

V.

NOTES ON TWO ADDITIONAL RUNIC RISTINGS IN ST MOLIO'S CAVE,
HOLY ISLE, LAMLASH BAY, ISLAND OF ARRAN. By J. C. ROGER,
F.S.A. Scot.

In a paper by Dr Daniel Wilson, printed in vol. xvii. of the Society's *Proceedings*, p. 52, he refers to me by name as differing from him in regard to his reading of the earliest noted inscription of St Molio's Cave. That is the "Nikulos" risting, which, he concludes, is the only one known to me. "Though the Runic inscriptions of this cave," he says, "cannot compare, either in number or diversity," with those of the Maeshowe tumulus, "they merit greater attention than they have yet received."

In view of these remarks, I submit sketches of two additional ristings in St Molio's Cave, which have apparently escaped the notice of Dr Wilson. They are not given in his recent paper to the Antiquaries, nor are they to be found in either of the two editions of the *Prehistoric Annals*.

The first of these is here represented (fig. 1) to half the size of the original. It reads IOAN-I-URE, the URE apparently a place name. The Runic character representing the letter U is doubtful, the modern Roman letter D having been carved over it. The second is what Professor Stephens reads as a man's name in the nominative case =UEDLUKAR. The KA is a *bind*. It is here represented also to half the size of the original in fig. 2.

A cast of the risting, which Dr Wilson, in his paper to the Antiquaries reads $\text{I} \Psi \Lambda \text{I} \text{R}$: (AMUDAR), was submitted by me to Professor Stephens, who confirms Dr Wilson's reading of this name, except that it is in the nominative case, and not, as he supposes, in the genitive. This, at least, is the opinion of Professor Stephens. AMUDAR, the latter explains, is equal to AMUNDAR. The question of AR = the common R, as a nominative singular ending, is treated by Professor Stephens in his *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. iii. p. 143. I should mention

that Professor Stephens reads the former of the two ristings IOAN I URI, not, as I have it, URE. The reason is that the tracing of my original sketch sent him was imperfect, in that I omitted the circular point from the centre of the straight line, which forms the letter E.

In regard to the risting in dispute, I should like to be allowed to place on record the opinion of Professor George Stephens, who in June 1884 wrote me as follows:—"I will add to my *Old Northern Runic Monuments* your explanation, that in the St Molio Cave the word is really THÆNE=this. Of TH for þ we have Runic examples. I will only



Fig. 1. Runic Inscription in St Molio's Cave. (From a Drawing by J. C. Roger, half size of original.)

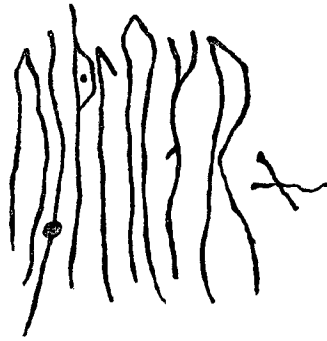


Fig. 2. Runic Inscription in St Molio's Cave. (From a Drawing by J. C. Roger, half size of original.)

mention one. The Northumbrian brooch in my *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. i. p. 386 (p. 125 of my *Hand Book* just published), has the þ in the name ALCFRITH, spelt with TH, not with þ, consequently we must read NIKULOS THIS RISTED (cut)." I was not aware there were other known examples of deviation from the common rule, but never had the smallest doubt that the intermediate word of the "Nikulos" risting could be anything other than the Norse *thane*. Dr Wilson himself writes me that my cast "will scarcely suffice to convince" him "that any genuine Rune-raister spelled thane (t,h,a,n,e), and not, as on the Laws Crescent plate, and elsewhere, with the *t* and *h* conjoined." It is, however, only fair to add, that this statement was volunteered by

the learned Principal before I communicated to him the substance of Professor Stephens' letter on this subject.

The drawings now submitted are copies of original sketches made by me more than twenty-five years ago, and, so far as my recollection serves, are about the size of the actual risings graven on the rock.