

I.

NOTE OF THE HUNTERSTON BROOCH, AYRSHIRE, WITH A READING OF THE RUNIC INSCRIPTION ON IT. BY PROFESSOR GEORGE STEPHENS, F.S.A., COPENHAGEN. (PLATE LVII.)

This costly jewel has become very famous, partly from its size and beauty, partly from its bearing two inscriptions in Scandinavian Runes carved on its back. In fact, it is Scotland's richest fibula, and the only one found in that kingdom on which runes are carved. I had occasion to discuss it in the Second Part of my work, "The Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England," and I have there (pp. 589-599) taken pains to give it the prominence it deserves, especially as its formulas (TALK, TOALK) = *this Brooch*, illustrate the beautiful prene found at Charnay, in Burgundy—a piece dating from about the fifth century, and with a risting on its back in Old Northern runes, which also has the word full DALCA PÆyOLÆ = *Brooch this*.

But I also wished to engrave this precious old loom *full size*, from careful casts, and to print it in gold and colours in exact facsimile of the original, for only in this way can we really understand the delicacy of its wonderful workmanship. The kindness of Sir James Y. Simpson, Bart., James Drummond, Esq., R.S.A., and Dr John Stuart, have enabled me to carry this wish into execution. But the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland thought these engravings worthy of a place in their own Transactions, and, accordingly, they are here reproduced from the blocks so admirably executed for me in chemotype by my accomplished artist Mr J. Magnus Petersen of Cheapinghaven, Denmark, and beautifully printed by the Messrs Thiele of the same capital.

A few words of comment, abridged from the text in my work, may be here not out of place.

The Hunterston brooch was found in the autumn of 1830, on the estate of Robert Hunter, Esq. of Hunterston, West Kilbride, Ayrshire,

not far from Largs. It lay near the surface at the foot of a steep cliff, a hundred yards from the sea. It is of silver, richly wrought with gold filigree, is set with amber, and has suffered no very great damage, save that the point of the pin is broken off. Its style and workmanship are Carolingian, whose rudiments go back to the fifth and sixth centuries, and may be termed Scando-Celtic, or Anglo-Frankic, or Romano-British, being in fact common to the high art of most European countries in the early middle ages. But these rudiments are here developed, and the fibula may date from the eighth or ninth century. Being found on Scottish soil, it may be of Scottish manufacture, but it may also have come from afar, and may claim another origin.

The Runic inscriptions seem to have been added later, apparently in the tenth century, and point to the Isle of Man. In Professor Daniel Wilson's "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," second edition, 8vo., London, 1863, vol. ii. pp. 267-77, will be found a good digest of the earlier readings of the letters. These readings failed chiefly from being founded on bad facsimiles of the runes. Professor Wilson's own version must be rejected also, not only because it is based on a false assumption—that the language is Celtic—but also because he handles the staves themselves much too freely, and allows himself liberties that cannot be approved. Four letters he omits altogether.

In the cartouches afterwards filled with runes, we see the small round-lets which are the neatly hammered and almost obliterated marks of the tiny silver rivets here used by the jeweller. We then have *two different runic hands*. After the last word on the right (OLFRITI) there was more than *a quarter of an inch* to spare. This has been filled in with five upright lines, all straight. The same person has crowded the room below with a rude chevron, often nearly straight lines.

The first who wrote his name on this jewel was MALBRITHA. He did it thus, unloosing the bind ($\mathfrak{R} = \mathfrak{A} \text{ A}$ and $\mathfrak{K} \text{ K}$) for AK:—

YHFRIBD I 11FY BKFA I FARI

MALBRIPA A TALK, PÖELK I LAKI.

MALBRITHA OWNS this DALK (brooch), THYLE (Speaker,
dawnman) INLAR.

We do not know the exact legal or priestly office in old times filled by the THYLE, which word also signified orator and poet. This is the *second* time it has been found on a Runic monument; and here it is on a piece undoubtedly owned by a Northman, or a man of northern descent, settled in the Isle of Man, or in the south-west of Scotland. Where LAR was or is, I do not know.

That a Celtic name should have been borne by a Scandinavian, is not surprising. The Manx stones offer many other instances, and so does all our older history. In ancient times many Icelanders had names originally Celtic. Such things always happen from intermarriage, friendship, and other causes.

A Runic Cross on the Isle of Mau (Plate I. fig. 1, *a* and *b* in the Rev. J. G. Cumming's "The Runic and other Monumental Remains of the Isle of Man," 4to, London, 1857), on the south side of the churchyard gate at Kirk Michael, was raised by one MAILBRIKTI (a mere variation in spelling of the name MALBRITHA) son of ATHAKAN SMITH (or artist); and it is not impossible that we may here have the same person, or a man of the same family, the more as the stone (like the brooch inscription itself) dates from the tenth century.

The second person whose name is here carved is a lady. She may have been wife or kinswoman of MALBRITHA, or she may have lived later. The runes are, again unbinding the monograms (A for A and T, A and L; and F for λ and F, A and O):—

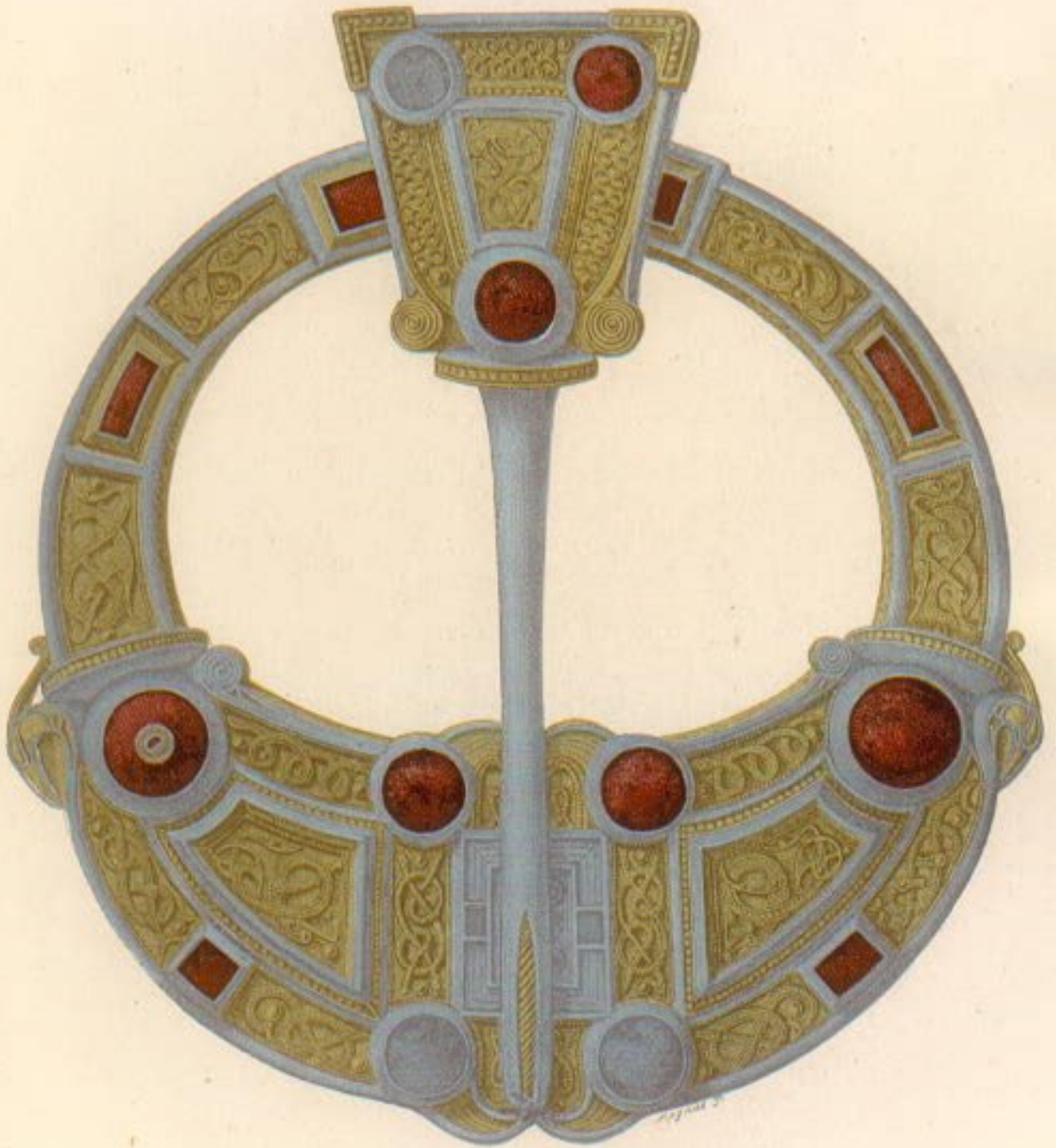
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TOALK A OLFRITI.

This DALK (brooch) OWNS (belongs to) OLFRITI.

The former resting had TALK, this one has TOALK, apparently a sign of difference of dialect, either from variety of place or lapse of time.

This, then, and only this, is, as far as I can see, the real meaning of the Scandinavian (? Manx) runes cut on this invaluable ornament.



HUNTERSTON BROOCH.
Front.



HUNTERSTON BROOCH.
Back.