II.

NOTES ON ANTIQUITIES FROM THE ISLAND OF EIGG. By NORMAN MACPHERSON, LL.D., Professor of Scots Law, Edinburgh University, F.S.A. Scot. (Plate XXX.).

The purpose of this paper is to record the circumstances in which certain objects of antiquity were found in the island of Eigg. But as an aid to determine their archæological value, it may not be amiss to state what is historically known of that island.

We find Eigg first made mention of in Irish ecclesiastical MSS., where it is spoken of as Egga, Ego, Ardegga, Egea, &c. Whether this name be derived from a Celtic or Scandinavian root, it has reference to the notched or serrated appearance of the island, when viewed from certain points. Eigg was known to St Columba, who there visited his countryman St Donnan, founder of the monastery, where eventually he and his fifty-two monks suffered martyrdom in the year 617.[1] The accounts vary as to who were the perpetrators of this deed. According to some, the

1 Adamnan's "Life of Columba," p. 304. The commemoration of St Donnan in the Felire of Ængus, the Culdee, written in the early part of the ninth century, is thus given by Dr Reeves :—

With the festival of Peter the Deacon,
To glorious martyrdom ascended,
With his clerics, of pure lives,
Donnan of Cold Eig.

Donnan of Eig, *i.e.*, Eig is the name of an island which is in Alba, and in it Donnan is, or in Catt; et ibi Donnan sanctus cum sua familia obiit, id est LII.

This Donnan went to Columcille to make him his soul's friend, upon which Columcille said to him, "I shall not be soul's friend to a company (heirs) of red martyrdom; for thou shalt come to red martyrdom, and thy people with thee." And so it was fulfilled.

Donnan then went with his people to the Hebrides, and they took up their abode there in a place where the sheep of the queen of the country were kept. This was told to the queen. "Let them all be killed," said she. "That would not be a religious act," said her people. But they were murderously assailed. At this time the cleric was at mass. "Let us have respite till mass is ended," said Donnan. "Thou shalt have it," said they. And when it was over they were slain, every one of them.

The Martyrology of Donegal, at April 17th, has—"Donnan of Ega, Abbot. Ega is the name of an island in which he was after his coming from Erin. And there

queen of the country[1] massacred them; according to others, she had to call in the aid of "Latrones" to carry out her cruel purpose, because the people of the island were friendly towards the monks. The calendar of Marian Gorman simply says—"Donnan the great with his monks. Fifty-two were his congregation. There came pirates of the sea to the island in which they were, and slew them all. Eig is the name of that island." The event is also referred to as "Combustio Donnain Ega." (Tighernach).

As was to be expected, the site of this martyrdom soon was re-occupied; and during the first half of the eighth century we find mention in the Irish annals of six or seven successive superiors of the monastery. Towards the end of the eighth century the Norwegians and Danes began their descents upon the west coast, and from that time till the battle of Largs (1263) the Hebrides may be considered as subject to Scandinavian sway. But after that event down to the Union they were held by the Scottish crown—not always, however, with a very firm grasp.

In 1282 we find Eigg annexed by statute to the sheriffship of Skye.

In 1309 Robert Bruce granted Eigg, among other lands, to Roderic, son of Alan, for service of a ship of twenty-six oars, with its complement of men and victual. From that time to the present century the island remained in the Clanranald family; but to follow the details of its forfeitures and transfers would be tedious and quite unnecessary here.

Its position between Skye and Mull, between the mainland possessions of Clanranald and his insular domains, and the fact of its containing a safe haven for Highland gallies,[2] made it a convenient place of meeting,[3]

came robbers of the sea on a certain time to the island when he was celebrating mass. He requested of them not to kill him until he should have the mass said, and they gave him this respite, and he was afterwards beheaded, and fifty-two of his monks along with him. And all their names are in a certain old book of the books of Erin,—A.D. 616." The Martyrology of Tamlacht has—"Donnain Ega cum suis lii quorum nomina in majore libro scripsimus."

[1] It is suggested by Dr Reeves that this queen may have given rise to the custom referred to by Martin, who says—"The natives dare not call this isle by its ordinary name of Egg when they are at sea, but Island nim Ban More, *i.e.*, the Isle of Big Women;" and to this day a small loch, containing foundations of an island dwelling, and lying high up on the shoulder of the Scuir of Eigg, is known as Lochan na Mna Moire.

[2] Sibbald MSS., Adv. Lib.

[3] In the "Clanranald Gathering" allusion is made to the Braes of Corvein, one of the hills in Eigg.

whether for domestic or warlike purposes. Let us take one example of each kind, and first, of the meeting which was held when Ranald, the eldest son of John of the Isles, gave up his own claim and that of his brothers by his father's first marriage, and handed over the chiefship to Donald, the eldest son of his father's second marriage to Margaret Stuart, daughter of Robert II. The ceremony is thus described in the Leabhar Dearg[1] of Clanranald, of which Mr W. F. Skene has obligingly furnished me with an extract from his MS. copy, and also with the translation :—

"Ranald, the son of John, was the high steward of Innsigall at the time of his father's death, he being of advanced age, and ruling them when his father deceased. He called a meeting of the nobles of Innsigall and his brethren to one place, *and gave the staff of lordship to his brother* at *Kildonan in Eig, and he was nominated MacDomnall* and Donald of Isla contrary to the opinion of the men of Innsigall."[2]

[1] "Do bhi Raghnall mac Eoin na ard stiubhord ar Innsibhgall an aimsir bas athair do beith na aois arsuigh agus ag riagladh os a cionn do ar neg do athair do chur tionol ar uaislibh Innsibhgall agus ar bhraithribh go haoinionadh agus *tug se slat an tighearnais do bhrathair* a *ccil Donnain an Eige agus do goireadh mac Domhnuil de* agus Domhnall a Hile an aghuidh baramhla fhear Innsigall."

[2] Mackintosh, whose translation was given to Sir Walter Scott, and quoted by him in his notes to the "Lord of the Isles," translates the passage underlined, "brought the sceptre *from* Kildonan in Eig, and delivered it to his brother Donald, who was declared." The verb, however, here translated "brought and delivered" is *tug*, the preterite of *Tabhair*, which means "give." Then the preposition is not *o*, from, but *a*, a form of *an* "in." There is, however, ambiguity here; for while O'Donovan, in his grammar of old Irish, has *a* or *i* "in," he also has *a* "from," and adds, "this frequently occurs in old MSS. exactly in the same sense as the Latin *a*," which it no doubt is. The proper preposition "from" in Gaelic is *o*.

Dr Stuart, in his "Note on the Coronation Stone" ("Proceedings," vol. viii. p. 102), refers to the practice of inaugurating a chief, by placing a wand in his hand, and quotes (besides Martin, p. 102) O'Donovan's "Customs of Hy Fiachrach," p. 451, where, among the requisites of a legitimate instalment or inauguration of an Irish chieftain, are found the following :—

"5. That after taking the oath to observe laws and maintain custom, the chief laid aside his sword and other weapons, upon which the historian of the district, or some other person whose proper office it was, handed him a straight white wand, as a sceptre and an emblem of purity and rectitude, to indicate that his people were to be so obedient to him that he required no other weapon to command them.

. . . . . .

"7. That after the foregoing ceremonies were performed, one of the sub-chiefs

The last memorable gathering of the warlike type which took place in Eigg, was when Sir James Macdonald, who had just escaped from durance in Edinburgh Castle, met Coll M'Gillespick before their invasion of Isla and Cantyre in the year 1614—their last effort to make head against the growing predominance of the Argyles. The ceremony with which Sir James was received has been frequently described.[1]

But perhaps the most notorious fact in the history of Eigg is the smothering of the whole of its inhabitants, in a cave, where they had hidden themselves, and were, on being discovered, smoked to death by their enemies.[2]

Considering how generally accepted and well-known this story is, it is curious to find how difficult it is to determine its date or to decide with certainty on whom the odium of this deed should lie.

The popular tradition ascribes the crime to Alaister Crotach, the well-known Macleod of Harris, who figured conspicuously in the history of the Hebrides from about 1490 to 1545, and whose infirmity, from which he derived the name of Crotach, is said to have resulted from an injury received in Eigg on an earlier expedition than that with which his memory is so unfavourably associated.

On the other hand, we find that in 1588 the inhabitants of the island were totally destroyed by Maclean of Duart. He was indicted by the Lord Advocate on a specific charge—to which he pled guilty—that when the "Florida," one of the Spanish Armada, was at Tobermory, he, with a party of a hundred Spaniards, sailed to the Small Isles and harried the four islands of Eigg, Rum, Muck, and Canna, burning the whole inhabitants without distinction of age or sex. The Records of the Privy Seal contain a remission granted to Maclean of the consequences of this act.

The oldest reference I have been able to find to any such event, except

pronounced his surname without the Christian name in a loud voice, after whom it was pronounced in succession by the clergy according to their dignity, and by his sub-chiefs and freeholders according to their respective ranks."

Have we in the Leabhar Dearg, in the mention of Donald being called "M'Donald," a trace of the custom of saluting a new chief by omitting his Christian name?

[1] "Gregory," p. 368.

[2] This cave is called Uamha Raing—a name of which no reasonable explanation has been given. These words are generally translated the Cave of Francis,—an etymology which connected them with the local physical features or with the event which occurred would be more in accordance with Gaelic topography.

in the judicial records, is in one of the MSS., belonging to the collection of Sir Robert Sibbald, in the Advocates' Library, in which the massacre is attributed to "M'Leod of Haris,"—the inhabitants "being in war against him for that tyme." In the account of the Hebrides, preserved in Sibbald's own handwriting, Macleod is not mentioned, but a specific date is given, and the precise number of victims stated.

". . . . Y^{r} are many caves under y^{e} earth in y^{e} isle whilk the country people retire to with their *goods* when invaded which proved fatal to y^{m} in y^{e} yeer 1577 where 395 persons, men, wyfes, and bairns, were smoared with putting fyre to y^{e} caves."

Sibbald is known to have commenced making his collections about 1680, and he died in 1704. Martin, who published his book on the Western Isles in 1703, makes no mention of the tragedy, although he speaks of a large cave on the south side of the Island.

The story, as popularised by Sir Walter Scott and others, seems to have been first given to the world in Sir John Sinclair's statistical account in the end of the eighteenth century. It would be rash at once to reject the generally accepted tradition; but it is difficult to reconcile it with the real evidence as to Maclean of Duart and his Spaniards. It is not easy to believe that twice within a few years the whole population should have been destroyed by fire; and assuming the date, 1577, not to be a mere mistake for 1587, it would be more than thirty years after the death of Alaister Crotach.

Turning now to the antiquities of the island, and first as to those of Christian times.

The island can boast of few ecclesiastical remains, although its topography is strongly marked by its connection with the church.

There is the farm of Kildonan deriving its name from the church of the saint and martyr of the island. Another farm, Galmisdale, is in old titles called Callumscoull, which it has been suggested might be a corruption of Callum's (Columba's) school or his hole.

Several spots are known as set apart for the priest as "Airidh an t-sagairt," Cuith an t-sagairt.

The mound mentioned by Martin[1] as "Martin Dessil" is well known,

[1] Western Isles, p. 277.

and the custom referred to of walking round it sun-ways was only recently given up.

The memory of the existence of many crosses here as in other West Highland districts is preserved in such names as Druim na Cross at Houlin on the north-west of the island, and Cross Morag at Gruline on south, while near the old Chapel of St Donan two fields are known respectively as Cross More and Cross Beg.

Martin makes mention of several holy wells, and it is curious that in several of the ancient Irish MSS. when the name Ega occurs, the gloss "*fons*" is interlined. Whatever may have been the case in Martin's time, there is no well now known as dedicated to St Donan, but one about a quarter of a mile west from the ruins of the chapel, known as the Well of St Donan's Altar, where tradition has it that he used to celebrate divine service.

In the north end of the island at Cleadale is the Well of Callum Ceile; and near Cross Morag is Toper na Beanmha, the well of the saints; and still a mile further west the well of St Catherine, believed in Martin's day to be "a catholicon for diseases," and very lately reputed good for the falling sickness, but of which the neighbours were afraid to drink lest the waters should communicate to the whole the malady of which it had cured the sick.

"There is a church here," says Martin, "on the east side of the isle, dedicated to St Donnan." The walls, long roofless, still stand, except the upper half of the east end. It is without architectural features. There is a square-headed south door, and two very small lancet windows near the east end. It has long been used by the Roman Catholics as a burying-ground, unbaptised infants being buried outside along the north wall of the chapel. It contains one or two stones of the usual type, known in the west as "Iona stones." There is also a small, erect tomb-stone, with a cross, which has been figured by Muir.

Let into the wall on the north side of the altar is a round-headed tomb, belonging to the old Morar family, a branch of the Clanranalds, to whom part of the island for some time belonged. On the wall of this tomb there is a shield, and over it a cipher. Without attempting to determine who is intended to be designated by the cipher, it may be mentioned that the tomb is said to contain the bones of the prince of pipers, Raonall MacAilein

Oig, the author of the most celebrated pipe music in existence. He was a man of powerful frame and great personal courage and resource, and

Fig. 1. Recessed Tomb with Sculptured Slab, in the Church of St Donan, Eigg.

many of his pibrochs are known to have been composed as records of exploits in which he was personally engaged. This tomb affords an interesting example of Celtic notions of heraldry. It bears date 1641. The earliest Clanranald shields, which I happen to have seen, are on two seals engraved by Laing, in both of which is a hand on the left, and a galley

on the right, with a tree in the centre.[1] The Clanranald arms are found in the first volume of records in the Lyon Office, 1672, and the shield rudely sculptured on this tomb is arranged as if a quartered shield were intended to be represented, and contains all the elements of the matriculated shield—a hand grasping a cross crosslet in the first quarter, in the third a galley. There springs from the base a tree like a laurel, stretching to the top of the shield, with a bird on the highest branches. A lion and a castle occupy the places of the second and fourth quarters respectively, and between the galley and the castle there is what might be either the ground out of which the tree springs, or more probably the fish so common on Macdonald shields. From the matriculated shield the castle has disappeared, but it is used as a crest, while the tree, now surmounted of an eagle, is reduced to heraldic conventionality, and occupies the fourth quarter, the lion getting the first, and the hand holding the cross crosslet the second, the lymphad retaining the third, with a salmon under it.

After mentioning the church, Martin proceeds: "About thirty yards from the church there is a sepulchral urn under ground; it is a big stone hewn to the bottom, about four feet deep, and the diameter of it is about the same breadth. I caused them to dig the ground above it, and we found a flat, thin stone covering the urn. It was almost full of human bones, but no head among them, and they were fair and dry."

About 60 yards north of the chapel there now is a stone *basin, rather than urn*, covered, as that mentioned by Martin, with a flat thin stone of a different description from that out of which the basin is hollowed. The measurements given by Martin are quite inaccurate, if he is speaking of that now alluded to. The inside depth is but 6 inches at the sides, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the centre. The thickness of the sides at the upper edge is 3 inches, and the width over all at the brim is $36\frac{1}{2}$ inches measured in one direction, and $35\frac{1}{2}$ when the diameter is taken at right angles to the previous measurement. Similarly, the greatest internal diameter at the brim is $28\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and the least $27\frac{3}{4}$ inches. It contained both earth and bones when I saw it last. This basin is now popularly reputed to contain the bones of St Donnan, yet that belief could hardly have existed in Martin's day without being noticed by him; and if

[1] Laing's "Supplemental Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Scottish Seals," p. 113.

"combustio" was a true description of the martyrdom, the bones I saw were not St Donnan's. Moreover, the *reliquiæ* of the saint were translated to Auchterless very possibly for fear of desecration by the Northmen, and there also, down to the Reformation, was preserved his "baculus," "qui circumlatus a febri et morbo regio medebatur."[1]

[Mr Anderson, the assistant-secretary of the Society, having come to Eigg in August last, and having expressed much surprise at the description of the stone urn as utterly different from anything he had seen of a sepulchral character, we resolved to examine the stone anew.

It lies so near the surface of the ground that it, or at least the flat thin stone that covers it, had been quite recently struck by the plough. Its site was pointed out by the ploughman, and we immediately had it dug round and measured.

On removing the thin red slab which covered it, we found a large basin of whitish sandstone (fig. 2), roughly chiselled into a circular form, and hollowed out also somewhat roughly into a circular form. The only portion that has been smoothed is the edge. The inside is hollowed out not quite perpendicularly, and the bottom is about an inch and a half deeper in the centre than at the sides, except where it has been perforated by an opening two inches wide at the inside and three at the outside. In digging round it we found some charcoal, a few small shells, and sea-rolled pebbles. It was full to the brim of ordinary earth, and contained a few fragments of human bones, say ten or a dozen. Among these the shafts of two *femora* and one *ulna* and *radius* were still recognisable. It by no means answered the description of Martin, 170 years ago, of being full of bones. The fragments were all replaced, and the vessel with its covering stone restored to the earth as deep as the nature of the subsoil would permit,

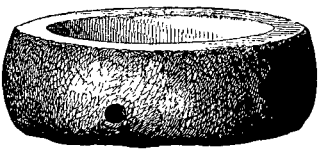


Fig. 2. Basin of Sandstone, probably an Ancient Font, now containing human bones, at Kildonan (36½ inches in diameter).

[1] "Collections on the Shires of Aberdeen and Banff," Spald. Club, p. 505. Another stone urn is said to exist in the same locality.

marking the site by placing over it a long sea-rolled stone eliptical in form, about 22 inches in length and 10 in breadth. This, too, had been turned up by the plough on the same spot, and re-called the stone known as St Columba's pillow.

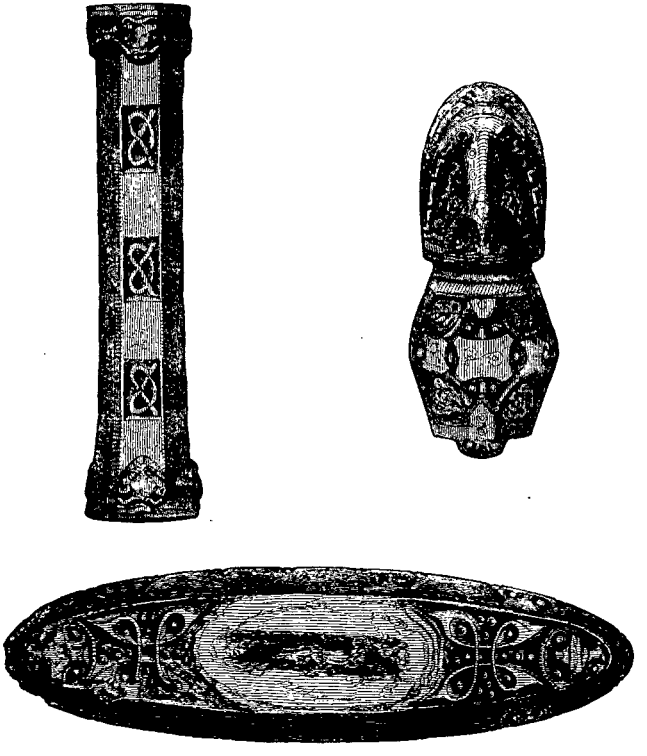
The conclusion we arrived at was that the stone had probably been a font at one time, or possibly a piscina, however it came to have had these bones deposited in it. With reference to the finding of charcoal and sea pebbles and shells as indicative of a sepulchral practice, it is proper to mention that Mr Allan Macleod, the innkeeper—now about eighty years of age—informs me that he remembers that this hollow stone and another made of the stone of Scuir—which contained many more bones—having both been found in the way of the plough, were dug up and removed to the edge of the field, but a few yards off, and there remained exposed to view for many months. My informant cannot say in what year this occurred, but he is sure it was soon after Mr John Macdonald came to be tenant of the farm of Kildonan, which was in 1818. In these circumstances, it can hardly be considered as certain that the place where we now found it was the place of its original deposit.

As to human bones being found where they could not possibly have been placed at the time of sepulture, whoever was some years ago familiar with Highland churchyards, whether in Protestant or Roman Catholic districts, must have been struck with the indifference displayed to the bones of the dead. If any were found in opening a grave, they would frequently be left exposed for years, being placed—say in the window of the old church, if such there was in the churchyard.]

With regard to the articles exhibited to the meeting.

1. The sword handle figured on Plate XXX. was, as far back as I remember, in my father's possession in Aberdeen. Recent inquiries, made through the Rev. J. Sinclair, the parish minister, regarding the finding of it, have elicited the information from a blind old man of very retentive memory, Donald Ban Mackay, that "it was discovered by his brother, Allan Mackay, when levelling a hillock a little below the division fence in the field called Dail Sithean, that is, the field of the tumulus or of the fairies, for the Highlanders called all mounds Sithean, the abode of the Daoine Sith. The spot is well known, half way between the chapel

and the rocks to the east. A fine stone for sharpening was beside it. It seems two pieces of the blade were for some years in the possession



Figs. 3, 4, and 5. Ornamentation of Guard, edge of Grip, and Pommel of the Sword-hilt.

of Allan and others. Donald's wife remembers that the discovery took place about forty-eight years ago."

There were also found along with the sword (*a*) a few thin plates of bronze, (*b*) part of a buckle (fig. 6) attached to one of these plates, and probably connected with a sword belt, (*c*) a triangular piece of metal

(fig. 7), as to which Mr Anderson has made the irresistible suggestion that it must have been one of the feet of a large bronze vessel.

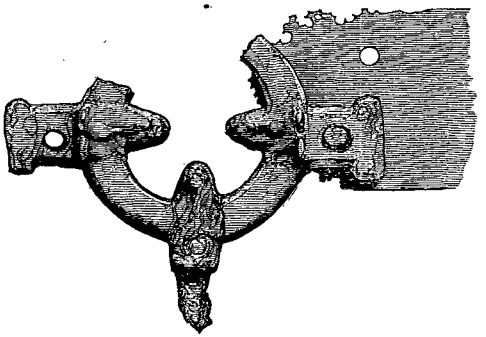


Fig. 6. Buckle or Fastener of Belt attached to a thin Plate of Bronze (actual size).

The sword handle is of bronze, or of some of the kindred alloys, and has been covered with plates of silver and gilding, and the blade has been of iron. No sword of the same form or style of ornament is to be seen on our national sculptured stones, nor is the style of the ornamentation the same as we find on Celtic brooches. The shape, however, of the handle is, though on a somewhat large scale, similar to that of several iron ones in the Society's Museum, and very closely resembles one or two in Scandinavian collections, to drawings of which Mr Anderson has kindly directed my attention, more particularly one in the Bergen Museum, found with an axe and hammer of iron in a cairn at Halsenö, another found in Romsdal, and a third found in Hedemarken, and now in the

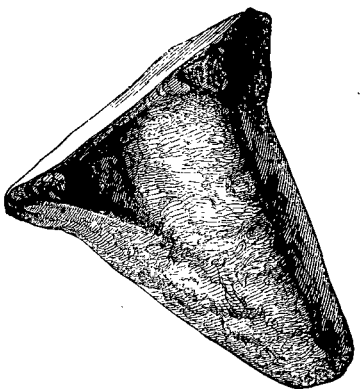


Fig. 7. Foot of large Tripod Vessel of Cast Bronze (2½ inches in length).

Christiania Museum.[1] All of these were found, like this one, in grave-mounds, and the last-mentioned—which has been photographed—bears so very close a resemblance to it both in form and in the manner of distributing the ornaments in alternating panels, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they belong to the same school of Scandinavian art, although the one now before the Society seems the more elaborately adorned. The accidental removal of the surface of one panel discloses that all the smoother ones are plates of silver, fastened with from two to four rivets, round which circles have been engraved and connected with each other so as to form a sort of *S*-shaped ornament.

From what has been said above of the history of the island it will be seen that remote as it lay, and insignificant as it was in extent, people from the British shores or Scandinavia might have been there on pilgrimage, or going to or returning from piratical expeditions, or special missions to the lords of the isles or the chieftains of Clanranald. So graves may contain relics of prehistoric days, or of any of the races, Irish, English, Saxon, Danish, or Norwegian, or even Spanish, whom adventure or misfortune brought to the west coast. In such circumstances unless the art expended on the sword-handle tells its birth-place, it were in vain to attempt to guess its history.

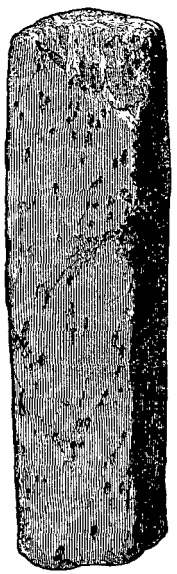


Fig. 8. Whetstone found with the Sword (actual size).

2. Some five or six hundred yards south from Kildonan were found the corroded fragments of an iron sword and a hone (fig. 8) as in the former case,—portions of a wooden scabbard, the wood with the fibre of cloth impressed on it—small fragments of woollen and linen cloth ornamented with, or at least in close contact with fur,—also a brooch of bronze, more or less silvered, of the well-known Thistle form (fig. 9),

[1] Photographs "Fra Christiania Oldsamling" in the Society's Library.

but without any lines engraved on it to represent the Thistle more perfectly. This I understand is the first brooch of the kind that has been discovered on Scottish soil, as distinguished from that of Orkney.

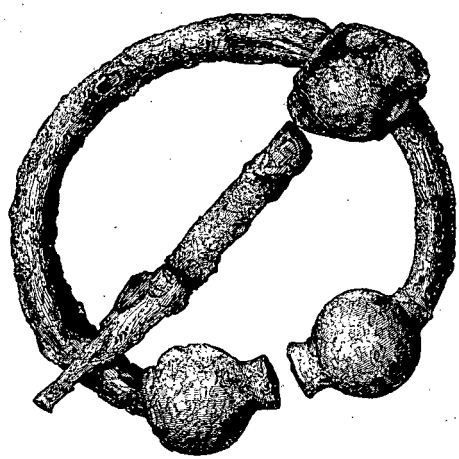


Fig. 9. Brooch of Bronze, silvered
(2½ inches diameter).

These articles were found in a tomb which I commenced opening in October 1875, with the assistance of Mr Arthur Joass, who feels a deep interest in antiquarian research, and has much acquaintance with ancient houses and tombs in Sutherland and other parts of the Highlands. It was after I left that the search was completed. Though the character of the mound was unmistakably sepulchral, a depression in the centre seemed to indicate that the tomb had been at some time disturbed; so it was with agreeable surprise that I heard of the find from Mr Joass, who sent along with the objects discovered a plan and section of the excavation made (figs. 12, 13). He wrote, "I found what I take to be fragments of a Claymore, also a Brooch and ornamental point of a scabbard. Along with the above I found bits of cloth (fig. 10) of coarser and finer texture. The point of the sword was about a foot long, but it went in three pieces when taking it out. There was no body found, only very small fragments of bone. I found no fragments of pottery or of flint. A

side and end of the tumulus seem to me to have been regularly built, and there were stones enough taken out that would have built the other side and end, which makes me think either the sides fell in or it has been disturbed at some other time, and that the large stones formed the boundary of the grave on that side." The object alluded to by Mr Joass (fig. 11) as probably the ornamental point of a scabbard, turns out, on further examination, to be the *agrafe* or fastening of a leathern belt, not unlike those found in Frankish graves of the Merovingian period. A small portion of the leather of the belt is still preserved, but part of the buckle is wanting. Further search and riddling of the soil has disclosed an iron axe-head perforated for a handle; a piece of wood in an iron

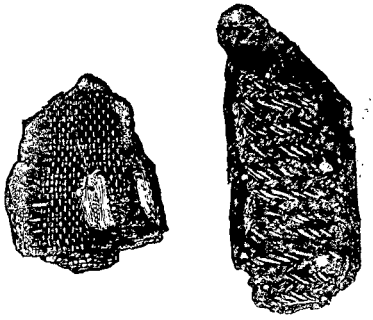


Fig. 10. Specimens of Cloth of coarser and finer texture found in the Tumulus.

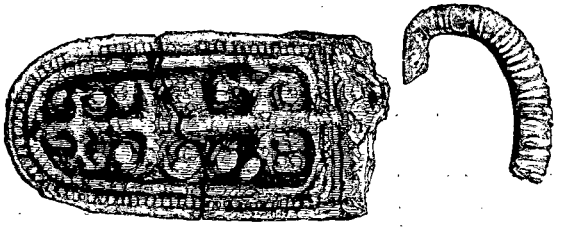
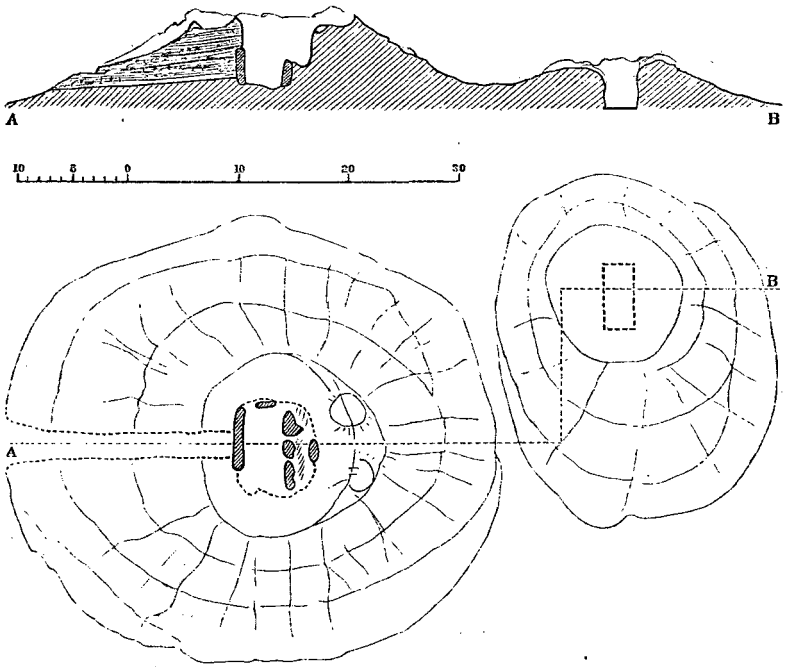


Fig. 11. Agrafe or Belt-Clasp (actual size.)

socket, the iron socket seems to have been pointed and also to have knobs on it, but is much corroded; a portion of a sickle, not unusual in graves of the Viking period, and also an amber whorl and beads.

3. Opening another tomb of much smaller size and but a few yards

farther south, has led to the discovery of another bronze brooch (fig. 14), but of inferior work, some splinters of flint, an iron sword, and beads



Figs. 12 and 13. Plan and Section of Tumuli.

of amber and jet; also a hone much worn with use (fig. 15), and with a hole bored at one end, as if the owner hung it by his girdle as an article he was certain constantly to want.

4. In 1861 some workmen asked leave to take a heap of stones to metal a road about 130 feet above the sea, and nearly a quarter of a mile from it. Being struck with the uniform circular form of the heap, the leave given was limited to taking enough from the outside to disclose the character of the mound. It was soon apparent that they had come upon a circular tomb made to a large extent of sea-rolled boulders filled up with gravel. There were three rows horizontally, and the inner row consisting of two rows

one above the other. In the interior was found a stone cist 16 to 18 inches deep, about 33 inches long, and about 19 inches broad. The sides were

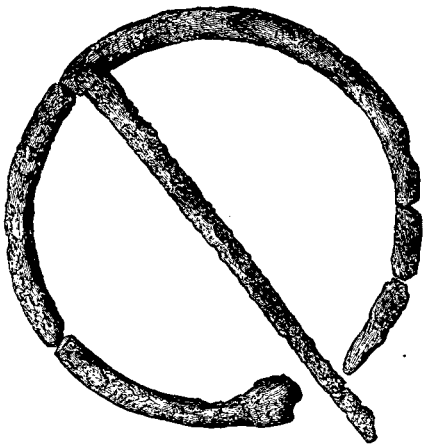


Fig. 14. Bronze Brooch (2½ inches diameter).

made of thin stones; a thick flat rough stone formed the top. The bottom was covered with a fine earthy matter, containing some small pieces of charred bones, but no urn or ornament of any sort was found.

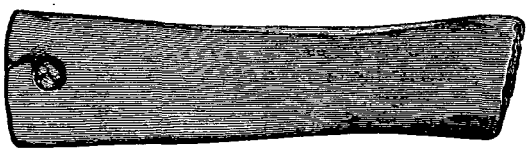


Fig. 15. Whetstone.

In ploughing a field some 250 yards to the west, the flint arrow-head exhibited was found.

5. On a rising ground on the shores of the bay of Laig, on the side of Eigg, next Rum, was a long cairn which bore the name of Sithean or

Sguman-nan-Cailleach. It was not distinguishable from many other heaps formed of stones gathered yearly from the adjacent furrows of cultivated ground. Stones being wanted twenty-five years ago to fill up a newly cut drain, the cairn offered a ready supply; and the removal of the stones disclosed two cists, or stone coffins, made of flat stones set on edge and laid lengthwise. Some articles of stone and bone are said to have been found in them, but to have been immediately dispersed (the stone hatchet exhibited may have been one). Tradition is silent as to what Cailleach gave name to the mound.

6. The two pieces of carved wood about 6 feet long now exhibited, were discovered lying some 30 feet apart by men who were draining a moss also on the west side of the island. Their form at once suggests the idea of their having been the stem and the stern post of a boat; there was found beside them a piece of wood, but it unfortunately was not preserved, the wood being quite soft when first found, and running in a slanting direction across the line of the drain, was cut across with a spade. It was stated to me that the sharpening of the end of what, until better informed, I shall call the stem, was done with his spade by the man who found it.

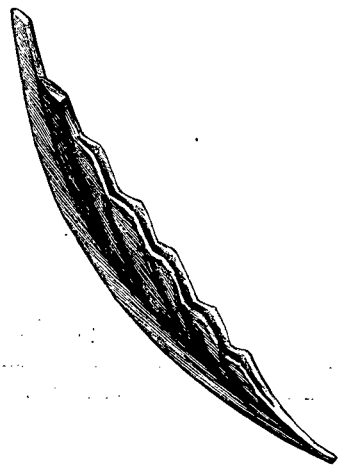


Fig. 16. Stem-Post (?) of a Boat, dug up at Laig (6 feet 4 inches in length).

These pieces of wood (figs. 16, 17), if they really belonged to a boat, are quite different from anything that has hitherto been found in mosses. The stem has been carefully formed by some sharp instrument, and it evidently points not to a canoe but to a boat built of planks; but instead of the planks being fixed on the outside of the stem, they seem to have been intended to be fastened inside so as to be protected by it as by a guard.[1]

[1] It is stated that in some Yorkshire villages the stems of the fishing-boats are protected by sheathing on this principle.

The planks might have been nailed together, sharpened to a point, and inserted in the groove made in the stem, and what is called an apron could then have been put inside the planks and the whole bolted together; but it will be observed that there is no mark of any perforation either for nails or pegs or for thongs. The piece of wood which appears designed for the stern-post has never been so carefully finished as the other, probably the planks would have been attached to it in the ordinary way—no guard was needed. Clearly it was intended to rise like the stem two notches above the highest plank. It may be that the third piece of wood was intended for a keel, that the stem had been got ready, and the stern-post was in course of preparation when the operation was interrupted by some of the calamities which befell the island.

Fig. 17. Stern-Post (?) of a Boat, dug up at Laig (6 feet 7 inches in length).

Hardly less interesting than these pieces of timber themselves is the fact of their having been found where they were.

Extending from the sea below the farmhouse of Laig is a low tract little above high-water mark, and once a moss. It is about half a mile long from west to east, and about quarter of a mile broad from north to south. It is separated from the sea by a ridge consisting chiefly of gravelly soil, rising gently from the sea-level at the west to from 30 to 50 feet at the east. At the west end, close by the sea, are parallel ridges of rolled shingle, storm-barriers, cast up by the waves—those next the sea without vegetation, those further removed now grass-grown. It used to be said that the whole flat was formerly a lake, which the Norsemen used as a winter harbour for their galleys; while a gap in the ridges of shingle, probably an old water channel, was pointed out as the canal by which they

drew them to the lake. In confirmation of this theory, a rock was pointed to which is called "Sron na laimhrig," or the landing-point. This rock, from the sea, looks quite unimportant, and is not of use either in guiding to a safe anchorage or in enabling any danger to be avoided; but its name derives new meaning from the discovery of the remains of the boat.

7. With the view to improving the outfall of the drains referred to, the channel of a stream, which has worked its way through the gravel where some 20 or 30 feet high, was being deepened and widened. The workmen came upon (*a*) the under jaw of a pig, (*b*) the antler of a deer, (*c*) a flat annular brooch of bronze, of singularly simple form, and unadorned.

I am not aware of any feature about the brooch that fixes its age, but it is of a late type.

There is still in the island an old blind man[1] who chaunts Ossianic poetry, never yet published, which he received by tradition. It would have been interesting to think that some of the wild boars and stags hunted by Fingal's dogs had been come upon. But of red deer there is not even a tradition, unless their memory be lithographed in a rock known as Cnoceildeig, or the Hillock of the young hind. My colleague Professor Turner, who has examined the pig's jaw, thinks it is probably that of a domestic pig, although, from the animal not having attained its full dentition, he cannot say with a feeling of absolute certainty that it may not have been a wild boar.

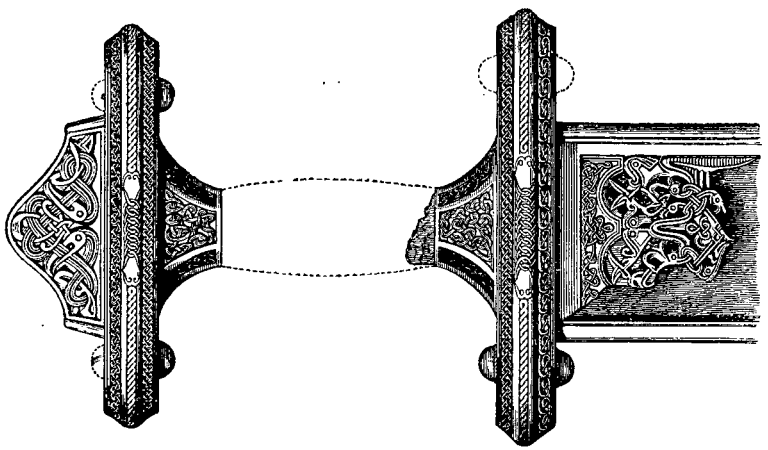
Thus have we glimpses of island history for a thousand years, from the martyrdom of St Donnan to the death of Ranald the piper. But who can assign their true dates to the flint, the iron, the bronze, the amber, the jet, the timber, not one of them products of the island[2]—probably not even one of them wrought by an island artificer,[3] for it is more than likely that the boat-builder was a Norseman; yet they are not only all found in the island, but specimens of each are discovered in a single tomb.

[1] While this paper was passing through the press, this interesting old man died.

[2] Perhaps the arrow-head may not be flint, but formed of agate or chalcedony, which are found in the island.

[3] The name of a little glen, "Lag a Gow," the smith's hollow, suggests a qualification of this remark, and may point to the time when the use of arms was so universal that the smith must have been an important artificer. There is also a rill of water known as the burn of the tanner. Both names may, however, be of quite modern origin.

These few remarks are suggested by the articles exhibited, but it would take a long time to describe all the traces of ancient life in this or any other locality. There are many artificial circular mounds unexplored; several stone monuments unsculptured, but doubtless recording some event in the island history; two circles of stones, either "Druidical" on a small scale, or indicating the sites of wooden tent-like huts; two enclosures on points of rock formerly insulated at high water, and one bearing the name of Ru na Crannag, indicating the days when the stockaded island castle was important, whether the water surrounding it was salt or fresh, as in the case of the cranogs that have recently attracted so much attention. There is at least one fresh-water dwelling, that above alluded to. But it is needless to enumerate them or suggest the existence of other such objects of interest till they have been explored and their true character ascertained.



Sword-hilt found in a Grave-Mound at Ultuna, Sweden.

SWORD-HILT OF THE VIKING TIME, FOUND IN THE ISLAND OF EIGG.

(7¼ inches in length.)