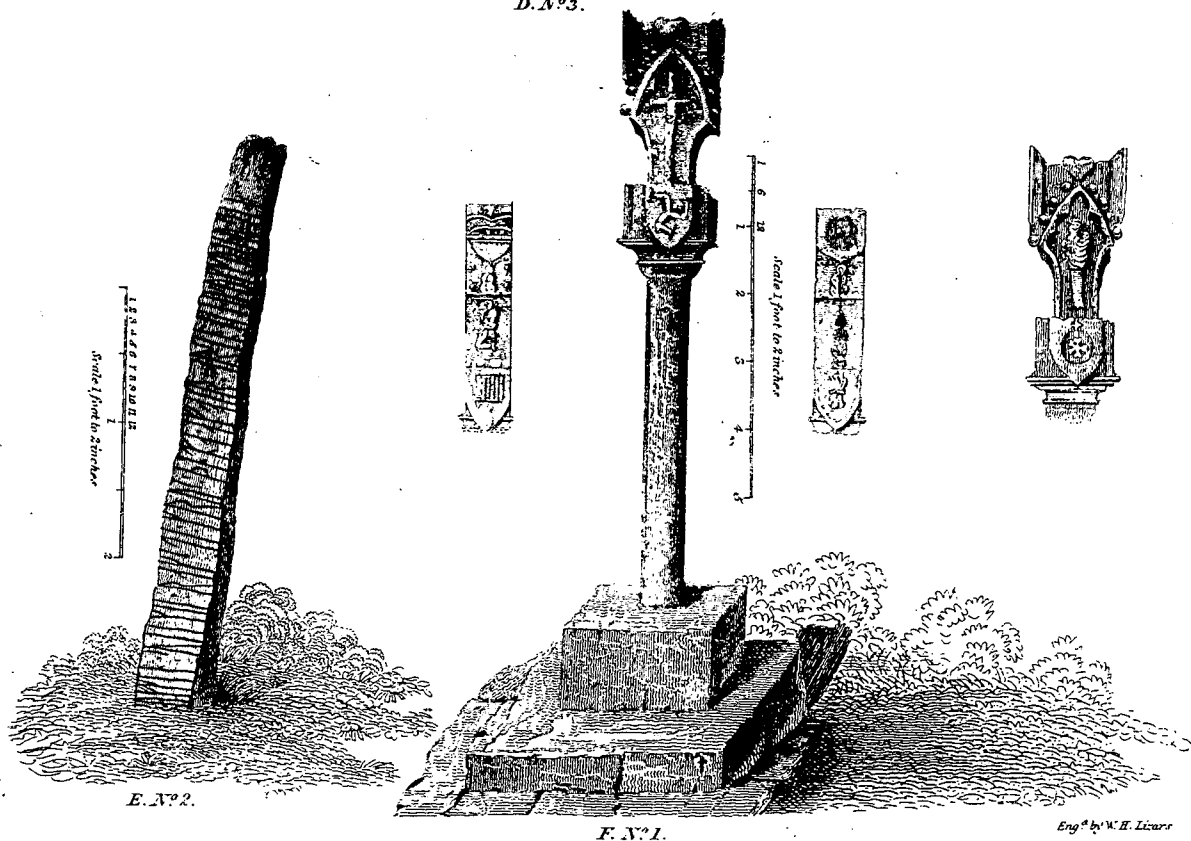
“Thurolfson carved or erected this monumental cross over Fridu, his mother.”

E. 1st, South view of the pillar at Kirk-Andreas. 2d, Edge view with the Runic letters. 3d, The north face of the same. This inscription has been decyphered by Mr Beauford,—

“The son of Ulf of the Swedti (Swedes) erected this cross to the warrior Afterarni, the son of Cunii.”

All these interpretations refer the pillars to the memory of individuals; and it is now of no consequence whether they were erected by a mother to her son, or, *vice versa*, by a son to his mother, or by a knight to his fellow warrior; and if I was to hazard a conjecture concerning their origin, I would suppose they were

* This stone is a blue clay slate, of hardness and tenacity.



Eng^d by W. H. Lizars

the offspring of the enthusiasm of some northmen of distinction newly converted to Christianity, and who mixed up together the sign of the cross, and those emblems of their former religion and habits of life which were still dear to them. The effect of such monuments in the cause of conversion amongst their followers would be great, and might prove a powerful adjuvant towards christianizing even the whole of the northern nations. It is well known that the Danes did not become Christians till the tenth century; and seeing that this island continued more in connection with them and the Norwegians than with any other people, till the Scotch got possession of it in the fourteenth, I would be inclined to refer the era of these pillars to the tenth or eleventh century.

F. Representation of a pillar at Kirkmaughold Church-yard gate, with the different faces of its capital. This is a cross of very superior elegance and workmanship. It is evidently of considerable antiquity, but cannot, by any analogy, be referred to an age so early as those last spoken of. The consecrated ground of Kirkmaughold was the only sanctuary in the island in the time of popery, and, from the sanctity and character of the saint who conferred on it his name, the church of Maughold had considerable celebrity in the insular canonicals. And as we possess no evidence whatever of the present Manks arms having been used by the Danes or Norwegians, I would be inclined to refer this cross, which is ornamented by them, to some zealots of rank who had availed themselves of the sanctuary sometime after the expulsion of the Norwegians.

G. The cross at Kirkmaughold Church-yard.

H. That at Port-le-Vullin.

I. Drawing of a stone dug from under ground at the ruins of the Abbey of Rushen, Ballasalla. Several of the abbots, and also

PLATE XIX.



some of the Kings of Man, were buried in this Abbey. But what renders the stone curious is, that the convoluted carvings towards the corners are much in the same manner as on the pillars possessing decidedly a Runic style of ornament.

K. Representations of a stone dug six feet from under ground at Kirk Santon, when the present church was building upwards of forty years ago. I was informed by the son of the late vicar of the parish that it made part of a stone grave. Are the characters Phœnician? or are they the old Greek? Can they be those in use by the Druids? There were many Druidical ruins in this neighbourhood, but they are now nearly all obliterated. A very perfect remain of the age of Hillocks is situated on the shore adjacent to the church. It is an oblong and regularly formed mound, about twenty feet high, called Cronk-na-Myrohow, the "Hill of the Dead," placed across the isthmus of a precipitous crag which overhangs the creek of Grenack, so as to leave merely a narrow and precarious foot-path to lead on the south side to the cliff within it. On the top of the cliff the foundations of a small, square, and feeble tenement, are very distinct; but which, though small, occupy almost the whole of the top of the precipice. It can only have been used as a religious tenement of some kind.

L. This stone stood many years in the house of Keys, at Castletown, and is now in the ditch or garden of Castle Rushen. I have sent the drawing of it, merely because Mr Dillon, when in the island, saw it. I think Bishop Wilson says it was, for what reason I know not, brought here from Cumberland. It appears to have been an altar, dedicated "Jové Augusto," by a cohort of the legion of the Narbonenses.

M. Is a sketch of a Druidical circle, with the foundations of an adjacent building, in the form of a parallelogram of considerable



magnitude, called by the natives Castle Horry or Hurry. It is situated in the parish of Kirkmaughold, on the summit of a round cultivated hill. It was not known till I discovered it about four years ago. Since that time, the foundations of the parallelogram have been erased for the sake of the stones. The circle, however, and the general outline of the building, remain; and although, in consequence of not having taken a finished sketch, but merely a memorandum of the whole when entire, I have been under the necessity of supplying the deficiency from dilapidated and imperfect materials, the delineation may be depended upon as giving by no means a less perfect representation of the ruin as it stood when I first saw it. Orry, the King of Man, whose name this ruin appears to bear, reigned in the tenth century, and was the first of the Danish line. Compounds of his name, as Ballachorry or Ballachurry, are frequently met with to this day, as designations of places in all parts of the island; and the natives still associate with his days the commencement of their traditions, and the origin of their laws. Can this have been a residence of his with a Druidical temple attached to it? We have no grounds of certainty that this King was a Christian when he got possession of the sovereignty of Man. Denmark was not converted till about his time; and if he was one of the race of northmen who infested the southern coasts of Europe in the middle ages, there can be little doubt that he was a Pagan. At all events, this ruin is curious, as being an uncommon conjunction of the Druidical temple with another structure. There are some others in the island similar to it, but smaller and less distinct in outline.