

NOTICE OF TWO SCULPTURED STONES AT KIRK ANDREAS, ISLE OF MAN, ONE BEARING AN INSCRIPTION IN BIND-RUNES; WITH NOTICES OF OTHER BIND-RUNE INSCRIPTIONS. BY GEORGE F. BLACK, ASSISTANT IN THE MUSEUM.

For the knowledge of the two stones described in the following paper, I am again indebted to Mr P. M. C. Kermode of Ramsey, Isle of Man, now a Fellow of this Society. In a letter to me, describing the finding of the stone bearing the bind-rune inscription, Mr Kermode says:—"I find by my notes that in November 1886, when examining the other Kirk Andreas crosses, I caught sight of a lichen-covered stone at the head of a grave-mound, and projecting about six inches from the surface. Something prompted me to pull it up, and I was delighted to discover it to be a piece of a beautiful cross, bearing an inscription in characters I had never before seen."

The stone, which is formed of the ordinary blue clayslate of the island, is unfortunately imperfect at both ends, and now measures only 22 inches in length by $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches in breadth and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in thickness. Judging from the sizes of the other Manx crosses, in which the length equals about three times the breadth, Mr Kermode has been led to infer that this stone would originally be about 2 feet 8 inches in length. The front of the stone (fig. 1) is divided into three vertical panels, the centre one of which bears a pattern in relief, formed of two double bands crossing each other and interlacing with oval rings at regular distances. A similar type of ornamentation occurs on three of the Kirkmichael cross-slabs (Cumming, *Runic and other Monumental Remains of the Isle of Man*, figs. 1b, 4a, 13c), on two of the Kirk Andreas cross-slabs (Cumming,

figs. 9*b*, 10*b*), the Malew slab (fig. 15*a*), the Kirk Braddan cross-slab (fig. 16), the Kirk Conchan cross-slab (fig. 25*a*), and on the cross-slab at Maughold (fig. 33). The panel to the right is occupied by a peculiar form of the tendril-pattern, no similar example of which is given in Cumming's book.



Fig. 1. Stone, with Bind-Rune Inscription, from Kirk Andreas
(from a photograph by George Patterson, Ramsey).

The remaining panel to the left is filled with the inscription, which, from its excessively complicated form, may well be considered unique. This inscription, which has hitherto baffled all examination, is imperfect

at each end, and now contains only twenty-five compound letters or groups of letters. Following immediately after the fifteenth letter are two dots in the form of a colon, which is a mark of division common in Runic inscriptions. Two similar dots follow after the eighteenth group. The difficulty in reading an inscription of this kind is to know the precise power or powers to be assigned to any one group, and this difficulty is still further increased by the apparent absence of vowels. In the inscription the side strokes in some instances appear to have been misplaced, owing to the exigencies of space, which adds greatly to the difficulty of reading the characters. Thus, the first three groups might be read, (1) *mtl*, *ky*, *lthth*, or *tlm*, *yk*, *thkth*, *ththk*; while No. (5) might be read *flb*, *fnb*, *fno*; *lbl*, *blf*, *lfb*, *lbf*, *lfl*; and so with *fnb* and *fno*, which may be read in as many different ways as the letters will form groups.

In an ordinary inscription containing one or two bind-runes, but having all the other letters standing by themselves, it becomes at once easy to determine the order in which the bound letters are to be taken. The best known ordinary inscription containing bind-runes is the one carved on a rock at Barnspike, Cumberland, and containing no less than twenty-one bind-rune groups. The inscription reads:

$\overline{\text{BARAN}} \overline{\text{HRAIT}} \overline{\text{AT}} \overline{\text{GILLHES}} \overline{\text{BUETH}} \overline{\text{IAS}} \overline{\text{UAS}} \overline{\text{DAUTHER}} \overline{\text{I}} \overline{\text{TRIKU}} \overline{\text{RAB}} \overline{\text{D}} \overline{\text{UAULKS}}$
 $\overline{\text{AT}} \overline{\text{FADRLAND}} \overline{\text{NU}} \overline{\text{LLANERKASTA}},$

and is translated by Prof. Stephens, "Baran wrote this in memory of Gillhes Bueth, who was done to death in a truce by Robert d[e] Vaulks, for his patrimony, now called Lanercost." Here the groups of letters marked above with a small horizontal stroke are bind-runes.

Some time ago I forwarded copies of the photograph of the inscribed face of the stone to several Runic scholars, and the two most eminent living authorities on runes, Prof. Stephens of Copenhagen, author of the *Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England*, and Prof. Sophus Bugge of Christiania, have replied that they are unable to make anything of the inscription. Dr Sven Söderberg, Privat Docent of old Northern Languages in the University of Lund, wrote suggesting that the letters remaining on the stone might be part of a calendar. Regarding this opinion, however, Mr Eirikr Magnusson of the Univer-

sity Library, Cambridge, writes to me: "You are quite safe in not accepting the calendar theory of Dr Söderberg. There are enough runes on the fragment to prove positively that such could not be the case. The characters would necessarily stand in such a case either for the seven dominical letters, consequently every seventh letter would be identical in form, or they would stand for the golden number, consequently leave open spaces for non-lunation days; but there is no indication of either being the case."

My own attempt to read the inscription has met with no better success, although I have combined the letters in every way possible, without misplacing the groups or taking them out of their regular order. For the present, therefore, we must be content to regard the inscription as insoluble.

The reverse side of the stone is partially scaled off, but enough of the original surface remains to show the ornamentation of two panels. That of the centre panel is the common tendril-pattern, which is characteristic of the Manx sculptured stones. The panel to the right contains the key-pattern, which also is common to the Manx stones, though not occurring with such frequency as the tendril-pattern. All the patterns are ornamented or emphasised by incised median lines, and are all in relief.

The second Kirk Andreas stone, Mr Kermode tells me, was found as far back as 1848, in pulling down the wall north of the church, after which it lay for many years in the rectory garden, but has now been placed in the porch at the west end of the church of Kirk Andreas. As neither the stone nor its inscription is mentioned by Cumming or Munch we may infer they were unaware of its existence. Strangely enough, neither is it mentioned by the late Dr Vigfusson in his paper on the "Manx Runic Inscriptions," published in the *Manx Note Book*. The first published notice of the stone is by Mr Romilly Allan in his Rhind Lectures on *Early Christian Symbolism*, where he gives, p. 275, outline drawings of both sides of the stone and the inscription on the edge.

The stone is like the one already described, in being formed of blue clayslate, and in being imperfect. It measures 14 inches in length by

7½ inches in breadth and 2¼ in thickness. The front of the stone (fig. 2) shows a cross of a form not usual on the Isle of Man stones, which usually show the glory. The shaft of the cross bears the chain-cable



Fig. 2. Sculptured Stone at Kirk Andreas—Obverse (from a photograph by George Patterson, Ramsey).

pattern, which terminates at the junction of the arms in a small cross with an out-turned scroll on each side. This peculiar chain-cable ornamentation is often found on Manx crosses, but is extremely rare elsewhere. It forms a prominent feature of the ornamentation of the

Gosforth cross in Cumberland, England, and on a cross at Penmon in

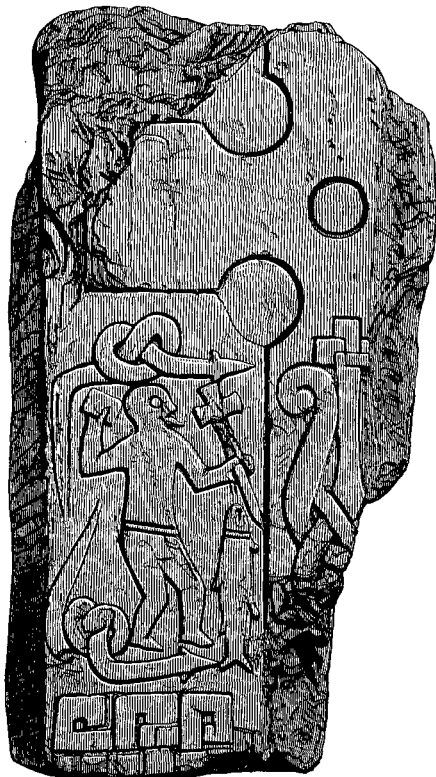


Fig. 3. Sculptured Stone at Kirk Andreas—Reverse (from a photograph by George Patterson, Ramsey).

Wales (Westwood, *Lapidarium Wallie*, pl. 84).¹ To the left of the cross-shaft is the figure of a man holding a spear in his right hand,

¹ In 1868 Dr Carl Säve drew Prof. Stephens' attention to a wooden spoon found during excavations in Upsala, which is also ornamented with the same pattern. On a granite font in the old church of Säm the same form of ornamentation occurs, according to Prof. Stephens, *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, iii. p. 98.

while with his left he holds an animal by the upper jaw. Perched on the man's right shoulder is a large bird, resembling an eagle, and above his left shoulder is a serpent tied into a knot. In the corner below the right arm of the cross is a pattern formed of a loop interlacing with a circle. The right arm of the cross bears a small square panel, formed of interlaced ornamentation, while two similar squares occupy the remaining space above the arm. On the lower part of the stone, below the animal's legs, is another interlaced pattern, of peculiar form.

The other face of the stone (fig. 3) is occupied by a large cross of the same form as on the obverse, and which also bears the same chain-cable ornamentation on the shaft. To the right of the shaft is the figure of a man holding a cross and a book, and treading on the head of a serpent, the body of which is also knotted. In front of the man is a fish with

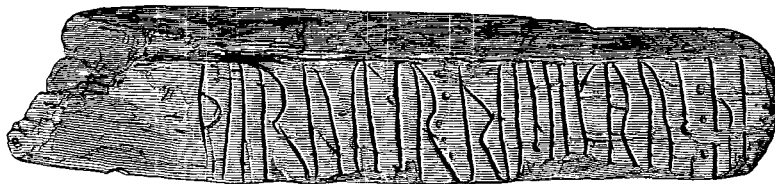


Fig. 4. Runic Inscription on Edge of Stone (from a photograph by George Patterson, Ramsey).

the head pointing upwards, while above the man's head is another serpent, knotted in the same manner as the others. The space at the bottom is filled with a large square of interlaced ornamentation, only the top part of which now remains. One edge of the stone (fig. 4) bears part of an inscription in the ordinary Manx runes, as follows:—**THURUALTR RAISTI KRUS THA[NA]**; that is "Thorwald raised this cross," after some one whose name is unfortunately lost.

The ornamentation of this cross-slab as a whole most closely resembles that of Sandulf the Black, also at Kirk Andreas, and may possibly be of the same date, namely, about the middle of the twelfth century.

OTHER BIND-RUNE INSCRIPTIONS.

Excluding the simple bind-runes, which are common in many inscriptions, there are only three other entire inscriptions in these peculiar characters known to me.

The first and largest of these occurs on the wall of the underground chamber of Maeshowe, and was discovered during the excavations carried out by the late Mr Farrar, an Honorary Fellow of this Society. The inscription, which consists of twenty-two compound characters, is reproduced in fig. 5, from No. 22, pl. xi. of Mr Farrar's account of his excavations. The characters differ considerably in form from those of the other inscriptions, but, like them, it has not yet been made to yield up its meaning. Prof. Stephens attempted a transliteration and translation in 1862, which is published in the Appendix to Mr Farrar's Book, and is as follows:—"BOT ER OKTIL AT SOKUA, SUO IN KOTALANT, SUA INKLANT"—"Boot (blood) money is also to seek, so in Gothland, so in England."



Fig. 5. Bind-Rune Inscription at Maeshowe.

In a letter to me, Prof. Stephens says he no longer regards his translation as tenable, and that he prefers to consider the inscription as still undeciphered. Another and widely-different translation of this inscription was given by the late Mr J. M. Mitchell, in his *Mesehowe: Illustrations of the Runic Literature of Scandinavia* (pl. vi. No. 22), as follows:—"THALK RAEIST THANE RUNER AND INGES SE. L"—"Dalk cut these Runes (for the repose of the) spirit and soul of Inge." This translation, like that of Prof. Stephens, cannot be accepted, as Mr Mitchell followed a very erroneous method in his interpretation of the Maeshowe inscriptions. The inscription is also given by Dr Charleton in the *Archæologia*

Æliana, 1865, p. 138, and No. 22 of accompanying plate, but without any attempt at translation.

The second of the bind-rune inscriptions occurred on the back of the silver boss of a shield, said to have been found in 1694 at Sutton, in the island of Ely, Cambridgeshire, which, unfortunately, is no longer known to exist. It is, however, figured the full size in Hickeys' *Thesaurus*, vol. iii., and reproduced in Prof. Stephens' costly work, vol. i. p. 290, and pl. vii. The inscription, which is imperfect at the beginning and end, and is as yet untranslatable, is shown in fig. 6.

Besides the bind-rune inscription, the boss also bears another in Anglo-Saxon, of the tenth century, which reads, "*Æduwen me ag. Age hyo drihten. Drihten hine awerie ðe me hire ætferie, buton hyo me selle hire agenes willes,*" which may be translated, "Aedwen owns me; may the Lord bless her. The Lord him curse who me from her shall take, unless she gives me of her own free will." The inscription is interesting as showing that the shield belonged to a woman.



Fig. 6. Bind-Rune Inscription on Shield-Boss.

The third example occurs on what seems to be a small amulet of bronze, which was found in 1866 at Maglekilde, Sealand, Denmark. On one side it bears a man's name Siuarth, in ordinary Scandinavian runes, followed by eight characters, of which four are bind-runes and the other four single consonants. The other side also bears a man's name, Olufr, followed by nine characters, of which five are bind-runes and the other four single consonants. This inscription is given in the *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. ii. p. 864, and is assigned by Prof. Stephens to the eleventh century.

INSCRIPTIONS IN TREE-RUNES.

Besides the bind-runes just described, there is another class of secret runes which are variously known as tree-runes, twig-runes, or crypt-runes, and are usually read after the following method:—The ordinary Runic alphabet or futhork consists of sixteen letters, which were usually divided into three groups, thus:—

F U P O R K H N I A S T B L M Y.

Sometimes this method was considered too easy, and the simple plan of reversing the groups was adopted, and the letters consequently assumed the following positions:—

T B L M Y H N I A S F U P O R K.

According to the first method, if we wish to write in tree-runes the word *fat*, we proceed as follows:—*f* is the first letter in the first group, and, consequently, is represented by a perpendicular line with an arm branching off from each side, the one to the left denoting the group and the one to the right the position in the group; *a* is the fourth letter in the second group, and is therefore represented by a vertical stroke with two arms on the left and four on the right; while *t* is the first letter in the third group, and is represented by a vertical stroke with three arms on the left and one on the right.

There are two inscriptions in this particular variety of tree-runes on the walls of the underground chamber of Maeshowe already referred to. The second of these inscriptions is shown in fig. 7, from Mr Farrar's *Maeshowe*, and in Prof. Stephens' *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. i. pp. 237, 238. These inscriptions are read after the second method—that is, with the groups reversed. The first gives us the man's name, *Arliker*, or *Arling*, with the nominative *r* still left. Prof. Stephens supposes a short mark across the vertical line of the first letter to be the mark of a diphthong, and reads the name accordingly as *Aærliker*. I am more inclined, however, to regard this mark as a mere accidental scratch. The second inscription (No. xviii. in Farrar) consists of ten letters, the second five of which differ from the first five, in having the strokes which

denote the class pointing downwards. From this we might readily guess that the letters announce two different words, and such is really the case. These two words are *pisar runar*—"these runes." I am inclined to con-



Fig. 7. Tree-Rune Inscription in Maeshowe.

nect these two words with the name Arling, and, supplying the verb, as has often to be done in Runic inscriptions, to read "Arling these runes (wrote)."

A second and much more difficult variety of tree-runes occurs on the famous Rök stone in East Gothland, Sweden. This stone, which contains the longest Runic inscription known, dating from the ninth century A.D., is carved with three kind of letters: (1) two lines and a half in the old northern characters, which have not yet been deciphered; (2) four other short inscriptions in twig or cipher runes; and (3) the remainder in the later, or common Scandinavian runes. It is with the second kind that we have to deal with here.

On the top and top front of the stone we have two groups, one of which is shown in fig. 8. In reading the runes of this inscription we



Fig. 8. Twig-Rune Inscription on the Rök stone.

commence at the right top, which gives us the number in the group; while that to the right bottom gives us the number of the group. On the left, contrariwise, the top limb shows the number in the group, the bottom one the number of the group.

On this stone, however, the alphabet is divided in a slightly different manner from that of the Maeshowe inscriptions, thus:

FUÞORK HNIAST BLMY.

Proceeding according to the method already described, we get for the first of these inscriptions the word HUAHAN,¹ which is the verb we require to complete the sense of the inscription. The second inscription reads *runibo*, to which are to be added other two letters in ordinary runes on the stone, and all of which added to the above verb give, "(These) runes he biddeth to hew" (Prof. Stephens).

The third of these inscriptions, shown in fig. 9, differs from all others in the manner of arranging the scores. The grouping of the letters is the reversed way, as in the other inscriptions. In this case the first five similarly-formed letters show the position in the group, and the next reversed three the number of the group, which accordingly is *r*. Reading the next two groups below, we get two other letters, which, added to the first, give the word *Rup*. The next group of ten letters are read in the same manner as the ordinary tree-runes, and yield the words *inimr fluoi*, which added to *ruth*, gives *ruthi nimr fluoi*, meaning "the foe takes to flight."



Fig. 9. Cipher-Rune Inscription on the Rök stone.

These twig-runes on the Rök stone are the earliest known, and are of importance as showing the great familiarity of the people with the runes. All the inscriptions on this stone have been ably elucidated by Prof. Bugge in the *Antiquarisk Tidskrift för Sverige*, vol. v., and by Prof. Stephens in his *Old Northern Runic Monuments*, vol. ii. pp. 228-240; and with betterings and additions in vol. iii. pp. 41-64.

¹ The infinitive of the verb to *hew* or *carve*.