

I.

DUNADD, GLASSARY, ARGYLLSHIRE; THE PLACE OF INAUGURATION OF THE DALRIADIC KINGS. BY CAPT. F. W. L. THOMAS, R.N., V.-P. S. A. SCOT.

It is not generally known that there is an engraving of a footmark on the top of Dunadd, which most probably indicates the place of inauguration of the kings of Argyll.

The parish of Kilmartin, during summer and autumn, is indeed "a smiling land," where moorland, hills, forests, fields, rivers, and marsh, together form landscapes of great beauty; and it likewise abounds in pre-historic and mediæval monuments. Among the most interesting is Dunadd, which is upon the border of the parish; it was submitted to a minute inspection, and it was then that my companion, the Rev. M. Macphail, observed the rock-engraved footmark, which, however, is locally well known to those who take an interest in antiquarian subjects; and, it is also noted on the Ordnance Map, sheet clx. as a "Trough."

Dunadd, pron. Doon-att, and written Dunad, Dunatt, Dunat, in the Irish Annals, and which translated would be Add Castle, takes its name from the river Add.¹ The river Add is generally accepted as representing the Gaelic *Amhainn Fhada* (where the *Fh* is silent), and meaning the Long River.² Dunadd is also called *Dun Monaidh*, i.e., Bog-castle,

¹ In 1353 Afenad (in North Knapdale) is named. Or. Pr. vol. ii. part 2, p. 41. I cannot identify it; it is possibly by Loch Sweyn.

² This etymology is not quite satisfactory. It is not called *Amhainn Fhada* by the inhabitants, nor can I find it so written; the Irish annalists write neither *Fh* nor the terminal *a*; and I should expect a long river to be called *Amhainn Mhór*. I have given reasons elsewhere for supposing that *Δογγον ποταμού εμβολαί* does not mean the mouth of the Long River, but the mouth of the river Lochy, in Linnhe Loch (the real name of which is *Liune Dubh*=the Dark Gulf). (Proc. S. A. Scot. vol. xi. p. 202.) But the river is certainly, by comparison, long; several lakes are called Loch Fad, not Fada; and "Macvurich tells of John Lord of the Isles, that he went to Mac Cailin (Campbell), and gave him all that lay between *Abhuinn Fhada* and *Alt na Sionach*, at *Braigh Chinntire*, i.e., neck of Kintyre or Tarbert; that is, he gave him, as we know from charters, Knapdale."—*W. F. Skene*.

which is very appropriate, as it forms the most conspicuous object in *Monadh Mòr*, in modern Gaelic *Mòine Mhòr*, *i.e.*, the Great Bog, or Moss of Crinan. Malcolm mac Kenneth (A.D. 1005–1034)¹ is called in the Albanic Duan *Rì Monaidh*, *i.e.*, King of Monadh, which is explained as referring to Dun Monaidh, in Lorn.² Dun Monaidh, appears as the residence of King Eochadh Buidhe,³ who died A.D. 629;⁴ and one of the fabulous ancestors of Macleod is “Monach Mor, from whom Dun Monnaigh is named.”⁵ Again, Moni is said to have been a Norwegian prince who landed in the district of Crinan, and is commemorated in the Pass of Moni;⁶ here there is an amusing confusion between the Gaelic *Mòine* = a peat-moss, and *Magnus*, in Gaelic, *Manis*, King of Norway. In the tale of Deirdri, Dun Monaidh⁷ is named, as well as the neighbouring Dun Treoin,⁸ now Duntroon. Bishop Carswell’s Gaelic Prayer-book⁹ bears to have been printed at “Dun Edin, whose other name is Dun Monaidh.” Now Edinburgh was never called Dun Monaidh, but the Carswell family were settled in Kilmartin, and Bishop Carswell himself was also rector of that parish, so that Dun Monaidh = Dunadd would be more familiar to him than Dun Edin, and he has confused the two together.

The Moss of Crinan, or *Mòine Mhòr*, is a large flat, containing three or four square miles; it is but fifteen or twenty feet above the mean level of the sea, and, during winter, is frequently inundated by the Add, which flows along the east side of Dunadd.

Dunadd is situated one mile to the westward of Kilmichael Inn, and one and a half mile to the northward of the inn at Carnban on the Crinan Canal: it rises abruptly from the plain,¹⁰ and is a small conoidal—or

¹ Celtic Scotland, vol. p. 384.

² Todd’s Nennius, p. 285.

³ Battle of Magh Rath, p. 46.

⁴ Chron. Picts and Scots, p. 347.

⁵ Uls. Jour. Arch. vol. ix. p. 100.

⁶ N. S. A. Inverness-shire, p. 45.

⁷ Gael. Soc. Trans. vol. i. p. 118.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 108.

⁹ Reprint, Edinburgh, 1873.

¹⁰ The Rev. R. J. Mepleton states that about twenty-five years ago, when planting was being done on the estate of Poltalloch, it was considered, with great good taste, that the rough bold outlines of Dunadd were more impressive in their natural condition than if the hill were covered with trees.

rather from some aspects, a saddle-backed—hill, whose base is about 200 yards in diameter, and height 176 feet. The face of the hill is broken, craggy, and precipitous on the south-west, north-west, and northern sides, and it could there be easily made unassailable by filling up the gaps with masonry; which, however, does not now exist. The south-east side of the hill is steep and craggy at the base, becoming more so as we proceed upwards, till, at the height of 120 or 130 feet, advantage has been taken of an escarpment on which to found a wall of defence.¹ The wall abuts against a perpendicular crag on the north side, and, enclosing a horse-shoe-shaped area, again abuts against a crag on the south-west. The wall is a complete ruin, but on the south side the foundation stones for 8 or 10 yards are *in situ*; they are large undressed blocks, one of them is 5 feet long; elsewhere, the stones of which the wall was built are small, averaging a cubic foot.

The port, or gateway, faces the south-east, and is formed by a straight, narrow, natural gap or ravine; it is about 9 feet broad and 17 yards long, enclosed by perpendicular native rock from 8 to 10 feet high, and over which there was, no doubt, a roof, on which the defending wall was carried. The gateway has a steep incline.

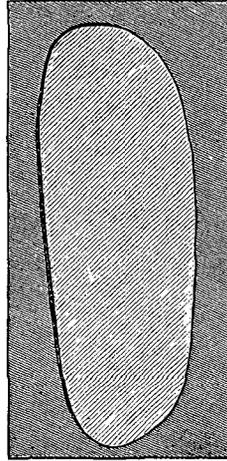
The area, or court, which may be regarded as a broad terrace, is very broken and uneven, and encumbered by huge ice-borne blocks; it is approximately 66 yards from north to south, and 45 yards broad. No ruin of ancient masonry was visible; but on the north side, close to the wall, there is a large well, which is, no doubt, fed by a spring. Tradition tells that the water in the well used to ebb and flow with the tide, and also that the well was intentionally filled up, to prevent accidents.²

The west side of the area is protected by the apex of the hill, which was also the acropolis, or citadel of the dún. It is of small extent, perhaps 30 × 12 yards; it is generally secured by upright crags, which

¹ See Sheet CIX. Ord. (6 inch) Map of Scotland.

² Handbook for Ardrishaig, Crinan, Loch-Awe, and Pass of Brandir, p. 40.

were surmounted by a wall, through which, on the east side, was the entrance by a natural gap—a continuation of that used for a gateway to the area below. The area of the citadel is formed by two rocks with a gap between; that on the south side is the highest, and the growth of nettles indicates an enriched soil. About 10 or 12 feet below, and to the northward of, the highest point, the living rock is smooth, flat, and bare of sward, and in it is engraved a depression of a footmark,¹ not of a naked foot, but such as would be made when the foot is clothed by a thick stocking or *cuaran* (see woodcut). The engravure is for the right foot; and it exactly fitted my right boot. The footmark is sunk half an inch deep, with perpendicular sides, the surface is smooth or polished, and the outline is regular. (It is not likely to remain so long, so that a cast of it is desirable.) It has probably been sheltered by the turf till recently. The footmark is 11 inches long, nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad where broadest, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the heel. When a person stands with his foot in the depression, he looks a little easterly of north. About four yards southward from the footmark is a smooth-polished and circular rock-basin cut in the living rock; it is 11 inches in diameter and 8 inches deep.²



Footmark cut in the rock on Dunadd, Argyllshire (11 inches long).

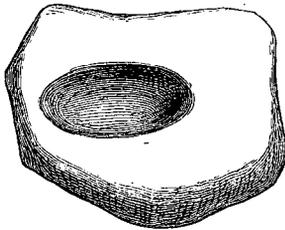
¹ "There is on the top of Dunadd a mark that strikes me as being interesting; it is like a large axe-head, or a rough outline of a foot. My impression is that it may have been the spot on which the chief would place his foot when succeeding to the headship of his tribe. The footmark was always considered among the people here as a mould for an axe-head, and I was rather laughed at for suggesting an inaugurating stone."—*Rev. R. J. Mapleton*.

² The question of the meaning and use of rock-basins is a large one. Some, both those that are portable and those sunk in the living rock, were undoubtedly used for shelling barley. One found in the ruins of a chapel at Mealista, Uig, Lewis, is

It is strange that Dunadd is not named in either Statistical Account of Glassary, but the obtrusion of the Northmen has probably obliterated all tradition of its importance. It was first recognised by Mr Skene as the capital of Dalriada, and a drawing of it, made by James Skene, Esq. of Rubislaw, bears date 29th July 1833. In a lecture at Poltalloch in 1850, Mr W. F. Skene brought the subject before his audience, and from that time Dunadd has been properly appreciated.

An account of the Dalriadic Scots or kingdom of Argyll will be found in "Celtic Scotland;" it must suffice to mention here that in A.D. 498 the Scots of Dalriada, *i.e.*, from the Route,—the present north-western part of Antrim,—crossed to Alba and settled in Islay and Kintyre, from whence they conquered the districts of Còwal, Argyll, and Lorn, and established the kingdom of (Scottish) Dalriada; till, in A.D. 741, they ceased to exist as a separate kingdom, having maintained their conquests and independence for 243 years.

inferred to be a font (*see* woodcut). It is an oval depression, 14×7 ins., and 4½ ins. deep, sunk in a rude, unshaped boulder of whinstone, 20×16 ins. on the



Stone Basin found at Mealista, Uig, Lewis (20 ins. in length).

upper face, and about 10 ins. thick; it is now at Lews Castle. There are three rock-basins in a row on the upper edge or side of a flagstone which forms part of a cromlech in the cemetery of the Mackenzies of Coul, Ross-shire. All of these, at any rate, could hold fluid. But rock-basins are also sunk in the vertical faces of standing stones, as at Fodderty, Ross-shire, where there are two on opposite sides of a monolith in the churchyard. These hollows certainly suggest some form of consecration which must be supposed to have been performed before the stone was erected, and that at Fodderty may have been turned over and "twice blessed."—*Cf.* Sir J. Simpson's "Archaic Sculpturings."

The Rev. R. J. Mapleton remarks, "Such basins are (or were) very common about here; sometimes on a rock, sometimes in a large boulder. On one of the islands near Lòch Craignish there are three or four of these rock-basins. Again, on the banks of Loch Kielziebar, North Knapdale, there is one; and I have seen several on loose blocks in various parts. The people here say that they were made and used as mortars to separate the husk from the barley."

Dunadd was besieged in A.D. 683,¹ and again in A.D. 736; for in that year it is told in the Annals of Tighcarnach, that Angus Mac Fergus, King of the Picts, devastated the region of Dalriada, took Dunad, burnt Creic, and put Dondgall and Feredach, the two sons of Selbaiche [king of Dalriada] in chains.² The same events are noted in the Annals of Ulster,³ where Dunad is written Dunat (as it is at present pronounced). The Creic⁴ is probably Cowal, for it is called in the tract on the Scots of Dalriada "Crich Comgail," *i.e.*, the territory of Comgail.⁵

But if there is but little notice of Dunadd in authentic history, there is no want of it in romance; for in the ancient story of the Battle of Magh Rath, Congal Claen, King of Ulster, having been served with a hen's egg instead of one from a goose, at a feast given by Donal Mac Aedh, King of Ireland, took great offence and became a rebel. Congal, wishing to raise an army, crossed over to Alba, and came to Dun Monaidh (Dunadd), where Eochaidh Buidhe, King of Alba (*recté*, King of Dalriada), had assembled his nobles. Congal met the king's sage and poet, Dubhdiadh (pron. Du-jea) the Druid, outside of the assembly. After salutations, Congall went to inform King Eochaidh of his business, who told Congall that he could not go to Ireland himself, but that he would send his four sons. Congall went to visit the sons; they contended among themselves as to which of them should entertain him. Congall was sorry for this, and consulted the Druid about it. Dubhdiadh advised Congall to say that he would stay with him who should get the regal cauldron from the king's house. This was a magic cauldron, called *Caire Ainsican*, which must have been exceedingly valuable in hard times, for no matter how much or how little was put into it to be boiled, there was always enough for everybody. Each of the sons sent his wife to borrow

¹ Ann. Uls. Chron. Picts and Scots, p. 351. Celtic Scot. vol. i. p. 264.

² Chron. Picts and Scots, p. 75. Celtic Scot. vol. i. p. 290.

³ *Ibid.* p. 357.

⁴ "I do not think the identification of Creic with the word Crich tenable; the former is a proper name, and apparently a Dun, but the latter is a general word, meaning any 'district.'"—*W. F. Skene.*

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 314.

the cauldron. Aedh's wife claimed it because her husband never refused anything to anybody; his hospitality exceeded that of all the world. Congall Menn's wife wanted it because her husband obtained victory in every battle, and got plunder. Then Donald Brec sent his wife, who thought to get it because her husband was a good ruler, and so generous that if Sliabh Monaidh (the hill of Dunadd) were made of gold, he would distribute it in one hour. The wife of Suibne then went for the cauldron, and claimed it on account of her husband's hospitality. For in

The house of Suibne,
 Suibne, son of Eochaidh Buidhe,
 The number which fit it standing
 Would not if sitting.

And those who find room sitting
 Would not if lying.
 One man with the share of four,
 Four around the bed of each man.

One hundred goblets, one hundred cups,
 One hundred hogs, and one hundred joints,
 And one hundred silver vessels
 Are yonder in the middle of his house.

But they were all refused, for King Eochaidh, by the advice of his Druid, determined himself to feast the host of Alba and the King of Ulster,—about which he could have no difficulty, having such an accommodating kitchen utensil. On the morrow Dubhdiadh and the other Druids were directed to foretell the result of an expedition against the King of Erin; and the Druids predicted misfortune. Nevertheless the four sons of Eochaidh Buidhe and the host of Alba, went with Congall Claen to Erin, where they were all slain at the Battle of Magh Rath, excepting Dubhdiadh the Druid, “who swam across to Scotland without ship or barque, with a dead hero tied to his leg.”¹

¹ Battle of Magh Rath, p. 321.

In the romantic tale of the "Death of the Children of Usnach," Deirdri, the heroine, after their decapitation, makes the following lament, which is not without poetic merit :—

Farewell east to Alba from me,
 Delightful the sight of her harbours and vales ;
 Where the sons of Usnach pursued the chase ;
 Delightful to sit o'er the prospect of her cliffs.

On a day when the nobles of Alban were feasting,
 And the sons of Usnach, deserving of love,
 To the daughter of the lord of *Dun Treoin*,¹
 Naisi gave a kiss unknown.

He sent her a frisking roe,
 A hind of the forest, with a fawn at its foot,
 And he passed to her on a visit,
 On his return from the host of *Inbher Nos*.²

* * * * *

What wonder that I have fondness
 For the regions of Alba of smooth way ;³
 Safe was my husband among them ;
 Mine own were her steeds and her gold.⁴

Further on the sons of Usnach are described as—

Three dragons of *Dun Monaidh*,
 The three heroes from the Red Branch ;
 After them not alive am I ;
 Three that broke every dreadful fray.

¹ Now Duntroon, Kilmartin, Argyllshire. The dún here named may have been the vitrified fort near the present Duntroon.

² Inverness.

³ *Reidh róid*. A great stretch of poetical licence ; but the poet may be ironical here.

⁴ Gael. Soc. Trans. p. 113.

Three that were reared with Aisi,¹
 To whom regions were under tribute ;
 Three columns of breach of battle ;
 Three that were fostered at *Sgathaigh*.²

Three fosterlings reared by *Uathaidh*,
 Three heroes most lasting in might ;
 Three renowned sons of Usnach ;
 'Tis irksome to be without them.³

From these ancient tales we turn to a much later period of romance, when Finn and his companions had developed into extraordinary and magical proportions ; for a story is current that when Ossian abode at Dunadd, he was on a day hunting by Lochfyneside ; a stag, which his dogs had brought to bay, charged him ; Ossian turned and fled. On coming to the hill above Kilmichael village, he leapt clean across the valley to the top of Rudal hill, and a second spring brought him to the top of Dunadd. But on landing on Dunadd he fell on his knee, and stretched out his hands to prevent himself from falling backwards. "The mark of a right foot is still pointed out on Rudal hill, and that of the left is quite visible on Dunadd, with impressions of the knee and fingers."⁴

¹ "Aisi is said to have had a military school in Skye, in conjunction with her father, Otha (*Uathaidh*). Cuchullan is said to have been bred there, and to have had Conloch by this military lady. The sons of Usnach and Connal Carnach are stated to have been reared there also."—*Ibid.* p. 118.

² Skye. "Sgathaigh is not Skye, which never appears written thus. The place is a vitrified fort in Lochscaivaig, still called Dunsghathaig."—*W. F. Skene*.

³ Gael. Soc. Trans. p. 119.

⁴ Handbook for Ardrishaig, &c., p. 41, where Dunadd is said to be the abode of the fairies. "With respect to the 'footmarks' about Rudall, I once heard that such a thing or things existed ; and on going to examine them found them in abundance ; but they were natural marks in the rock. In some of these rocks there are concretions of various sizes, and of a long, oval shape, composed of several layers or coats (similar to an onion), with a central core ; where these are exposed on the surface, half worn through, and lying flat in their longest diameter, they have a very close resemblance to a footmark. This may have given rise to the legend of the footmarks on or near Rudall."—*Rev. R. J. Mappleton*.

I had not heard of this legend when at Dunadd, and cannot tell what marks, if any, have led to the notion of the impression of fingers. The footmark is that of a right foot, and the adjacent rock-basin is the fabulous impression of a knee.

The formalities observed at the entrance of a chieftain upon the government of his clan are thus described by Martin¹—"A heap of stones was erected in form of a pyramid [*i.e.*, *carn* or *tumulus*], on the top of which the young chieftain was placed, his friends and followers standing in a circle round about him, his elevation signifying his authority over them, and their standing below, their subjection to him. One of his principal friends delivered into his hands the sword worn by his father, and there was a white rod delivered to him at the same time.

"Immediately the chief Druid (or orator) stood close to the pyramid, and pronounced a rhetorical panegyrick, setting forth the ancient pedigree, valour, and liberality of the family, as incentives to the young chieftain, and fit for his imitation."

The orator, Martin explains, is in their language called *Is-dane*, which he writes for *aois-dan* = a poet; from *aois* = people, and *dana* = poetry.

Further on,² when noticing the history of the Macdonalds, he quotes from the MSS. of Mac Vurich, the antiquist or shenachie of Clanranald; and of Hugh Macdonald, the historian of Clan Huistein or Slate Macdonalds; and Martin's account of the installation of a chief, seems partly taken from the latter. A copy of Hugh Macdonald's MS., in modern spelling, is now known as the Knock MS., and the greater part has been printed in "Coll. De Rebus Albanicis, or Proceedings of the Iona Club." As the book is scarce, I quote what bears on the present subject:—

"I [have] thought fit to annex the ceremony of proclaiming the Lord of the Isles. At this, the bishop of Argyle, the bishop of the Isles, and seven priests, were sometimes present; but a bishop was always present, with the chieftains of all the principal families, and a ruler of the Isles." Here "ruler" is a translation of *Reachdaire* = judge, or lawgiver; and it

¹ Western Isles, p. 102.

² *Ibid.* p. 212.

was also the chief brehon or judge who presided at the inauguration of O'Neil.¹ "There was a square stone, seven or eight feet long, *and the track of a man's foot thereon*, upon which he stood, denoting that he should walk in the footsteps of his predecessors, and that he was installed by right in his possessions. He was clothed in a white habit, to show his innocence and integrity of heart, that he would be a light to his people, and maintain the true religion. The white apparel did afterwards belong to the poet by right." O'Dowd was nominated by O'Caomhain, a sub-chief of a senior branch, who stood on O'Dowd's right hand; after the nomination, O'Caomhain walked three times round the newly-elected chief, and had his battle-dress and charger; and the poet, Mac Firis had the steed, battle-dress, and raiment of O'Caomhain."² "Then he was to receive a white rod in his hand, intimating that he had power to rule, not with tyranny and partiality, but with discretion and sincerity. Then he received his forefathers' sword, or some other sword, signifying it was his duty to protect and defend them from the incursions of their enemies in peace and war, as the obligations and customs of his predecessors were. The ceremony being over, mass was said after the blessing of the bishop and seven priests, the people pouring their prayer for the success and prosperity of their new-created lord. When they were dismissed, the Lord of the Isles feasted them for a week thereafter; [and] gave liberally to the monks, poets, bards, and musicians."³

About 1831, when the "Fairy Knowe," in the parish of Carnyllie, Forfarshire, was being reduced or removed in the course of agricultural improvement, there was found, besides stone cists and a bronze ring, a rude boulder of about two tons' weight, on the under side of which was scooped the representation of a human foot. Probably some distinguished chieftain had erected the tumulus, not only as a tomb for himself, but also as a place of inauguration whereon the engraved stone, by which the right to rule was conveyed, was placed.⁴

¹ Genealogies, &c., of Hy-Fiachrach, p. 432, I. A. S.

² *Ibid.* pp. 109, 434.

³ De Reb. Alb. p. 297.

⁴ Kil. Arch. Jour. vol. v. p. 451; Jervise's Epitaphs, 249.

Mr Jervise further notes that a small undressed block of granite lies by the side of the mountain stream of the Turret, in Glenesk, near Lord Dalhousie's shooting-lodge of Millden, and upon it the figure of a human foot, of small size, is very correctly and pretty deeply scooped out. This is called the "fairy's footmark."¹

There is (or was), in Lady Kirk, at Burwick, South Ronaldsay, Orkney, a large stone which, according to the Rev. G. Low, tradition says St Magnus used as a boat to ferry him over the Pentland Firth, and for its service laid it up in the church, where it is still preserved. "Its shape is boat-like, but that it ever served that purpose is of the complexion of many other monkish stories which in times past were greedily swallowed by the unthinking vulgar. The stone,—which is about four feet long, two broad, and eight inches thick, seems to have been taken from the next sea-beach, where many such are still to be found,—has engraved on it the prints of a man's feet, which probably furnished the first hint of the miraculous use of it, and may point out the true one, which there is little doubt but it was a stone appropriated to expose delinquents at the church in times of Popery."²

But this theory of the meaning and use of the sculptured stone is negatived by the fact that in 1529, when the inhabitants were still "Papists," no notice is taken of the stone being used for such a purpose; on the contrary, John Bellenden, archdeacon of Moray, states the legend to this effect:—South Ronaldsay is an island inhabited by robust men; it has a church near the sea-shore, where there is a very hard stone called "a grey whin," six feet long and four broad, in which the print of two naked feet is fixed, which no workman could have made. Old men narrate that a certain Gallus [Magnus?], being expelled the country, went on board of some ship to find an asylum elsewhere, when suddenly a storm arose by which they were exposed to great danger, and at last were ship-

¹ Kil. Arch. Jour. p. 451.

² Anderson's edition of "Low's Tour through Orkney and Shetland, in 1774," p. 27 (not yet published), where there is a drawing of the stone. Mr Anderson has also supplied me with many notes on "footmarks."

wrecked; he at length jumped on to the back of a whale, and vowed, humbly praying to God, that if he was carried safely to shore, he would in memory, &c., build a church to the Virgin Mary. The prayer being heard, he was carried safely to the shore by the assistance of the whale. The whale having become changed into a stone of its own colour, he placed it in that church where it still remains.¹

The date of this legend shows that the stone was not sculptured for the purpose suggested by Mr Low, while the probability is altogether in favour of its having been the inauguration stone of a pre-Norse Pictish chieftain, in South Ronaldsay.



Footmarks cut in a stone at Clickemin, Shetland.

Sir Henry Dryden mentions² that on a stone now in the causeway leading through the Loch to the Broch of Clickemin, near Lerwick, in Shetland, there are two sinkings in the shape of human feet, whether contemporary with the occupation of the fort is uncertain. Sir Henry has given figures of these, which are here repeated.

Mr Anderson informs me that in the parish of North Yell, Shetland, "on the hill-side, above the hill-dyke of Bracon, is the stone containing the 'Giant's Step,' of which the other is said to be over in Unst. The mark of the 'Rivellined' foot is pretty fair. I conjecture it is the stone on which in Celtic times the king of the district was crowned."³

It is not necessary to do more than refer to the coronation stone of the ancient kings of Scotland, formerly at Scone, but now in Westminster Abbey, as it has been the subject of a learned memoir in our "Proceedings." We are there told that it was the custom of the Celtic tribes to inaugurate their kings upon a sacred stone supposed to symbolise the monarchy.⁴ Whatever may have been the original size and shape of the coronation

¹ Barry's Orkney Islands, p. 443.

² Archæol. Scot. vol. v. p. 203.

³ Note headed "Antiquities in the Island of Yell, Shetland, by Mr J. T. Irvine," in one of Mr George Petrie's MS. Notebooks, now in Library of S. A. Scot.

⁴ Pro. S. A. Scot. vol. viii. p. 99.

stone, it seems to have been dressed at some period to fit it into a chair.

With regard to the rock-engraved footmark upon Dunadd, the poet Spenser states the custom to be among the Irish, on the death of one of their chief lords or captains, that they presently assemble at an appointed place to choose another, when they elect, not the eldest son, nor any one of the children of the deceased lord, but usually his eldest brother or cousin; and the next eldest is elected as Tanist or successor if he should survive the chief-nominate. They place him who is to be chief or captain upon a stone, always reserved for that purpose, and placed commonly upon a hill,—“*in some of which I have seen formed and ingraven a foot, which they say was the measure of their first captaine's foot,*”—whereon, standing, he takes an oath to preserve all the ancient customs of the country inviolate, and to deliver the succession peaceably to his tanist, and then one who has that peculiar office delivers a wand to him; after which, descending from the stone, he turns round first one way and then the other.¹

Many hard words have been launched at Giraldus Cambrensis, in some cases by persons who should have known better, for what he has said about the inauguration of a chief of Tirconnell. He evidently related what he had been told and what he believed to be true, which is much more praiseworthy than the suppression of that which is unpleasant to national vanity. There is nothing related by Giraldus that may not be literally correct. It must be remembered that the eating of horseflesh was the prominent distinction between Christian and pagan, between the Irish and the Scandinavians of the ninth and tenth centuries. Now, Turgesius (*i.e.*, Thorgisl) was prince of Tirconnell, for he made himself king of the northern half of Ireland, and would certainly have had horseflesh at his installation and other feasts; and with regard to the use which is said to have been made of the “bree,” it is the misrepresentation of an oblation or sacrifice which would appear as unmeaning to the Christian Irish as smearing a man with oil would have been to the pagan Danes.

¹ Ancient Irish Histories, vol. i. p. 11.

Examples of sculptured footmarks do not seem to be common in Ireland, at least but few are recorded. Nor is it to be supposed that there was a rigid uniformity of practice at the inauguration of a Celtic chief. O'Donovan has a valuable memoir on the subject in the "Genealogies, &c., of the Hy Fiachrach," but I do not observe any other notice of the usage of an engraved footmark than that by Spenser.

In the garden of Belmont, on the Greencastle road, about a mile from Londonderry, there is (1837) a block, called St Columba's Stone. The surface is a rude rectangle, whose diagonal is $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, but the thickness is not stated. Near the middle



Footmarks on
St Columba's
Stone.

is the sculptured impression of two feet, right and left, and 10 inches long. Petrie supposes this to have been the inauguration stone of the kings of Aileach, brought to its present place by some local chief of Derry.¹

On the northern slope of the Clare hills, a little south of the public road leading from Gort to Feakle, and about midway between those two towns, in the townland of Dromandoora, on an exposed and tolerably smooth surface of a rock, is the engraved outline or impression of a foot clothed by a sandal; the carving or impression is 10 inches long, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches where widest, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the narrowest part. Near it is another sculptured rock, on which is a figure somewhat resembling the caduceus of Mercury, and belonging to the same order of idea as some of the sculptured figures on cromlechs in Brittany.² In the same locality are two cromlechs.

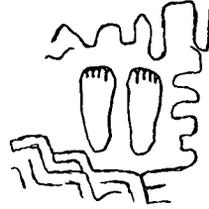
The inauguration stone of the Mac Mahons still exists on the hill of *Lech*, formerly called *Mullach Leaght*, or the "Hill of the Stone," three miles south-west of Monaghan, and is marked on an ancient MS. map of Ulster, in the State Paper Office, *Mullagh-lost, so called of a stone there, on which Mac Mahon is made*. Sir Henry Bagnall writes to Lord Burghley, from Newry, September 9, 1595, "Sythence the writinge of

¹ Ord. Mem. of Londonderry, p. 233.

² Pro. R.I.A. vol. x. p. 441.

my L^{re}, old Oneyle is dead, and the Traitor (Tyrone) gone to the stone to be made." The impression of the foot was effaced by the owner of the farm about the year 1809. The stone measures 6 feet 5 inches long, by 4 feet 4 inches broad.¹

On the sea-shore, near the creek of Croësty, in the commune of Arzon, Morbihan, Brittany, is a tumulus called *Petit Mont*, and at its foot, on the north side, is a cromlech. On the face of one of the upright stones is sculptured the impression of two naked feet, nearly surrounded by engraved meandering lines, which have a peculiar character, but to which no meaning can be attached. Nearly all the stones of this cromlech are sculptured, but the descriptions would be unintelligible without plates. Handled celts



are recognisable, and on one of the stones is a group of small pits, such as would be made by the impression of the point of a finger. As it has been proved that in many cases the stones which were to form the sides or roof of a cromlech or tumulus were sculptured before they were put in position, we may suppose that in this example the cromlech was the tomb of a chief who was the last of his race, and that the inauguration stone of his family was used to form part of his monument.²

Footmarks cut on an upright Stone of Cromlech at Arzon, Morbihan.

The meaning and use of the foregoing examples of sculptured footmarks can be explained by the theory that they were symbolical marks of sovereignty, carved in a sacred rock or stone, and that by the chief-elect placing his foot or feet therein he assumed dominion of the land, while the subsequent presentation to him of a rod (*alias* wand, sceptre, stick, &c.), admitted and confirmed his right to rule the clan. This formed what may be styled the civil part of his inauguration; but the heads of the

¹ Shirley's Dominion of Farney, p. 74.

² Delandre's Morbihan, p. 214. Recueil des Signes Sculptés sur les Monumens Mégalithiques du Morbihan, par L. Davy de Cussé.

great religious societies, who seem to have always been of noble descent, had also great power.

In reference to the possible use of footmarks to symbolise dominion, we have to notice their occurrence on the "Archaic Sculpturings" of the British Isles, and on the *Hällristningar*, Swd., *Hällristningar*, Dan., *i.e.*, rock-carvings of Scandinavia.

At Clonmacnoise, Kings County, Ireland, close to the chapel of Clonfinlough, there is an "esker," or ridge, on which are several boulders of an arenaceous limestone; one of them is called the "Fairy's Stone," and the "Horseman's Stone"; the stone is flat, $9\frac{3}{4}$ by $8\frac{1}{4}$ feet, and slopes to the south. The surface of the stone is described as covered with cup-shaped hollows, which the writer supposes to have been originally natural, but perhaps artificially deepened, and in some added, to complete the figure. The cups, as is usual with this class of monuments, are not really placed in any order; but the hollows have been connected by incised lines to form crosses, or taken advantage of to indicate the pommels of rudely-marked daggers; or they have been elongated and, by the connection of two of them, made to resemble the impression of the human foot, of which several occur on the stone. There are what seem to be several varieties of the ancient Irish ring-brooch. The carvings, which are about an inch deep, appear to have been formed by a rudely-pointed tool or pick.¹

In many parts of Sweden, but particularly on the west-coast, there are figures of great antiquity sculptured on granite rocks (*Hällristningar*), whose surfaces have been polished by glacial action. The figures, which represent men, animals, ships, arms, &c., often form tableaux of considerable dimensions. On almost all of these are those cups (*ecuelles*), so frequent among the "Archaic Sculpturings" of Britain and Brittany, and to which no meaning can yet be assigned. But what concerns our present subject is that footprints and shoe-marks (sandals) are frequently represented indiscriminately with other figures. At Järrestad, in Scania, is a rock, with a considerable slope towards the east, about 16 × 12 metres,

¹ Kil. Arch. Jour. vol. v. p. 361, and Plate 43.

on which there is a great variety of figures. There are not less than fourteen ships, but seven of these are drawn upside down; two of the



Footmarks cut on Rocks in Sweden.

ships are distinctly under sail. On one of the ships a man appears to be blowing a trumpet, and another is holding a shield or lance. In eight of the ships the crews are indicated by thick lines. There are many somewhat oval figures, with a line drawn across their narrowest part, which are supposed to represent the sole of the foot, or otherwise sandals; they are scattered here and there, mostly in pairs, but also many are grouped together. This kind of figure is seen sculptured on many rocks in Bohuslän, but it is very rare to find some which are engraved at Järrestad and which have the greatest resemblance to the print of a naked foot in moist clay. There are also cruciform circles, or four-spoked wheels; a rude figure which appears to be intended for a horse; a small figure of a man on horseback; celts, with handles; double spirals; a spiral terminating in a trident, &c.¹

On the Lökeberg, Bohuslan, there is a group of about ten pair of footmarks associated with "cups," ships, &c.; and at Backa, Bohuslan, there are engraved several pair of foot, or rather shoe, marks, along with a confused group which almost seems to be intended to represent a naval battle.² But it must be observed that there is seldom any unity of design in these "Rock Sculptures;" the individual figures are drawn promiscuously and have no relation to each other; this is the characteristic of "Archaic Sculpturings."

Footmarks and foot-print figures are also known in Denmark. At Sonderby Mark, Horns Herred, Frederiksborg Amt, there is a remarkable

¹ Congrès International, Stockholm, tome 1^{re}, p. 478.

² Congrès International, Stockholm, tome 1^{re}, pp. 466, 467.

long-barrow (*Langhøj*). On two of the roofstones are the usual "cups," and on the third there are two non-corresponding footmarks (for they are both *left* feet) by the side of each other.¹

It seems well established that the Scandinavian rock-sculptures belong in general to the Middle Bronze Age, a term which is technically useful and no doubt sufficiently indicates a certain era; but at the same time it has been proved that the best tempered bronze tools are incapable of cutting, in granite, the figures so freely drawn upon the rock surface.² Be this as it may, it cannot be doubted that the *Hällristningar*, with their faithful representations of bronze swords and axes, belong to a very early age; it is therefore of great interest to find footmarks and footprints engraved upon them. By the comparative method we may conclude that they were then a symbol of sovereignty and came into use at that period of advancing civilisation when metals were worked and ships were built and sailed.

In Italy, tablets dedicated to Iris and Hygieia have been found upon which footprints were engraved; but the meaning of the symbol is unknown. It is questioned, in the case of Iris, whether the footprints do not symbolise a state of rest after the accomplishment of a hazardous journey; and, in the votive tablet to Hygieia, the naked footprints may refer to disease in his feet, of which the donor has been cured by the goddess? or do they record the gratitude of some Roman soldier who escaped the amputation which was inflicted on his comrades by Hannibal?³

Many notices of "sacred" footprints in Asia are collected in Tennent's "Ceylon"⁴ but these mythical impressions are not limited to that continent; for, in the legendary history of Uganda, situated at the north-west angle of Victoria Nyanza, in Equatorial Africa, Kimera (the third in descent from Ham?), "was of such size, strength, and weight, that his

¹ Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed, 1875, p. 418.

² Congrès International, Stockholm, tome 1^{re}, p. 485.

³ Tomasinus, De Donaris, p. 64.

⁴ *Loc. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 132-140.

feet made marks in the rocks, and the impress of one of his feet is shown to this day by the antiquarians of Uganda in a rock situated not far from the capital, Ulagalla. It is said that this mark was made by one of his feet slipping while he was in the act of launching his spear at an elephant.”¹ This remarkable statement of African folk-lore correlates admirably with the belief in the impression of Adam’s foot in Ceylon, on one side, and of Ossian’s foot, at Dunadd, on the other; and these legends serve to show that the human mind, at the same stage of civilisation, will, from the same facts, draw the same, although absurd, conclusions.

But to return to the capital of the Dalriadic Scots. Dunadd, *alias* Dun Monaidh, is of great importance archaeologically, for in it we have a dated example of a regal dún or hill-fort which was for some time the capital of the Dalriads and the scene of the inauguration of their kings. We know that it was occupied and unsuccessfully defended in A.D. 736, apparently by the sons of Selbaiche, king of Dalriada. We see that the wall of defence was built of undressed stones, which were of moderate size, and without lime-mortar. The absence of stone walls within the court or area indicates that the dwellings were of wood; and, if we adopt the tradition preserved by Spenser, the footmark is the impression of the foot of Fergus Mor Mac Erca, who was the first king of Dalriada and who died in Scotland in A.D. 501.² Although it can be of little personal advantage to get the length of a man’s foot at the beginning of the sixth century, yet it at least supplies an ethnological fact; and, as the rock-basin may fairly be considered as having some relation to the footmark, an era is indicated and a theory suggested for those cavities.

¹ Stanley’s Dark Continent, vol. i. p. 349.

² Skene’s Celtic Scotland, vol. i. p. 140.