

VIII.—*Notices of Three Churches in North Uist, Benbecula, and Grimsay, said to have been Built in the Fourteenth Century.*

By F. W. L. THOMAS, Capt. R.N., F.S.A. Scot.

With Descriptions and Plans of Primitive Chapels in Rona and Sulasgeir.

By T. S. MUIR, Esq.

[*Read before the Society, 4th December 1871.*]

Of the scores of chapels in the Outer Hebrides, whose ruins exist or whose sites are known, very few have any traditionary date of the foundation or of the name of the founder; but there are three which are said, by the historian of the Macdonalds, who wrote in the time of Charles II., to have been built by Amie MacRory, the repudiated wife of the "good" John of Islay, first Lord of the Isles. The notes and measurements made of these churches may interest some members of the Society, particularly if they have not at hand the comprehensive work of Mr T. S. Muir, on the "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture in Scotland."

TEAMPULL NA TRIONAIDE (OR, AS IT IS CALLED ON THE SPOT), TEAMPULL NA TRINIDAD; *i.e.*, THE CHURCH OF THE (HOLY) TRINITY.

The ruin of Trinity Church stands at Carinish,¹ the south-west extremity of North Uist, at a short distance from the inn. It is in a very dilapidated condition; for besides that it is roofless, the sides and lintels of the windows and doorway have been destroyed, for the sake of the dressed stone of which they are said to have been formed. The interior is choked for several feet in height with rubbish and graves, and it is hoped that among the debris some figured and moulded stones may yet be found. When I was there the crop of nettles was most luxuriant, many of them being over six feet high.

¹ Carinish, Karynych (a mis-spelling of Karynich) for Kiarri-nes, *i.e.*, Bog-ness; from *Kiör*, bog, marsh, and *nes*, ness.

The interior of Trinity Church measured $61\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, and the breadth $21\frac{1}{2}$ feet; it is, therefore, three times longer than it is broad; the average thickness of the wall is $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

The east wall, which, like the rest of the church, has been made of undressed stones, has been thicker than the others (3 feet 10 inches); but it

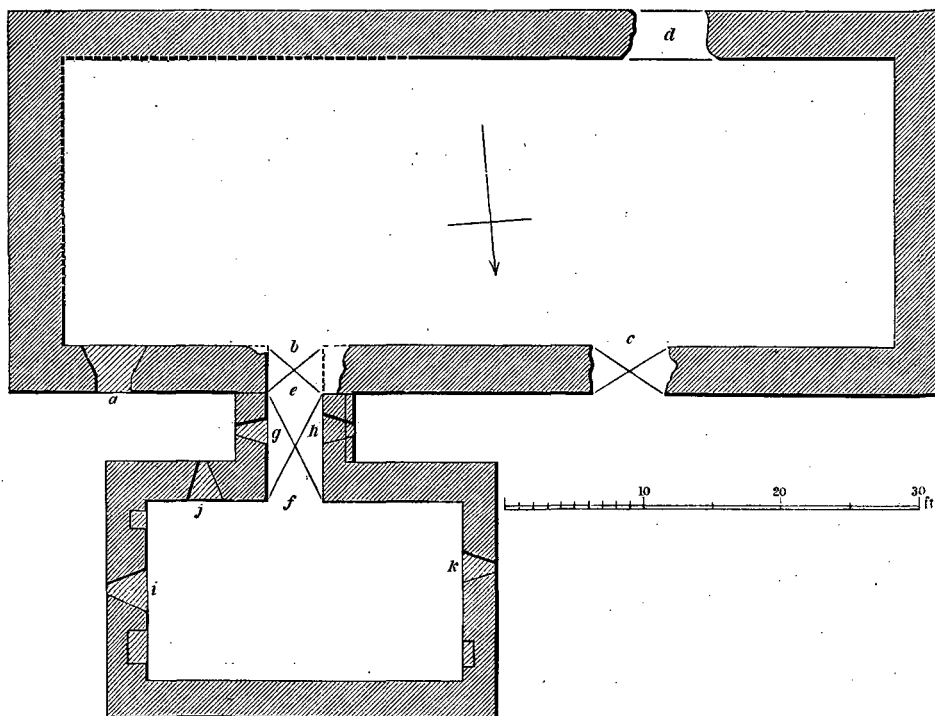
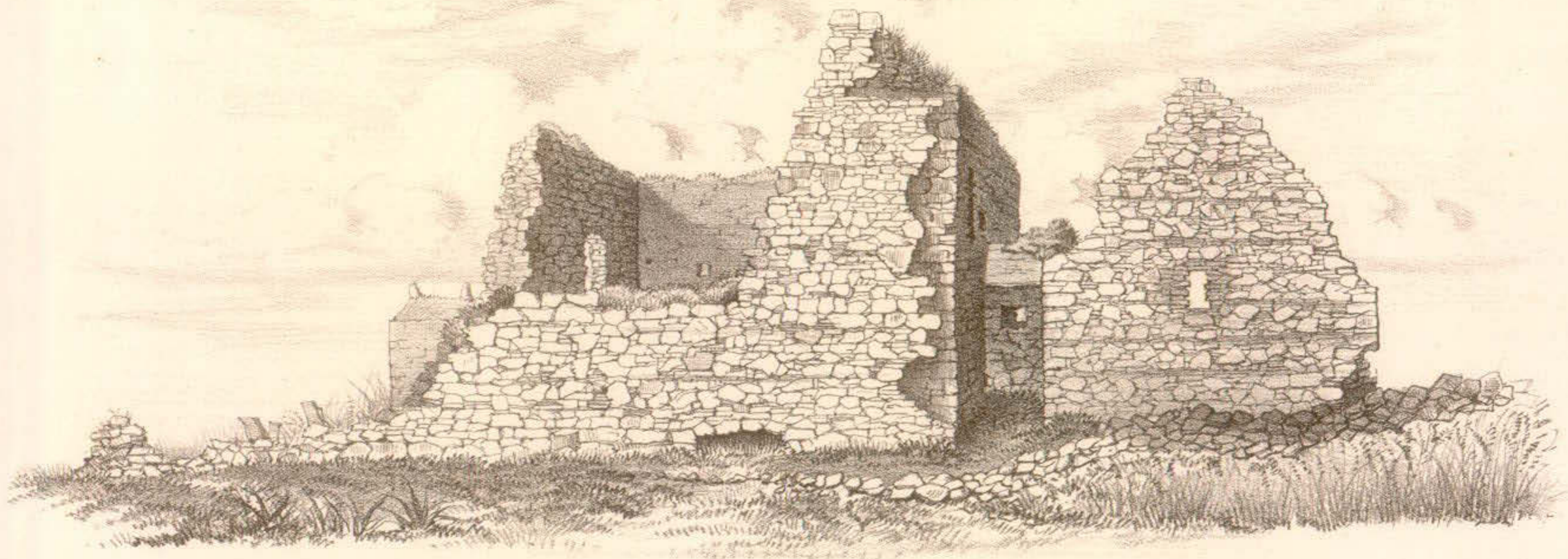


Fig. 1. Teampull na Trionaide (ground plan).

is nearly all down, and there are no architectural features left,¹ except a rude oillet or hole, apparently to shoot out of. (See view, Plate XXVII.)

¹ "There was a spire (pinnacle) upon the east gable of Trinity Church, with the figure of a giant (fomhair) with three heads, on the top. This 'giant with three heads' was probably a representation of the Trinity. Some say that the 'giant with three heads' stood in a niche in the gable, and not on the top. There were several pieces of sculpture, both inside and outside of the church, but these being of freestone were carried away for sharpening stones. It is also said there was an altar of marble or freestone in the church, and that the sides of the doors and windows were of cut freestone, which have been taken out and carried away. There are some bits still remaining."—*Mr Carmichael.*



MODERN TOMB.

CURIOUS PORCH.

TEAM PULL NA TRIONAIDE (TRINITY CHURCH) AND TEAM PULL MAC VICAR;
CARINISH NORTH UIST: FROM THE EASTWARD.

The north wall has a round-headed window (*a*) of undressed stones at the east end; it is $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide outside, splaying to $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, arched and splayed above. The arch is cleverly formed of unhewn stones, and the key-stone has been ingeniously selected and placed. There is a recess or ambry below the window, filled with human bones.

Next comes a doorway (*b*) utterly destroyed; it is now blocked up, but it led through an arched passage to an adjoining chapel, of which anon. There is another doorway (*c*) in the north wall, being the present entrance to the ruin; the arch of this doorway is obtusely pointed, and it appeared to me not to be original. There are five oilllets in the north wall, which, as well as the west and part of the north, is still about 17 feet high. The masonry is of large undressed stones, rudely in courses, often separated by small flat pieces laid horizontally.

The masonry of the west wall is quite different;¹ there is no attempt at horizontality, nor is there either door or window; but what looks very odd is, that the wall is pierced with seven oilllets or holes (as seen in Plate XXVIII.), three below and four above, at the height where, I suppose, there has been a wooden gallery. These oilllets, whose sides are formed of rough stones, do not splay nor dip on the inside, so that the range from them, if intended to shoot from, is very limited indeed. The holes may average 8 or 10 inches square, and are a curious feature in an ecclesiastical building. They appeared to Mr Sharbau and myself to be original, but I do not feel very positive on the subject.

The south wall is half gone; there remains an ope where a window has been, and a break (*d*), which may have been the original doorway.

On the north side of the church is a small chapel, attached to the church by a very curious porch (*f*). The walls of the porch are not bonded

¹ "There were flags in the floor at the west end, and when these were lifted and carried away, the west wall fell down. The wall was rebuilt by a patriotic man of the name of MacCòiseam, who was a small farmer at Carinish. He expected the proprietor—the Fair Lord, Ann Mòrfhear Bàn—to recoup him for his outlay, but the proprietor declined, and the wall was never completed. Moreover, the scaffolding fell, by which one of the workmen was killed, and he was buried on the spot."—*Mr Carmichael*.

The above note from Mr Carmichael appears to account for the puzzling holes or oilllets in the west wall; that they are, in fact, holes for the scaffolding poles which have never been filled up. And I can offer no better explanation of their presence in other parts of the church.

into the church ; but my companion and myself came to the conclusion that they were an original extension from those of the chapel. The porch has a round-arched or barrel roof, and on the church side the walls are apparently pendicular (fig. 2, Plate XXVIII.) ; but at the entrance to the chapel the barrel roof is hidden by masonry, while the jambs or sides of the doorway are decidedly inclined (fig. 3, Plate XXVIII.), although from the dilapidation of the masonry it is difficult to say how much ; it is probably seven inches wider at the bottom than at the top. The porch has splayed window-slits (*g, h*) on each side, and on the outside has a flattish angular roof, covered with imbricated stones, like tiles.

The chapel is 23 feet long, and $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad inside, and the walls are $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick.

The north wall is quite destroyed ; the east wall is complete, and the gable has a ledge or bevel about 9 inches broad along the edges for the (stone ?) roof to rest on ; there is a small rectangular window (*i*), splayed at sides and top, not quite in the middle of the wall, and an ambry on each side of the window.

In the south wall there is a small narrow window (*j*) like that just noticed, and the inclined doorway (*f*) described above. It is about 5 feet high, 2 feet 4 inches wide at top, and 2 feet 11 inches at the bottom.

The west wall still sustains the gable (see fig. 1, Plate XXVIII., reduced from photographs), which is ledged, and has a small window (*k*) like others, with an ambry on one side. The window is considerably on one side of the centre of the wall—a deviation not often observed in other chapels.

I was told on the spot that the little chapel is called Teampull Mac-Vicar.¹

We read in the “*Origines Parochiales*,” that “in 1389, Godfrey² of Ile, lord of Wyst, confirmed to the monks of Inchaffray the chapel of the Holy Trinity (at Karynch) in Wyst, as granted them by Christina, the daughter of Alan, the true heiress, and Reginald, called M’Rodry, the true lord and

¹ “The small chapel on the north side of Trinity Church is called Teampull Chlann a Phiocair, from some families of the Macvicars who took possession of it for burying therein. An old man still living, John Macvicar, Balsher, told me lately that he saw this ruin roofed and thatched with heather.”—*Mr Carmichael*.

² Godfrey was Amie’s son.

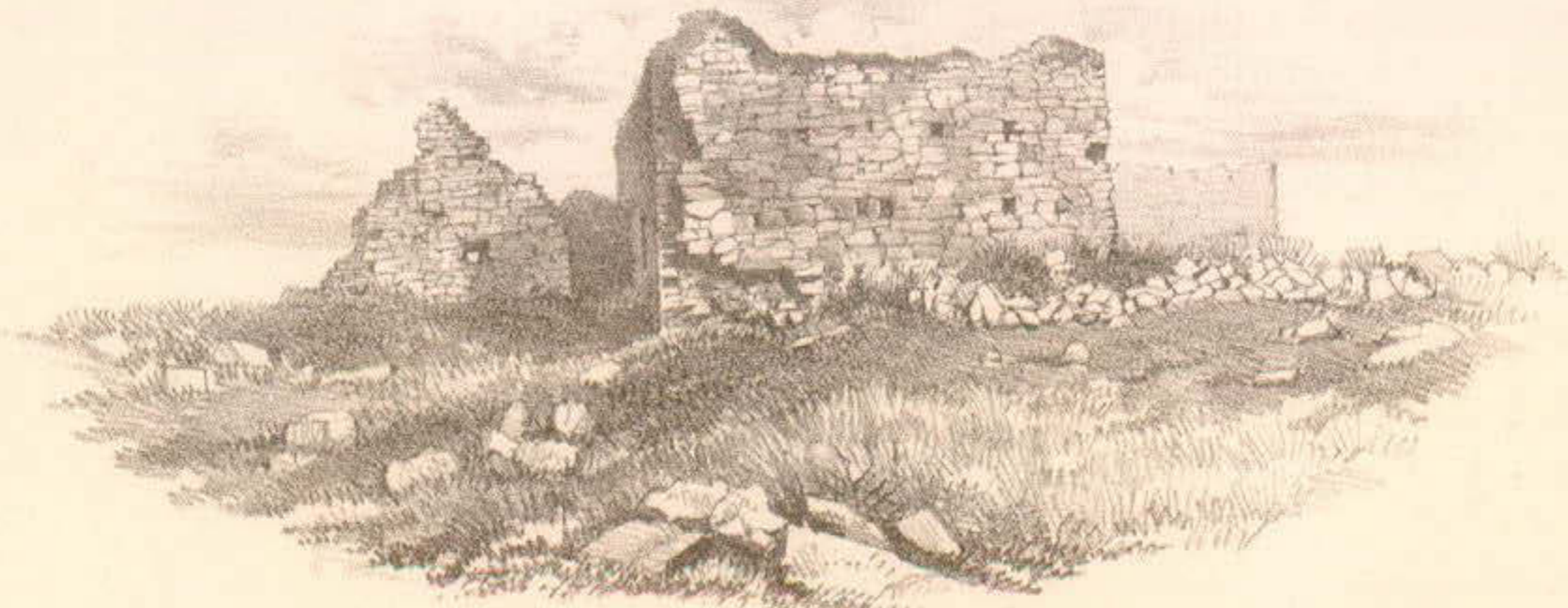


Fig. 1 Teampull na Trionaide (Trinity Church) and Teampull Mac Vicar, Carinish, North Uist. From the westward, shewing the west wall of Trinity Church pierced with seven holes or oillets, three below and four above.

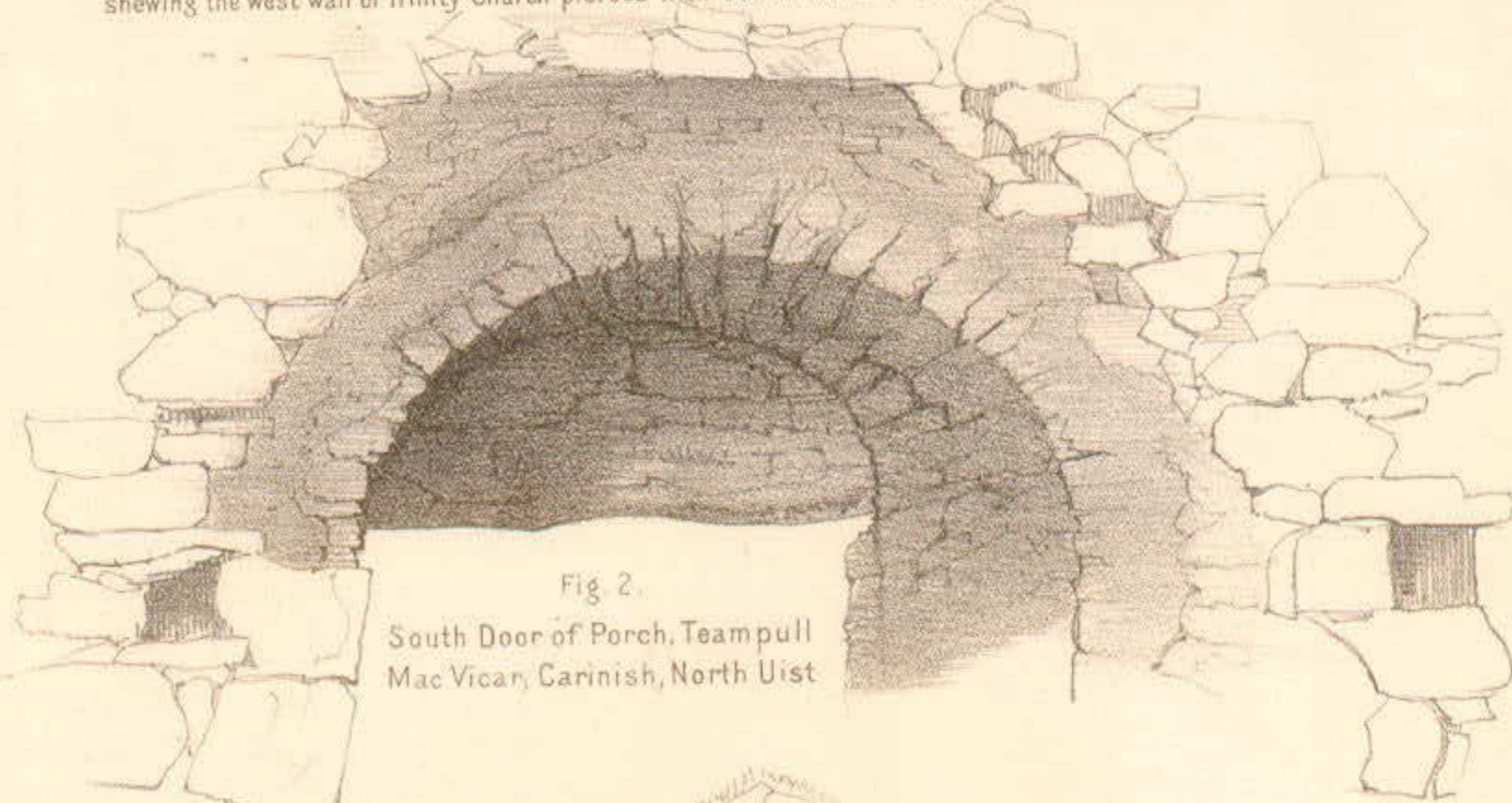


Fig. 2.
South Door of Porch, Teampull
Mac Vicar, Carinish, North Uist



Fig 3.
North Door of Porch, Teampull
Mac Vicar, Carinish North Uist

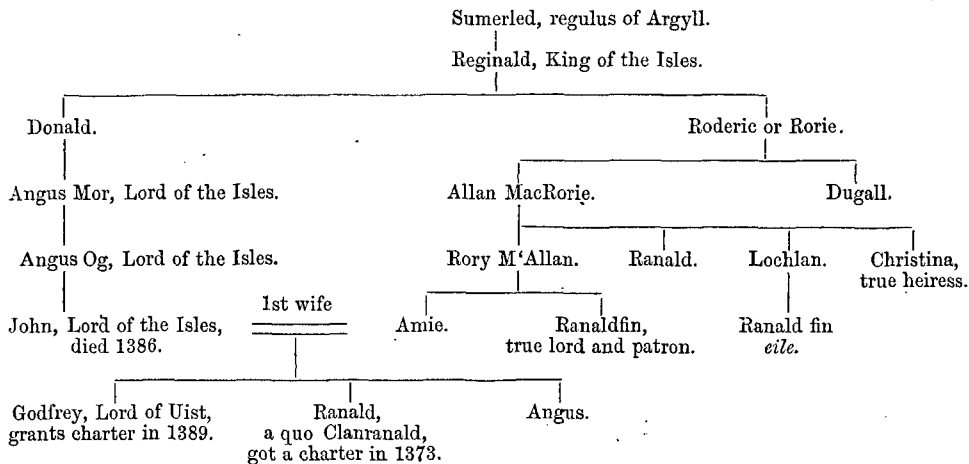
patron. About 1390,¹ the chapel of Carinish was probably rebuilt or repaired by Amie M'Ruari, who is traditionally reputed its founder. In 1601, the Macdonalds of Uist took refuge, with their cattle, in the church of Kiltrynad, when the island was invaded by the Macleods of Harris. The church is marked by Blaeu as Kiltrinidad, and its ruins are locally known as Teampul-na-Trianaide (the Trinity Church.)”²

In a note it is added,—“The chapel was apparently a Culdee church, and therefore built before the time of Cristina, the daughter of Alan, who lived about the year 1309.”

The authority for the belief that Amie MacRuari rebuilt Trinity Church is, I suppose, the family history of the Macdonalds, written in the time of Charles II., and printed in “De Rebus Albanicis.” The Sennachie states, “This gentlewoman being a good virtuous woman, &c., she built the Trinity Church, at Carinish, in North Uist.”³ He also asserts, eight merk lands in North Uist, and two farms in Benbecula, were mortified to the church, but does not say to what church. He probably refers to the

¹ Upon this date Mr Skene remarks,—“It must have been earlier. See the Genealogy appended—

Genealogy showing connection of M'Donalds and M'Rorie's.



John, Lord of the Isles, married secondly in 1373, so that the date of repudiation must have been earlier ; he died 1389. Amie married probably about 1355 ; born say 1335.”

² *Loc. cit.* Part i. vol. ii.

³ *Loc. cit.* p. 298.

transaction when, "in 1389, Godfrey of Ila, lord of Wyst, confirmed to the monks of Inchaffray, along with the chapel of the Holy Trinity, the whole land of Karynch,¹ and 4 penny lands in Ylara (Ileray), situated between Husabost² and Ken-erroch, as granted to them by Cristina, the daughter of Alan and Reginald M'Rodry."³

The occasion on which Trinity Church became the fortress of the Macdonalds is thus told by Sir Robert Gordon:—

"Troubles betuein the Clandonald and the Seill-Tormat [Macleods of Harris], in the West Iles." "About this tyme [1601] there arose great troubles in the north-west iles of Scotland, betuein Donald Gorme [Blue-eyed] Mackonald of Sleat, and Sir Rory Mackloyd of Herris, upon this occasion: Donald Gorme Mackonald had mareid Sir Rory Mackloyd his sister, and for some displeasure or jealousie conceived against her, he did repudiat her; whervpon Sir Rorie sent message to Donald Gorme, desiring him to tak home his wyff agane. Donald Gorm not onlie refused to obey his request, bot also intended a divorcement against his wyff; which when he had obteyned, he mareid the sister of Kenneth MacKenzie, Lord of Kintayle. Sir Rorie Mackloyd took this disgrace (as he thought it) so heighlie, that he assembled all his countreyemen, and his tryb (the Seill-tormat) without delay, and invaded with fyre and sword a pairt of Donald Gorme his lands in the yle of Sky; which lands Sir Rorie clamed to apperteyne unto himself. Donald Gorme, impatient of this injurie, conveyed his forces, and went into the Heris, which iland he spoiled, killed some of the inhabitants, and careid away from thence a great booty of cattell. This agane did so sturr vp the said Sir Rory Mackloyd and his tryb, that they took a journey into the ile of Ouyst (which apperteyneth to Donald Gorme), and landing ther, Sir Rorie sent his cowsen, Donald Glasse [grey-headed] Maeloyd, with 40 others, to spoile the iland, and to tak a prey of goods [cattle] out of the precinct of the church of Kil-trynad, wher the people had put all ther goods and cattell, as in a sanctuarie. John Mack-ean-Mack-James (one of Donald Gorme his kinsmen), who had stayed in the iland, accompaigned with tuelff men, rencontred happellie with Donald Glasse

¹ "Cairenische," in 1561, is among "The Abbatis (of Ecolmkill) landis within Donald Gormis boundis," p. 2, De Re. Alb.

² Husabost, for Hùsa-bùstaðr, house-stead.

³ Or. Pr., p. 374, part i. vol. ii.

Macloyd. This small companie of the Clandonald behaved themselves so valiantlie that, after a sharp skirmish, they killed Donald Glasse Mackloyd, with the most pairt of his company, and so rescued the goods. Sir Rorie Macloyd seeing the bad successe of his kinsman, and suspecting that ther wer greater forces in the iland, retired home with the losse of his kinsman and servants, thinking to returne agane shortlie with greater, to revenge the same."¹

But the late Rev. John Macdonald, minister of Harris, and who was a native of Benbecula, supplied me with a much fuller traditional account of the battle of Carinish ; and it is interesting, as illustrating the manners and customs of the islanders about 270 years ago. He tells,—“The battle of Carinish was fought at the time when the well-known feud existed between the M'Leods and M'Donalds. Donald Glas (grey) M'Leod, accompanied by his son, a brave young man, and sixty of his followers, sailed from Harris with the intention of raising a *creach* in North Uist—a place which, it would appear, was not over well protected against hostile incursions. They landed at Loch Efort,² on the east side of North Uist, and lost no time in setting about the accomplishment of their purpose. By some it is asserted that they made a circuit of the whole island before any resistance was offered to their progress ; while others, with more appearance of truth, maintain that they ravished Carinish only, although they passed a night in the small island of Balshare.³ Be this as it may, it was at Carinish they paid the penalty of their guilty conduct.

Donald M'Donald—commonly known by his patronymic of Donald-Mac-Iain-Vich-Hamish—a near relative of the chief of the clan M'Donald, a more terrible man than whom, in arms, the West Highlands could not produce at that time, lived at the date of our story at the island of Eriska,⁴ in the Sound of Barra.⁵ To him the North Uist people, among whom he had resided for a number of years, looked of all others as the readiest help at this juncture, and particularly as he had proved himself a terror to the M'Leods

¹ P. 244, Sir R. Gordon's "Sutherland."

² Efort, Eport, for Eyja-fjördr = Island-firth. In the West Highlands "fjördr" has become *forth*, *fort*, *port*, *ort*, *ert*, *art*.

³ Balshare, for Baile s-ear (Gaelic) = East Village.

⁴ Eriska, for Eriks-ey = Ericks-island.

⁵ Barra, for Barr-ey = (St) Barr's-island.

ever since their differences had commenced. M'Leod was not therefore long in North Uist before "Sgeula nan Creach"¹ reached Eriska. M'Donald was in motion at once, with his twelve gillimores—a small well-trying band of his own choosing and training, whom he always retained about him. As he was passing a place called Airdavachar² in Iochdar, South Uist, he met a man who was well known to him, and to whom he made the remark after the usual salutation, "Tha latha buain fhaghair agam ort," *i.e.*, "I have a day in harvest against thee." "Ma tha cha'n fhad a bhithas," says his friend, "If you have, that will not be the case long;" and this man joined the small number that was on the way to drive the M'Leods out of North Uist.

It was a beautiful morning in May. A Benbecula man, who was working with his *caschrom*,³ at a place then called Gerrydonull (now called Lincllet) near the South Ford,⁴ observed a number of armed people coming from the strand; he at once recognised M'Iain, and caught the purpose of his journey. An idea can be formed of the delight the people of those days took in strife from the readiness with which this man, without ever being asked, stuck his "caschrom" in the ground, assumed his bow and sword, and ran to meet M'Donald. The latter was glad of this accession to his small force, and marched on towards the North Ford. Having come to the last stream in the strand, between Benbecula and North Uist, called "Sruthan na Comraig," *i.e.*, the Stream of the Sanctuary, at the entrance of Baymore in Carinish, they were met by a stalwart wild fellow of the name of Donald Dhu, whom M'Iain had known when he resided in North Uist. M'Donald asked him where he was going, to which he answered that he was on his way to Grimsay to cut peats. To the next question, which was about wages, he replied that sixpence was promised him for his day's work. "Come," says the leader of the band, "engage with myself for this day, as I have more important work on hand, and am scarce of crew, and I will give you that much at least in the evening." The offer was at once accepted by Donald Dhu, and M'Iain's force was augmented to fifteen. As they advanced

¹ Sgeula nan Creach = News of the invasion.

² Airdavachar in Iochdar, for Aird a Mhachair (Gaelic) = Point of the (sandy) plain. Iochdar, nether; (district) is understood.

³ Caschrom = foot-plough.

⁴ It is from these Fords (Faoghalaichean) that Benbecula gets its name.

further on their journey, a poor woman gave them all the necessary information concerning the enemy: the M'Leods were in the old temple (Trinity Church), after finishing breakfast upon a fine cow that they had taken from a widow at Eachadh of Carinish, and slaughtered that morning.

Now was the time for M'Iain to enter into his arrangements for the day. The M'Leods had hitherto encountered no opposition, and had no idea that danger could be so near. Reasons were too obvious to the enemy why he should not fall upon them in the "temple," and being well acquainted with every inch of the ground, he made the following disposition of his few men. Dividing them into three parties, he concealed the first, consisting of seven, behind the rising ground that faces the present mission-church, and to the south of the brook (now a drain) called "Feithe na fala," *i.e.*, the Ditch of Blood; the next division, four in number, he stationed behind a knoll about half way between the position of the first division and the "temple;" and the last, consisting of the remaining four, were appointed to give the alarm to the M'Leods that "M'Iain had arrived." The men had been duly harangued, and each had received his instructions in the most definite terms; their leader then took an elevated position on the height a little to the north of where the preaching-house now stands, from whence he had soon the satisfaction of seeing his orders carried out to the very letter. The alarm given, out rushed the M'Leods all in confusion, and before they were aware of what like the danger really was, four of their number were brought down by the cool aim of their enemies. The latter, after carrying out their orders so far, fell back with all speed upon the second party, and with them waited the approach of the foe. These, fancying they had only a handful to deal with, rushed on in the same confusion till they were checked by a second shower of arrows, which made eight of them reel back and bite the dust. The M'Donalds now precipitated themselves upon the main body, and waited as before until the enemy was within range, when all suddenly springing up and letting fly a third discharge of arrows with the same well-regulated aim, and with the same galling effect, rushed across the hollow through which the road now passes, and took their position for the brunt of the day, a little below the place where their leader stood. The M'Leods now beheld the force with which they had to contend, and pressed on with great fury to engage them on even ground. Just as line stood to line, and the rage of battle was commencing, M'Donald received a further accession

to his force from a very unexpected quarter. Among the M'Leods was a stout young man of the name of M'Donald, the son of a blind old man who had resided for years at Rodil, in Harris; and had, by "coaltship," or some other way, been in close friendship with M'Iain. This youth could not brook the idea of being in the ranks of foes fighting against his own clan, and particularly when he saw such fearful odds against them. He therefore jumped across the field and joined them. The struggle had no sooner commenced, than M'Iain observed the great difference in power in favour of the bows of his own men, which he quickly set about turning to his advantage. Therefore, as his greatest care was to preserve his men as much as possible, he caused them to retrograde gently during the course of the action, so that while their arrows were telling with galling effect in the fray, those of their opponents were falling spent at their feet. Before Donald Glas (M'Leod) could understand why his men were falling in heaps around him, while not so much as one gap was being effected in the small detached rank that stood opposite to him, the numbers on both sides were more nearly equal. Seeing that the day was assuming more and more an unfavourable aspect for him, that he was on the soil of an enemy, and that even the line of his retreat was cut off, he inspired his men with courage, and made a furious onset upon the M'Donalds, with a determination, as it would appear, to make the best of his circumstances, should that only result in the last and least honourable course of safety, namely, a "retreat." He was met, however, by too stubborn an opposition, and his effort only made the struggle assume a more ferocious character, which was the worse for him, as his ranks were subjected to a quicker process of thinning. The day was almost M'Donald's own, when, as in the excitement occasioned by his success, he had approached nearer the enemy than was prudent, he received an arrow "ann am beul a churain," *i.e.*, at the mouth of his cuaran or shoe, which threw him on his length in "Feithe na fala." His men seeing their leader low, became infuriated, rushed upon the foe, and in a few minutes cut them to pieces. Five or six managed to make their escape. These took to their heels in good earnest. One of them, who, from his spare lean form and extraordinary swiftness, was called "Glas nam beann," *i.e.*, the Gray Man of the Mountains, made for Loch Efort, and soon reached old M'Leod with his woeful intelligence. The story he brought was to the old chief very unlikely, and in case it should be found that he had deserted, given a

false report, or attempted to carry a joke too far, a triangle was erected in order to hang him as a punishment for such conduct. The intelligence proved, alas! too true. The triangle was scarcely up, and the rope intended for poor "Glas" neck suspended, when another fugitive appeared, bearing about him all the marks of despair. Half dead with fatigue and terror, he threw himself before M'Leod and told his tale of misfortune. The latter, seeing things had come to the worst possible pass, took to his boats and held off the land.

The other fugitives were not so fortunate. These consisted of young M'Leod and two or three of his men. Their retreat being cut off, they made for the island of Balshare as the only alternative. Probably they had an eye to the protection of the sanctuary, as a small chapel in ruins is there, called Christ's Temple.¹ Thither they were hotly pursued by some of the M'Donalds, among whom was Donald Dhu, who had greatly distinguished himself in the fray, but particularly after he had seen M'Iain stretched in the ditch. He far outstripped his comrades in the pursuit; and young M'Leod seeing he was gaining fast upon him turned round, and stood to wait his coming up, on the strand (which is called from him ever since "Oitir Vich Donul Glas"), at no great distance from the shore, evidently thinking a surrender was the wisest policy. In this he was woefully mistaken. Donul Dhu came up in a great fury. The M'Leods threw themselves on their knees, their young leader along with them, and in the most earnest manner begged for mercy. The savage answered, "Cha do chuir Dia anam anns an duinne don d'thugainnse maitheanas agus MacIain 'na shìneadh 's an fheithidh;" i.e., "God did not put a soul in that man whom I would pardon, and M'Iain stretched in the ditch." With this he came down with his sword upon the head of Donald Glas, and the blow cleaved his skull on the right temple, immediately above the ear. The others were soon despatched, and their graves are pointed out on a green knoll a little above the shore of Balshare island, and looking down upon "Oitir² Vich Donul Glas." The young leader was buried in the "temple" at Carinish. Years after this the grave in which his remains were deposited was opened, in order that another inhabitant might be consigned to its dark recess, and young

¹ Mr Carmichael informs me that Christ's Temple is also believed to have been built by the Lady Amie.

² Oitir, Gaelic, a bank or ridge jutting into the sea.—*O'Reilly*.

M'Leod's skull was taken up and placed in one of the corners or windows of the temple, as the practice then, and till very recently, was. Among the heaps of skulls that crowded the recesses of the temple as lately as twenty years ago, poor M'Leod's was easily distinguished by the gash it had above the ear. The Carinish youth often used it for a football.

Such is the story of the battle of Carinish. I have not lost an opportunity of getting information regarding it for the last twenty years. I gathered it from among the most trustworthy people in Uist; with some of these I have walked over the ground and had the plan of the battle pointed out and explained to me. One of them gave me the account as he had it from his grandfather, who was a native of Carinish—a man of intelligence and some education. He was accounted the best sennachie of his day. In fact, while I may say I have heard the account fifty or a hundred times, I have never heard it with any material difference.

M'Iain was conveyed to a house in Carinish with the arrow sticking in his flesh. He was very weak; and it was from the Old Castle of Borve,¹ Benbecula,² then inhabited, that a cake of barley-bread was procured to strengthen him. Anything else was out of the question, so wretched was the state to which "creachs," and broils, and depredations had reduced the islanders. The arrow was extracted, but not without great difficulty and pain. The song sang by "Nic Coshem," M'Iain's foster mother, to drown his cries, is now for the most part lost. She sang it extempore, at the head of a band of young women arranged around a "waulking" board. Knowing how passionately fond he was of a good song, she set up this demonstration to divert his attention while undergoing the operation. There was no chloroform in those days. The song commenced—

" Mhic Iain, a laoidh mo chéilleadh
Gur moch a chuala tu'n éibhe," &c.

i.e., " Vich Iain, O darling of my soul, early didst thou hear my cry."

¹ Borve—when written in Gaelic, Borgh—(gen. Bhurriugh, pronounced Vurrie), for Borg, Norse, castle. Borve is a common topographical name in the West Highlands, but so completely is the original meaning forgotten, that where the ruins of the castle remain, the Gaelic, Dun, is prefixed; thus Dun Bhurriugh. See Ord. Map of Lewis.

² Benbecula, for Beinn-dha-Fhaoghailaichean, pro. Ben-a-Oo-a-la, Hill of the Two Fords.

M'Donald recovered from the effects of his wound in a short time; for fourteen days after this we find him on his way to Skye at the head of his men.

If I was to add anything of my own to this story, it would be my opinion that M'Donald took a very active part personally in the engagement, and received some slight wounds; for "Nic Goshem" says, in one of the songs addressing him, "Bha fuil do chuirp chubhraidh a'drughadh ro t'anart;" *i.e.*, "The blood of thy precious body was oozing through thy linen."

So far the Rev. John M'Donald, who appears to have told the tale as it was told to him. The Macleod version would have been something very different;¹ but there can be no doubt the Macleods suffered a severe defeat, for Sir Robert Gordon was contemporary with the event; and as the glory of the Sutherlands and Gordons—nor the disgrace of the Sinclairs, Mackays, and Mackenzies—is not concerned, there is great probability that he would endeavour to relate the truth.

It is to be regretted that scarcely an architectural feature remains of Trinity Temple; the rounded window of undressed stones in the north-east corner may be part of an original church built in the Norman style; while the obtusely pointed doorway, with the south wall, may have been made at the time asserted by tradition (before 1390). The west wall is of a different style of masonry to the rest, and there is no sign of window or door in it; there may have been a window in the gable, which is now destroyed; but the two rows of oilllets are surely remarkable features. I have noted the occurrence of holes in the gable of St Kenneth, Loch Laggan, Badenoch; and Mr T. S. Muir, describing the ruined church of St Helen, Aldcamus, Berwickshire, notes,—“The west wall is almost entire, but appears to have

¹ Since writing the above, I have found a notice of the battle of Carinish in the MS. "Traditions of Lewis," by John Morrison, a native of Harris, and consequently favourable to the Macleods. He tells that Sir Roderick lost sixty of his men, but that Donald Glas Macleod manfully stood his ground, after the rest of his party had fled, and faced MacIain.

"The surviving Uist men allowed both heroes fair play until they perceived MacIain Macdonald losing ground, when they gathered to his rescue. Macleod by a back stroke killed two of them, but the rest gathered thick around their leader, now almost overcome. One of the Uist men came behind Macleod and made a blow with his sword, which only cut away Macleod's belt; but this disabled him and exposed him to a mortal wound, by which he fell, regretted even by Macdonald who fought against him that day."

In tradition, or even history, it saves a world of trouble to hear only one side.

been a re-erection, as, besides angle buttresses, of probably fourteenth century date, pieces of Norman detail are built into it in various places. It is without a window, though copiously pierced with rows of diminutive square holes, the object of which it is difficult to divine."¹

I was told that the dressed stones that formed the doorway and windows were pulled down to make the graves in the floor of the church. The Rev. J. Macdonald named one ambitious individual who had done so; and Mr Muir remarks,—“It would appear that, till about the beginning of the present century, the interior of the greater church was decorated with sculptures similar to those still existing at Rodil, as I was told that one Macpherson, an octogenarian living at Cladach, Carinish, remembers having seen, when a boy, stones in the walls figured with angels, armed men, animals, &c. The area of the church is deeply bedded with rubbish, and among it possibly some of these interesting relics might be found by any one disposed to the labour of making a search.”²

Concerning Temple MacVicar I can form no decided opinion. It may have been a sacristy belonging to the original church, like that at St Muluag, Ness, Lewis, but it is more probably an original chapel, not later than the thirteenth century, though it may be several centuries older, as the sloping door seems to indicate.

Mr Muir, in his “Barra Head, A Sketch,”³ observes that “Carinish is perhaps of all places in North Uist the most interesting to the ecclesiological antiquary. The ruins referred to above (Trinity Church) occupy a raised spot at the south end of the island, and close by the little inn from which the traveller has his bearings on taking the long mazy ford to Benbecula. In the want of historical data, and of any peculiarities in the fashion of the buildings themselves, it seems useless to guess to what age they belong.

“At Carinish, the south-west point of the parish, there is a ruin of large dimensions, called ‘Teampul na Trianaide,’ or Trinity Temple, which, by the tradition of the inhabitants, is said to have been built by the daughter of Lorn, when she was separated from the Lord of the Isles. I have in my possession a document, which is a copy of what is said to be the original charter of dedication of some lands in Uist to the Trinity and Blessed Virgin

¹ P. 298, vol. iii. plate 21, Pro. S.A. Scot.

² Barra Head, A Sketch, p. 41.

³ *Loc. cit.* p. 39.

Mary Church at Carinish, by Godfrey Macdonald, Lord of Uist, in the year 1389. This, should it be genuine, does not contradict the tradition."¹

"In a part of the parish called Carinish, there is a church called Teampul Trianade, or Trinity Temple, which tradition gives out to be the oldest building of the kind in the Highlands."² But here tradition is most undoubtedly at fault.

Fordun³ has "Insula Barry, et ibi cella Sanctae Trinitatis." I am not aware of any church dedicated to the Holy Trinity in Barra; no doubt "Barry" is here a mistake for "Vyst."

TEAMPULL CHALUMCHILLE; *i.e.*, THE CHURCH OF ST COLUMBA,
BENBECULA.

At Uachdar (*i.e.*, the upper or further part or place), about half-way between Iochdar (*i.e.*, lower or nearer place) and Nunton,⁴ and a quarter

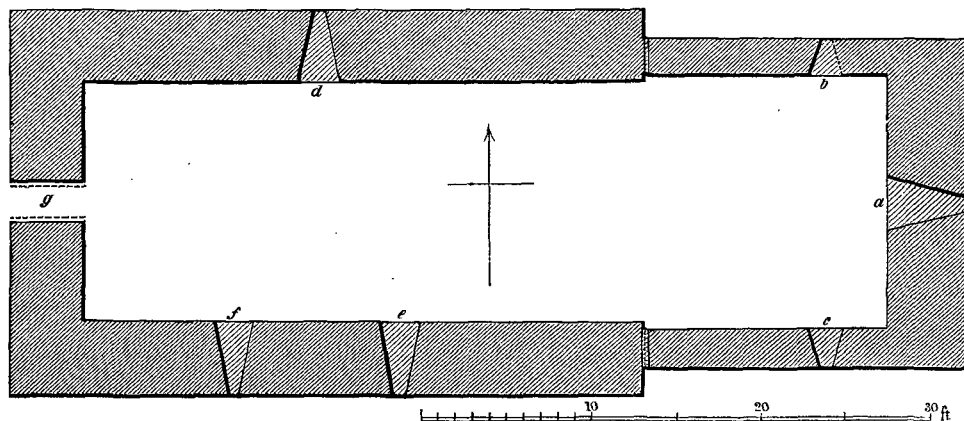


Fig. 2. Teampull Chalumchille (ground plan).

of a mile on the south side of the road, is a small lake, Loch na Chille, *i.e.*, Church Lake, which in consequence of drainage is now in summer a swampy meadow. On a point jutting into the lake from the south side stands the ruin of Teampull Chalumchille.

A cursory examination suggests that the greater part of this church was

¹ P. 169, Stat. Acc. Inverness-shire.

² P. 321, vol. xiii. Old Stat. Acc.

³ Hist. of Scot. vol. i. p. 43.

⁴ Nunton, formerly Baile nan Cailleachan, Gaelic, Nun's-town.

built in a very remote age. On the north side the mortar is so much washed out of the wall that it appears at first sight to be dry-stone masonry. The only door, at the west end, with inclined jambs, and so low as to necessitate a stooping position on entrance; the narrow doorway through a thick wall, and covered with undressed flag-stones; the little rectangular windows, like port-holes to a casement;—altogether present a combination of antique features, of which I have not seen the like in the Long Island.

Teampull Chalumchille stands east and west, true; *at present* it is distinguished into chancel and nave. The interior measurement of the chancel is 14 feet long and 15 feet broad, of the nave, $33\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $14\frac{1}{4}$ feet broad; thus, the whole (interior) church is $47\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, and the original breadth $14\frac{1}{4}$ feet.

The east wall is 5 feet thick, and, with the gable, which is still standing, but greatly overhanging and ready to fall, is 27 feet high. The gable is apparently ledged or rebated: much mortar is used in the building. The east window (*a*) is a narrow (6 inches) rectangular slit, $2\frac{3}{4}$ feet high on the outside. It is splayed slightly at top and bottom, and largely at the sides, so that the inside is almost square, being 3 feet 2 inches high, and 3 feet wide. The side walls of the chancel are evidently much later additions, and do not bond into the walls of the nave. The chancel walls are but 2 feet 2 inches thick, and are 14 feet long; they are greatly dilapidated. There was a window on each side near the altar; the north one (*b*) is ruined, but that on the south (*c*) is a narrow oblong slit, externally 8 inches by 2 feet 8 inches, but splaying on all sides within to 1 foot 10 inches by 3 feet 6 inches.

The walls of the nave are very massive; they are $4\frac{1}{4}$ feet thick. In the north wall is a small rectangular window (*d*), 7 inches by 14 inches outside, splaying at sides and bottom to $2\frac{3}{4}$ feet by 2 feet 5 inches inside. In the south wall are two little windows: the easternmost (*e*) is 10 inches square, but splaying on all sides to $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet within; the other (*f*) is rectangular, being 1 foot 2 inches by 8 inches, splaying on all sides to 2 feet 2 inches square internally. These light-holes have a strange look, and seem more fitted for a dungeon than a church. The sills of the windows appear to have been about 5 feet from the ground.

The door is in the middle of the west wall, with straight sides and roof.

The roof is formed by lintels laid across, which have now almost all been taken away. The jambs of the doorway (*g*) slope inwards, so that while it is only 2 feet wide at the top, it is 2 feet 4 inches at the bottom; the height is but 4 feet 7 inches.

The masonry of the older part of the church is of large, regular, apparently undressed blocks, laid in courses as far as the unequal size of the stones would admit. In the newer wall are many isolated large blocks, surrounded by intermediate pieces that are not small.

I was told that a cross was in the church till lately.

Such is the description of the ruined church of St Columba, which I cannot for a moment believe to have been built at the end of the fourteenth century; but the thinner walls at the east end are probably repairs made by the Lady Amie near that time, as stated by tradition.

The older building I believe to be of great age, possibly erected under the direction of St Columba himself, but certainly prior to the Norse invasion at the end of the eighth century. There is no other church that I know of in the Long Island that has such thick walls nor such small windows, nor in any other large church is the only door at the west end. The sloping jambs of the door is also an antique feature, only seen by me in two other places, viz., at Teampull MacVicar, already described in this paper, and again at "Caibeal Chlann MhicDhughail" (Chapel of the Clan (or Family) Macdougall), one of a group of five churches and chapels at Howmore,¹ South Uist.

"It is a curious fact that the first Christian church erected in Britain, and which is ascribed to the apostolical age, was exactly of the size generally adopted in Ireland after its conversion to Christianity, namely, 60 feet in length, and 26 in breadth."²

"These churches have rarely more than a single entrance, which is placed in the centre of the west end; and they are very imperfectly lighted by small windows that splay inwards, which do not appear to have ever been glazed. In all cases the sides of the doorways and windows incline

¹ Howmore, Howfe, Hough, for Haugr-mor, Great-hillock; from *Haugr*, Norse, a hillock, and *Mor*, Gaelic, great. In the Orkneys the large tumuli and the mounds formed by the ruins of the broughs are called Hows.

² Petrie's Round Towers, p. 195.

like the doorways in the oldest remains in Cyclopean buildings, to which they bear a singularly striking resemblance.”¹

Seventeen ruined churches and chapels in the Long Island were measured and planned; in no case were they constructed of ashlar masonry, so that minute measurements were often a matter of estimation. Of these ruins fifteen were simple rectangles, and, as shown by the following table, there appears to have been three different proportions used in their projection: *first*, the length three times greater than their breadth; *secondly*, the length two and a half times more than their breadth; *thirdly*, in the smaller churches and chapels the length is one and a half times greater than their breadth.

Ancient Churches and Chapels in the Long Island.

	Exterior.	
	Length.	Breadth.
St Clement's, Rodil, with tower,	85	21½
„ „ without tower,	63½	21½
Trinity Church, Carinish, North Uist,	68½	27¾
St Columba, Eye, Lewis,	68¼	24
Teampull MacDhiarmid, Howmore, South Uist,	66	26
Teampull Mhuire, „ „ „	59	20
St Columba, Benbecula,	56¾	22¾
St Muluag, Ness, Lewis,	52	23¼
St Columba, Lochs, Lewis,	35½	18½
Chapel Melista, Lewis,	35	25
St John, Bragir, Lewis, nave,	20	16¼
„ „ chancel,	11¾	12¼
St Michael, Kallin, Grimsey, North Uist,	28½	19
Teampull MacVicar, Carinish, „	28	19
St Aula, Gress, Lewis,	24¾	19¼
St Mary, Benbecula,	24½	16
Tigh a Bheannachd, Uig,	23¾	16¼
Chapel Mhic Alain, Howmore, South Uist (mortuary),	20	{ 14½ ^W 12¾ ^E
Chapel Mhic Dhugail, „ „	17	11½
Chapel an t'sagairt, „ „	16¼	12¾

Now, St Clement's, Rodil, without the tower; St Columba, Eye, without the western chapel; and St Mary's, Howmore, have a mean length of 63·58

¹ *Loc. cit.* p. 162.

feet, and mean breadth of 21·83 feet, or $\frac{2\cdot91}{1}$, which practically is three to one.

Trinity Church, Carinish; T. MacDhiarmid, Howmore; St Columba, Benbecula; and T. Muluag, Ness, have mean length 60·31 feet, mean breadth 24·94 feet, or $\frac{2\cdot44}{1}$, which is about two and a half to one.

The remaining ten chapels—St John's, Bragir, not being a simple rectangle, is not included—have an average length of 25·325 feet; breadth, 17·0 feet, or $\frac{1\cdot49}{1}$; that is, they are half as long again as they are broad.

Petrie tells us that the typical Irish church (*daimhliag*) should be 60 × 26 feet; dimensions supposed (at any rate, the length) to have been recommended by St Patrick himself;¹ and this is very near to the second class of churches noted above.

The *duirtheach*, or oratory, originally built of wood, is found by Petrie to be 15 feet by 10 feet, interior measurement; and the proportion of the rectangle corresponds generally with that of the smaller churches (those less than 50 feet long) and chapels in the Long Island; and it is interesting to know that—if I understand the quotation correctly—a wooden chapel cost, if thatched, a heifer for every foot and a half of length; but, if roofed with boards, a cow was paid instead of a heifer; and that a stone church cost twice as much as a wooden one.²

“The church of Benbecula, said to have been founded about 1390³ by Amie or Algive, the wife of John Lord of the Isles, appears to have been included in the grant of the lands of Uist made in 1392 by that Lord to Reginald of Yle his son, and confirmed in the same year by Robert III. In 1535, King James V. presented Archibald Makillewray to the rectory of the parish church of St Columba, in Beandmoyll, which was vacant by the decease of Sir Tormot Makane. In 1542, the same king presented Sir Fingonius M'Mulane chaplain to the same church, styled the rectory of Beanweall,⁴ in Evist, vacant or when vacant by the demission of Sir Archibald M'Ilwray.”⁵

¹ P. 161, Petrie's Round Towers.

² P. 365, *loc. cit.*

³ Concerning this date, see note by Mr Skene, *ante*.

⁴ This represents the pronunciation of the name of the island by the natives at the present time; the ignorant corruption to Benbecula is worthy of notice.

⁵ P. 370, part i. vol. ii. Or. Pr.

TEAMPULL MHICHAEL.

The south-west extremity of Grimsay, North Uist, is called Ru' Mhechael, *i.e.*, St Michael's Point; and about 500 yards from the shore is the ruin of a small chapel, dedicated, as I was informed on the spot, to the saint.

It is a simple rectangle, $23\frac{1}{4} \times 14$ feet inside; and the walls are $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick. It is greatly dilapidated, the east wall being quite gone, and the south side, in which was the door, is but 3 feet high. There is 9 feet of the west wall left, in which is a splayed, straight-lined window, and it is nearer to the north than the south side. In the north wall, which is 9 feet high, are two windows; the eastmost is destroyed; but the western is rectangular,

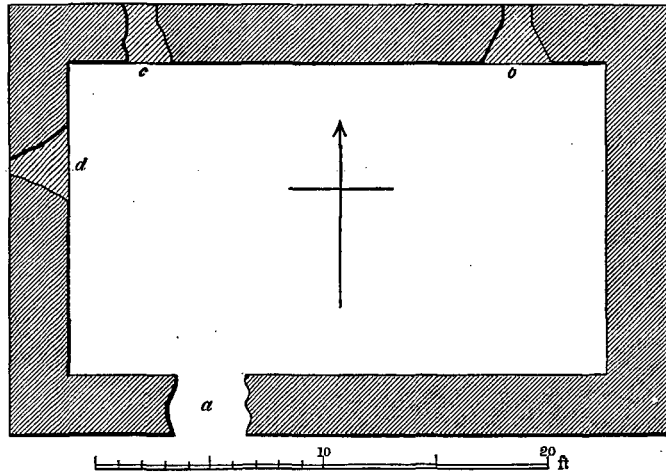


Fig. 3. Teampull Michael (ground plan).

$1\frac{1}{4}$ foot wide on the outside, with parallel sides ($4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high) for $\frac{3}{4}$ foot, then splayed to 3 feet on the inside.

There is a tradition that St Michael's chapel was built by the same lady that built Trinity Church, Carinish, and that it was for the use of strangers and fishermen coming to the port of Kallin. Martin (p. 56, *Western Isles*) refers to this chapel as the "Lowlanders Chappel, because seaman who die in the time of fishing are buried in that place;" but he locates it in the adjoining island of Rona, where it is not known that there ever was a chapel.

The sennachy of the Macdonalds states that the Lady Amie "built

the little oratory in Grimsay," and he may be correct in this instance; if so, the date of the erection of St Michael's chapel is before 1390.

It will be seen that of the three churches ascribed to the Lady Amie, I am willing to suppose that she built St Michael's, repaired and perhaps embellished Trinity Church, and rebuilt the side walls of the chancel of St Columba, Benbecula.

The remains of lime-cemented chapels are very numerous throughout the Outer Hebrides; but these islands possess a class of ecclesiological anti-

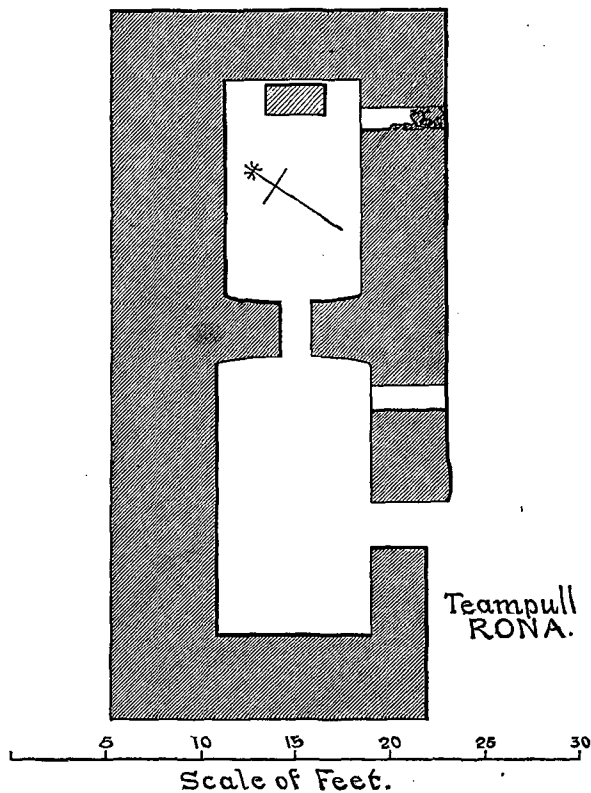


Fig 4. Teampull Rona (ground plan).

quities not elsewhere to be found in England or Scotland. These are the drystone and stone-roofed cells or oratories, built upon lonely islands far from the habitations of men. Mr Muir has visited, and described in his "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture," the three that are still nearly perfect;

viz., on the Flannan Isles, on Rona,¹ and on Sulasgeir.² But, as he has since revisited the two latter, I think it desirable to copy, with his permission, his drawings and description.

Of Teampull Rona he remarks,—“On the outside it is in most part a rounded heap of loose stones, roofed over with turf.”

Within you find it a roughly built cell, 9 feet 3 inches in height, and at the floor, 11 feet 6 inches long, and 7 feet 6 inches wide. (See plan.) The end walls lean inwardly a little, the side ones so greatly (see view), that,

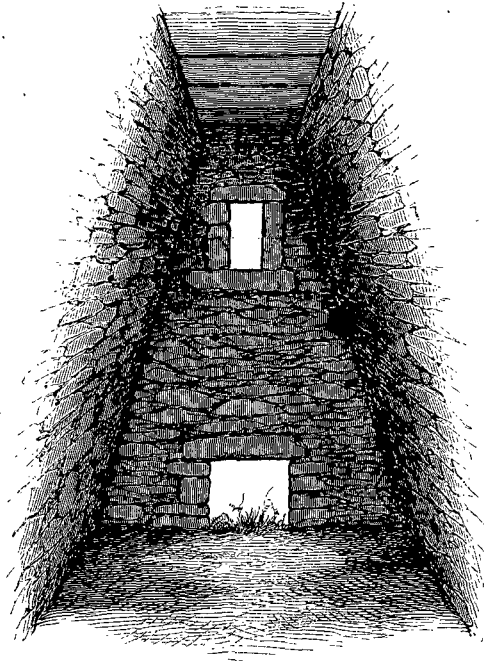


Fig. 5. Teampull Rona, interior looking west.

where they meet the flat slab-formed roof, they are scarcely two feet apart. Beyond the singularity of its shape, there is nothing remarkable in the building, its only minute features being a square doorway in the west end, so low that you have to creep through it on your elbows and knees,—a flat-

¹ Rona, for Ronans-ey, *i.e.*, the Island of (St) Ronan.

² Sulasgeir, for Sula-sker; from *Sula*, a gannet, and *Sker*, a rock; Norse.

headed window, without splay on either side, 19 inches long, and 8 inches wide, set over the doorway,—another window of like form and length, but an inch or two wider, near the east end of the south wall,—and the altar-stone, 3 feet in length, lying close to the east end.

Attached as a nave to the west end of the cell, and externally co-extensive with it in breadth, are the remains of another chapel, internally 14 feet 8 inches in length, and 8 feet 3 inches in width. Except the north one, which is a deal broken down, all the elevations are nearly entire, the west one retaining a part of the gable. A rude flat-headed doorway, 3 feet 5 inches in height, and 2 feet 3 inches wide, in the south wall, and a small window of the same shape, eastward of it, are the only detail.

At what time either of these buildings was put up it is impossible to say. Both are alike rude in their masonry, and between them there is scarcely a difference in the character of their few inartistic details; but, be the age of the larger what it may, the cell, which may be termed the chancel of the structure at large, is certainly by many hundred years the older erection, and in all probability the work of the eighth or ninth century.

In the burying-ground, which is fenced by a low wall, with a doorway on the south-west, there are several truncated plain stone crosses, the tallest one only 2 feet 6 inches in height. At the intersection of the arms it is pierced with a triangular group of three small round holes. (See fig. 6.)

Of Teampull Sulasgeir, Mr Muir remarks, that it occupies "a slope at the east side of the southern end of the islet," where "five or six stone bothies, quaintly fashioned things of the ordinary Lewis type, have been put up as shelters to the fowlers while there killing the birds. Near to these, on a small semi-insulated spot, closely surrounded by rocks, marked Sgeir an Teampull in the Ordnance map, there is a low rugged building with rounded corners and curved roof (see plan), called Tigh Bheannaichte (Blessed

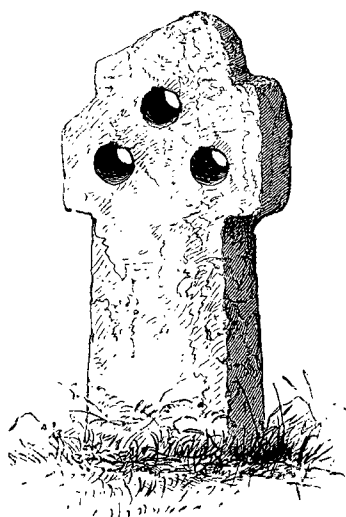


Fig. 6.
Cross at West End of Teampull.

House), internally 14 feet long, and 8 feet wide at the middle, and 6 feet 4 inches at the ends. Within, the walls, rising with a curve towards each other, are roofed with heavy slabs, laid horizontally across. Outside, also, the walls and roof are curved, and covered over with loose stones and turf. The doorway, a rude flat-headed aperture, with inclined jambs, 3 feet 5 inches in height, 16 inches wide at top, and 22 inches at bottom, is on the south-west. Eastward of it there is a small square-shaped niche, and near to the north end of the west wall there is another of the same form. The

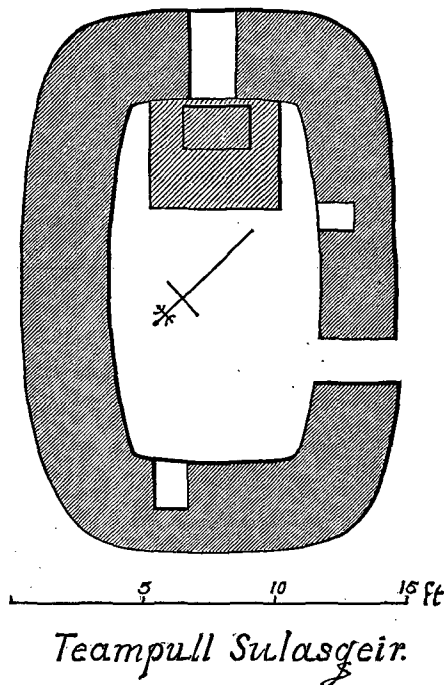


Fig. 7. Teampull Sulasgeir (ground plan).

only window is a small one at the east end, under which is the altar-stone, 2 feet 8 inches in length, raised on a low dais or foot-pace flanked by thin slabs set upon edge.”¹

¹ North Rona; A Sketch, p. 36.