

III.

NOTICE OF A FRAGMENT OF A RUNE-INScribed CROSS-SLAB, FOUND
ON INCHMARNOCK, BUTESHIRE. BY GEO. F. BLACK, ASSISTANT IN
THE MUSEUM.

The fragment of rune-inscribed cross-slab which forms the subject of this notice was recently forwarded to the Museum by the Marquess of Bute, K.T., Vice-President of the Society. His Lordship's factor, Mr John Windsor Stuart, states that the fragment was found on the site of the old burying-ground connected with the chapel of St Marnock, on Inchmarnock. In a letter to Dr Anderson, Mr Stuart says: "The farmer showed me the place where he found the rune-stone, and we opened what appeared to be a grave at the place. It was lined with thin, flat stones, evidently waterworn and brought from the shore; but there was nothing inside it, not even a bone. We tried another place—a mound—and found a fragment of soft sandstone, after washing which there appeared some carving like flowers or something of that sort."

The rune-inscribed fragment (fig. 1), which is of schistose slate, measures only $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in greatest length and $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in greatest breadth, and is that part of the slab where the arms of the cross unite with the shaft. The cross has been of the wheel-headed form, standing in relief from the surrounding surface of the slab. The inscription is written in the ordinary form of the later Scandinavian runes, with "stung" *i* for *e*, and extends along both arms of the cross. The

beginning and the end of the inscription are unfortunately broken away, but what remains reads: “. . . KRUS . THINE . TIL . GUTHLE . . . ” Although the latter part of the name of the person to whom the cross was raised is broken away, there is little doubt it was either Guthleif or

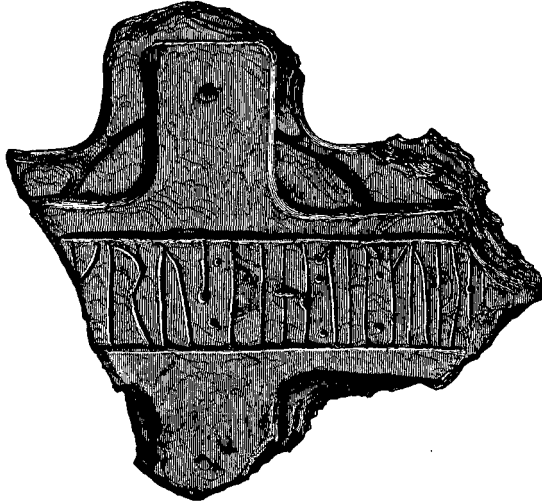


Fig. 1. Rune-inscribed Slab from Inchmarnock.

Guthleik, probably the former. Restoring the last two letters of the former name, the whole inscription would read as follows:—

“(N. N. RAISED) THIS CROSS TO GUTHLEIF.”

In the Norwegian account of King Haco's expedition against Scotland in 1263, a Gudleik Sneis is mentioned as one of a company particularly selected by Haco for his own ship. It would be unsafe to assume, however, that the inscription refers to him, as in all probability it is of a much earlier date. The demonstrative pronoun *thine* is interesting as adding another example to the many ways in which the word is spelled in the later runic inscriptions. On the island of Bornholm, for example, many inscriptions in the later runes have been found,¹ and among them

¹ Vedel, *Bornholm Oldtidsminder og Oldsager*, pp. 405-407.

we find the word spelled in no less than ten different ways, viz.: *thana, thena, thina, thensa, thinsa, thinsi, thesi, thisi, thusi, thitsi*. Prof. Dr George Stephens, in his *Old Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England*, vol. ii. p. 1014, has also collected a large number of spellings of both the singular and plural forms. On the reverse of the fragment there are a number of faintly incised lines enclosed within an incised border, but if meant for runes they are too illegible to be made out.

As regards the date of the Inchmarnock inscription there can be, I think, little doubt that it is of the same age as the runic inscriptions in St Molio's Cave, Holy Island, Arran, which have been described by Sir Daniel Wilson in an earlier volume of the Society's *Proceedings*.¹

A few notes on the history of the island and on the saint after whom it is named are added below.

The island of Marnock or Inchmarnock was gifted to the monastery of Sadell by Roderick of Kintyre, a grandson of Somerled the younger, King of Man, about the year 1220. In 1572 the island was in the possession of the Bishop of Argyll, who granted a charter² (January 22, 1572) "ad feudifirman dimisit Hugoni Cunynghame, fratri suo germano, &c., 5 librat. terrarum de Inchmerno." In 1598 John Stewart purchased the island from Bannatyne of Inchmarnock, who held it in feu from the Bishop of Argyll. Five years later "John Stuart, of Ardmoleis, Sheriff of Bute," complained (January 11, 1603) to the Privy Council that his lands had been invaded by Campbells and others with convocation of "brokin heyland men," to the number of twelve hundred; and among other things "they also reft furth of the said Sheriff's lands of Inchemernok ten sheep, a fat cow, and plenishing worth £20," besides the plenishing and victuals of some of his tenants and their "hail plew irlis."³

The earliest mention of the chapel on Inchmarnock is by Fordun (lib. ii. cap. x.), who describes it as a cell of monks, "Insula Inchemernock et ibi cella monachorum." In Bleau's map of Bute the island is

¹ *Proceedings Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. v., New Series, pp. 45-56.

² *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, 1546-1580, p. 554.

³ *Register Privy Council*, vol. vi. p. 518.

called *Kildavanach*, which means the same. All trace of the chapel is now obliterated.¹

St Marnan or Marnock, after whom the island is named, is mentioned in the Aberdeen Breviary under the date March 1, A.D. 625. The legend in the Breviary is filled with the praise of his virtues, especially his gift of preaching. Men honoured him "tanquam deum in terris." He died at a great age, and was buried in the church of Abirkerdoure (now Aberchirder), which was dedicated to him, in Banffshire, where for long after health was restored to the sickly. His head was washed every Sunday in the year, amid the prayers of the clergy and the blazing of lights, and the water drunk by sick persons on account of its curative properties!² Camerarius says that the saint's head was the object of great devotion in Moravia, and was carried in processions, attended by the whole of the clan Innes, &c., "Habebat Moravia Sancti Marnani caput, quod summa cum pompa et honore (comitante præsertim Innesiorum tribu nobili et perantiqua, quæ tenerrimo in Marnanum ferebatur affectu) ad æris serenitatem a Deo postulandam circumferri solebat. Extat ecclesia Aberkerdoure Dunerno omne irrigata Marnani nomine, peregrinantium ad sacras ibidem Marnani reliquias celebris."³ In the Irish Kalendars, St Marnock is identified with St Ernin, whose day is the 18th of August: "*Ernin .i. Mernócc ó Raith Naoi i nUibh Garrchon .i. Fothartaibh Laighen: ocus o Chill draighnech i nUibh drona, 'Ernin, i.e., Mernoc, of Rath-naoi [Rathnew] in Ui Garrchon, i.e., in the Fotharta of Leinster: and of Cill-draighnech [Kildreenagh] in Ui Drona.'*"⁴

In a perambulation of the lands of Yochry and Achbrady, belonging to the church of Aberkeyrdor, mention is made of an oath, "sworne tharto apone Sanct Marnoy's ferteris (i.e., feretrum),⁵ in presens of the

¹ Reid, *History of the County of Bute*, p. 30.

² *Breviarium Aberdonense*, pars hym. fol. lx. b. lxi.

³ *De Scotorum fortitudine, doctrina & pietate* (Paris, 1631), pp. 108, 109.

⁴ *Marian. Gorm.*; *Cal. Dungall*, p. 223, quoted by Reeves, *Adamnan Vit. Sanct. Columb.*, p. 26. According to Reeves, "Mernoc is a contraction of Mo-Ernin-oc, the prefix denoting *my*, and the suffix *little*, so that the name thus altered conveyed the additional expressions of affection and familiarity."

⁵ The word *feretrum* usually means a "bier" or "coffin," but in mediæval Latin it acquired the additional meaning of a "shirne." See also preface to *Registrum Moraviense*, p. xxx., note.

Kyngis iustice,"¹ &c. Mention is also made² of a great oath being taken, "capite Sancti Marnani presente." St Marnock was patron of the family of Innes, who got the thanedom of Aberchirder through the marriage of Sir Robert Innes with Janet Aberkirder, about the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.³ In 1348, Adam, Bishop of Brechin, in dealing with the lands of the chapelry of Boith, appoints that the Vicar of Monikie (Monzeky) shall every year celebrate the Mass de Sancto Marnoco, "et quicumque pro tempore fuerit vicarius de Monzeky missam de beato Marnoco futuris perpetuis temporibus celebrent seu faciant celebrari."⁴ In the *Liber Ecclesie S. Trinitatis de Scon* (pp. 186, 187) is a gift to the convent "De terra et capella Sci Mernoci infra fossata," dated the 10th of April 1456. In the same chartulary (p. 231) there is a grant "To James Hepburne of Rowandstoun, and Jonet Oliphant his spous, quarter of the toun and landis of Balquhormock and the croft callit Sanctmernockis croft ats the chapel-yaird with the chapell of Sanctmernock with the yaird stane dyikis about the samin and the doucat croft; 15 March 1585." In the "Rentall of the Commoun landis perteaning to the burgh of Sterling sett doune in May 1652, there is an entry under "St Lawrance Altar," of "St Marnokes chappell and yaird at the brig, £2, 0s. Od."⁵

Numerous places in Scotland, besides Inchmarnock in Bute, have been named after this saint. About three miles south from the church of Kilfanan "is to be seen the foundation and a small part of the wall of a chapel surrounded by a churchyard, on a small field called Ard Marnock, *i.e.*, St Marnock's Field. . . . About 300 yards above this chapel, on an eminence, a cell and part of another appears in the end of a pile of stones or *borradh*. . . . There is a tradition in the country . . . that the entire cell was where St Marnock retired to do penance."⁶ The parish of Aberchirder is also called Marnoch. A well near the manse is called the Saint's Well. Here on the second Tuesday

¹ *Registrum de Aberbrothock*, vol. ii. p. 277; see also *Registrum Moraviense*, pp. 247-249.

² *Registrum de Aberbrothock*, p. 278.

³ Douglas, *Baronage of Scotland*, p. 14.

⁴ *Registrum Episcopatus Brechinensis*, vol. i. p. 12.

⁵ *Extracts from Records of the Burgh of Stirling, 1519-1666*, p. 239.

⁶ *Old Statistical Account*, vol. xiv. p. 258.

of March, is held an annual market, called Marnoch Fair.¹ Just beneath the church of Aberchirder is St Marnan's Ford, and on a hill hard by was a stone called St Marnan's chair.² Besides Kilmarnock in Ayrshire, the old church of Leochel was dedicated to him. At Fowlis-Easter a church was dedicated to him by David de Bernham,³ on August 31, 1242. At Benholm, Kincardineshire, there is St Marny's Well; at Little Dunkeld, Perthshire, there is a place called Dalmarnock, and there is another Dalmarnock on the Clyde near Glasgow. There was also an Inchmarnock, a suppressed parish, now united to Glentanner and Aboyne.⁴
