

III.

THE CAPELRIG CROSS, MEARNs, RENFREWSHIRE; ST BLANE'S CHAPEL, LOCHEARNHEAD, PERTHSHIRE; AND A SCULPTURED SLAB AT KILMARONOCK, DUMBARTONSHIRE. BY A. D. LACAILLE, F.S.A.Scot.

THE CAPELRIG CROSS.

In these notes I propose to describe the Capelrig Cross, an early Christian monument, situated only six miles from the centre of the city of Glasgow. Strangely enough it has not, until now, been the subject of a paper given to a scientific society. *The Old and New Statistical Accounts* do not mention it. In his *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Eastwood*, p. 26, the late Rev. George Campbell makes only passing reference to it as a "memorial of early Christianity." When the late Mr J. Romilly Allen read a paper on "The Early Christian Monuments of the Glasgow District" to the Glasgow Archæological Society on 16th November 1900,¹ one of the audience, at the close of the meeting, asked the lecturer if he had seen the Capelrig Cross, as it was not referred to in his address. Since then, I am led to understand, it has not been mentioned in public. Occasionally it was examined by persons walking

¹ *Transactions, of the Glasgow Archæological Society*, vol. iv. (N.S.) pp. 394-400.

in the district who may have been attracted by a brief reference contained in a publication of the Glasgow Corporation Tramways.¹

Its present appearance is such that, at first sight, it might well be regarded as a monolith bearing only some traces of intricate markings. On the 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map (Renfrewshire, Sheet XVII., N.W.) its site is shown almost on the 300-foot contour, and figures as "Cross (Remains of)." When I first saw the cross, it stood neglected in a field about 130 yards north-north-west of the Holm Farm, and a few yards south of a small wood on the lands of the Barcapel estate, in the parish of Mearns. Cattle were in the habit of rubbing against the stone, but remains of a wooden fence which had once protected it existed. I am happy to be able to state that the proprietor of the ground, Sir Thomas Clement, K.B.E., having consented to the removal of the monument to the Art Galleries, Kelvingrove, Glasgow, for preservation, this operation was carried out in June last.

Holm Farm used to be known as Capelrig House, but, when the old residence became unsuitable as a mansion-house, a new one was built about a quarter of a mile to the south-west, and was named "Capelrig" in affectionate memory. Old Capelrig House then became known as the "Holm." About thirteen years ago some of the Capelrig lands, including the Holm and the remains of the cross-shaft, came into the possession of Sir Thomas Clement, whose seat, at Barcapel House, is about a quarter of a mile to the west.

The Capelrig monument is the shaft of a free-standing cross of native indurated sandstone, the top having been broken off. The total length of the shaft is now 7 feet 7 inches. At the base the faces measure 1 foot 6 inches and 1 foot 8 inches in width, and taper upwards towards the lower part of the head, where the width is 1 foot 3½ inches. Twelve inches of the lower part of the shaft form a tenon, tapering to 9 inches in width on both faces. Similarly the sides, which are 8 inches wide at the top, expand to 9¼ and 8¾ inches at the base, and then taper to 6 inches and 5 inches at the foot of the tenon, which was inserted in a mortice prepared for it in the centre of the pedestal or socket stone.

The fact that the shaft before removal stood in its original socket was only discovered during the digging operations necessary before it could be shifted. Other important and interesting discoveries were made while the work was being carried out. Mr Alexander Anderson, in charge of the squad of workmen, tells me that, on lifting the turf, the base of the shaft was found to be surrounded by fair-sized land-gathered stones so firmly packed together that they seemed to support the monument in the ground, as I had surmised. Rich soil was removed,

¹ T. C. F. Brotchie, *The Borderlands of Glasgow*, pp. 122-3.

but all efforts to dislodge the shaft proved ineffectual. When a lower level was reached by the digging party it was seen that the cross-shaft was fixed into a large boulder. All surrounding soil was removed to a considerable depth, and under it was a bed of firm clay into which the base-stone had sunk for 9 inches. By means of chain and tackle the workmen succeeded in raising the shaft, wedging it in the socket of the pedestal if progress became impeded. No mortar had been used to hold the shaft in place. Packed between the surfaces was a mixture of clay and small gravel, which was picked out with no little difficulty to allow the lifting of the shaft, an operation which could only proceed as the packing was gradually extracted.

A close inspection of the site was made previous to the actual lifting of the stone. To the east and south were discovered fragments of flat slabs, showing that in the past there had probably existed a pavement at the base of the monument.

In describing the ornamentation on the cross I am designating the eastern aspect as the front and the western aspect as the back, and the sides to the north and south as the right and left sides respectively (fig. 1).

A restoration of the panels and the carvings they contain, although all damaged and weathered, was feasible. The sides to the north and south presented little difficulty, but the upper panel of the front was not so readily reconstructed. It will be observed from the illustration and description that all the interlaced work on the face, back, and sides is of patterns commonly found on monuments of this class. The back bears but little trace of sculpturing, yet after repeated scrutiny in good light I have been able to make certain of the lower of the two panels. Indeed the back has suffered most; a huge irregular vertical flake, now mostly weathered to a deep furrow, has been broken off, leaving only vestiges of carvings on the side nearer the left or south side. Similarly a large piece of stone has been broken off the front; practically the entire upper panel is defaced, but after careful study the interlaced work was reconstructed on the basis of what remains, and is shown in the drawing.

So badly defaced are the carvings as a whole that no photograph can bring out the different designs in a satisfactory manner. The interlaced work is double beaded. Where the narrow medial channel is to be seen on the damaged bands, the following of the cords is often made more difficult, as this central line, while setting off the sculpturings, unfortunately has given greater scope for natural agencies to perform their destructive work. The interlaced bands on the front and back are so damaged and weathered that only the faintest traces of a medial line can be detected here and there.

By making a drawing from most carefully taken rubbings of the surfaces, I attempt to show the nature of the decorations which ornamented the shaft of this free-standing cross. In the diagram dotted lines indicate reconstruction based on the outlines of the stone and

THE CAPELRIG CROSS

(SHAFT AND PEDESTAL)

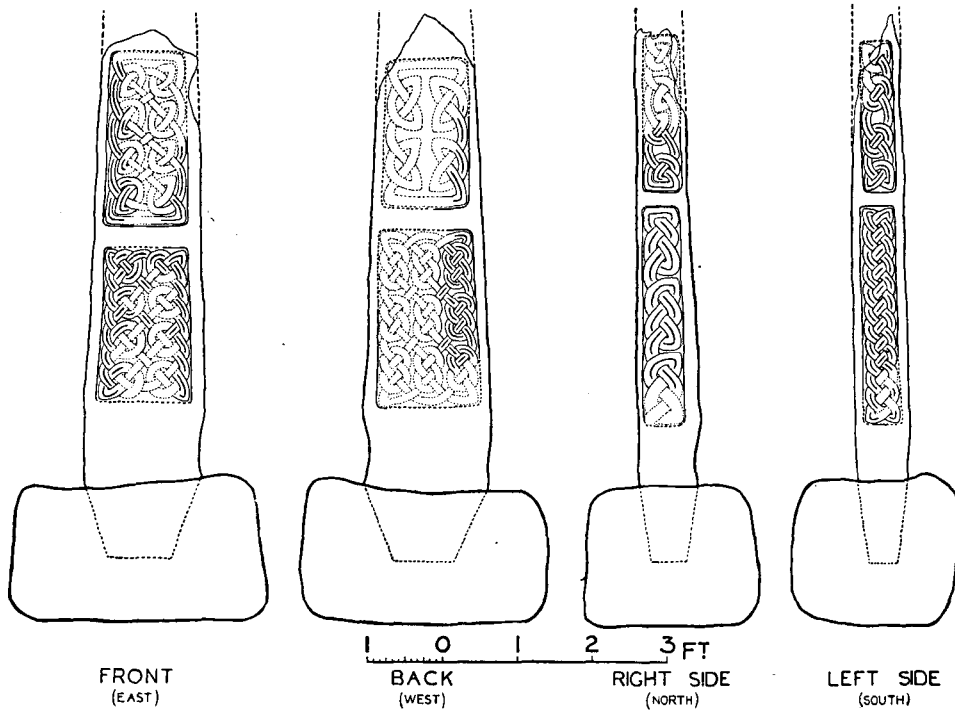


Fig. 1. The Capelrig Cross.

what is visible of the panels and their interlaced work. Only what is now discernible is shown by full lines.

The front or east face has borne two panels. The upper of the two is badly damaged, but its outline exists on the left side and at the base, except for an inch or so near its centre, where the large vertical break, becoming less pronounced, intervenes, as well as a part extending more than half-way up on the right side. The cords on the left are broken away, save where they run close to the edge of the

panel, and here they are quite clearly defined, as are small portions of cords next these and nearer the centre. Along what remains of the outline on the right side of the panel can also be detected fragments of bands. Fortunately there is enough remaining on the left side, and a little above the bottom of this panel, to show that the interlaced work was a pattern produced by a vertical row of four loops facing downwards. So little remains on the right side that one cannot be positive as to the arrangement of the loops which existed, yet it can be assumed, without much fear of error, that there was, as on the other side, a vertical row of four loops, but facing upwards. Combined with the left side the scheme shown is derived from an eight-cord plait.¹ It will be noticed that the lowest band follows the panel outline instead of crossing in the centre. This is an unusual feature, but it occurs on a number of monuments. Although there does exist a slight break in the middle, so very little is actually missing that it is quite obvious the cord could not run otherwise than parallel to the outline.

While the lower panel bears no sign of mutilation, it is sadly defaced by weathering in the centre for practically its whole length. The vertical outlines are entire; the top lacks a few inches and the outline at the base is missing. At the sides the cords are fairly clear, and those at the top discernible in good light. The not uncommon scheme is a combination of eight pairs of loops arranged in a double row; four loops on the left side face to the right and four on the right face the left. This pattern is derived from a ten-cord plait.²

Identification of the interlaced work here is made somewhat difficult by the deplorable effects of chemical action on the stone, which at this part, and to a lesser degree on the right side, was exposed to easterly and north-easterly winds by which were borne the impurities of the Glasgow atmosphere. So impregnated are the parts affected by the destructive chemicals that the stone is quite black.³

The back of the cross-shaft bears the remains of two large panels, the upper one now being reduced to faint traces of markings at the bottom right-hand corner. About 9 inches of the vertical and less than 6 inches of the horizontal outline remain with small fragments of cords. I venture to suggest, in spite of the extremely scanty traces of sculpturings, that the pattern which figured here consisted of four

¹ *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. ii., fig. 658A, p. 257.

² *Ibid.*, pt. ii., fig. 587, p. 226.

³ While the better preserved Arthurlee cross-shaft, which is now scheduled as an Ancient Monument, is comparatively well situated in its present location in the garden of Arthurlee House, steps should be taken in its case, as well, if not by placing it under the shelter of a roof, at least by treating it effectually against weathering and the chemical-laden atmosphere of the growing industrial town of Barrhead.

Stafford knots arranged in two rows placed vertically along the right and left sides of the panel. Placed so, the interspaces form a very clearly defined cruciform figure. This scheme, derived from a six-cord plait, is not usual in broad panels as it leaves much blank space, albeit in this case it has not an unpleasing appearance. The combination is illustrated in *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. ii. fig. 598, p. 232. A broad panel on the Arthurlee cross-shaft bears two rows of three Stafford knots each. In the pattern on that monument the cord at the bottom runs parallel to the base of the panel, thus giving additional support to the suggestion as to the scheme here. Moreover, this particular feature is similar to that in the corresponding panel on the face.

The outline of the lower panel exists for almost its full length downwards on the right and for 1 foot 9¼ inches upwards on the opposite side. At the left-hand bottom corner the base outline is discernible for only 1½ inch. Corresponding to the remaining outline on the right can be noticed faint and much weathered interlaced work for a little more than a third of the width of the enclosing panel. Fortunately, enough remains to make the identification and reconstruction of the pattern fairly simple. There originally existed a scheme derived from a twelve-cord plait and disposed in three vertical rows of figure-of-eight knots, each row being made up of three knots placed vertically.¹

The right side has borne two panels, but with the exception of a few inches at its lower end the upper one has been destroyed. There is sufficient interlaced work left to show that the pattern, when complete, consisted of four loops, alternately left and right facing upwards and downwards. This attractive design, derived from a four-cord plait, is frequently seen in narrow panels. It figures in *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. ii., No. 656, p. 256.

The interlacing in the lower panel and the carvings of the corresponding panel on the opposite side are the best preserved on the cross-shaft. The panel outline is complete, although badly weathered near the bottom; the cords, however, at this part are no longer visible. The remaining bands, much broader than any of the others, are perfectly clear. The pattern consists of crossed rings in a single row, with an interlaced band which is stopped off at the top and bottom of the panel.² The waved line formed by the band perhaps does not give so pleasing an effect as would an endless cord. While this feature, also characterised by an exceptionally broad cord, is to be seen on cross-slabs

¹ *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. ii., fig. 572, p. 222.

² *Proceedings*, vol. xvii., fig. 158, p. 258.

at Inchinnan¹ and Govan,² I do not think that there occur many other examples of this particular design.

Two panels exist on the left side, and while there is much missing of the upper one, so fair a portion does remain that the scheme can be traced quite easily. It is derived from a four-cord plait in combination with two rings, thus forming a twist-and-ring pattern.³

The lower panel, fortunately, is not so badly defaced as most on the shaft. Only at its base do the bands become somewhat indistinct, but they are not actually missing, save in a few places near the bottom. Where the weathering is most pronounced, traces of the medial line make the pattern seem a little vague, but the upper portion is so definite that it is at once apparent that the design is derived from a four-cord plait of the type most commonly found on monuments of this class. The late Mr J. Romilly Allen names no less than twenty-seven examples, other than the Capelrig Cross, known to him as occurring in Scotland at the time of the publication of *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, on which is to be found this simple but most effective pattern.⁴

The pedestal is an irregular quadrate boulder of yellowish sandstone. Except for the socket it bears no sign of being dressed in any way. Its greatest length, 3 feet 5½ inches, is at that part which originally faced east; the maximum breadth is 2 feet 3 inches on the former north side. Measurements on the other sides are 3 feet 2 inches and 2 feet 1½ inch respectively. At the bottom the stone is a little narrower than the dimensions stated, which are taken 4 inches above it. In height the pedestal is 1 foot 9½ inches at the back and 1 foot 10½ inches in front.

Interesting features were noticed in studying the socket cut in the pedestal. Viewing this in the same way as the shaft, it is found that the cavity at the top measures 1 foot 10½ inches back and front, but the width at the ends differs; at the left it is 10 inches, and ½ an inch more on the right. At the bottom the dimensions are 1 foot 7 inches by 8 and 7 inches at the respective ends to left and right. It will thus be remarked that the mortice was unevenly chiselled out, and a peculiarity which struck me was to find that one end was cut plumb and the other battered.

Assuming that originally the base-stone was placed in the ground to a depth of at least 9 inches, and taking into consideration the

¹ *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. iii., fig. 476 and p. 458.

² *Ibid.*, pt. iii., fig. 491 and p. 466.

³ *Ibid.*, pt. ii., fig. 574, p. 222.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pt. ii., fig. 503, p. 202.

measurements of the shaft before it was removed, it will be observed that, by the subsidence of the monument and the raising of the ground in the course of time by agricultural operations, no less than 11 inches of pedestal and 5 inches of shaft became buried.

It can be shown now that the land-gathered stones, previously noted round the shaft below ground and uncovered by the workmen when preparing the excavation, had no part in supporting the monument. Doubtless they were only the lowest of a heap of stones collected and amassed round the ancient cross during the ploughing of many years and taken away as required for building or repairing field-walls.

One may be surprised at the want of strict symmetry in some of the carvings, but I feel this, to a great extent, enhances the interesting nature of the different schemes of interlaced work, although it made reconstruction more difficult, especially as the sculpturings are so disfigured. The appearance of the interlaced work on the surfaces of two panels at least is of bewildering confusion on account of the effects of weathering and slight lack of symmetry. The stone itself was not cut quite symmetrically; the side to the north differs somewhat from its opposite, and the entases of the east and west faces are slightly unequal.¹ This feature of lack of perfect uniformity is not unusual in early Christian monuments.

Judging from other examples, but chiefly the Barochan Cross in the same county, which is intact as regards form, it is probable that the Capelrig Cross was a monument of the usual Celtic type—that is, with a ring meeting the head, shaft, and arms at their respective intersections. Failing, however, the recovery of some portions, it is impossible to hazard a more definite opinion as to the nature of the upper structure, of which so much has disappeared.

Having regard to its proportions, the Capelrig Cross must have ranked as one of the tallest monuments of its class in Renfrewshire.

It has been suggested that the Barochan Cross near Houston was in some way related to an establishment of the Knights Templar in the neighbourhood, but it can easily be proved that this cross is of a date long anterior to the foundation in this country of any house of this religious and military order. Nevertheless, it is interesting to know that Capelrig, where are the remains of a cross of similar type, was at one time a seat of the Knights Templar, but when the community established itself in the Mearns district the Capelrig Cross would be considered ancient.

There has been controversy as to the purpose of these free-standing crosses which existed in large number to the south and south-west of

¹ *Ut supra*, p. 123.

Glasgow, but the weightiest argument as to their disposition over so extensive an area is that they indicated the boundaries of certain limits of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. From their religious character it can hardly be doubted that these crosses also served, as do, to this day, the numerous Calvaries and other symbols of religion in stone and wood one sees so frequently at the wayside or on prominent points in many continental countries, particularly in Western France.

Many crosses were destroyed in Scotland during the religious troubles of the sixteenth century, even as a large number was in earlier times, as is shown by the evidence of portions of Celtic crosses built into the cathedral foundations at St Andrews.¹

The finest Renfrewshire example still in existence is the Barochan Cross,² but its beautiful and elaborate carvings are fast disappearing before the ravages of weathering and the atmosphere, now not so pure as it was, because of smoke from factory chimneys not far off. It is imperative that this cross be removed to shelter, or future generations with a fuller knowledge, and it is to be hoped keener appreciation of these legacies of the past, will have little to gaze upon but weathered stone.

The Capelrig shaft is not so ornate as that of the Barochan Cross, which includes among its sculpturings human and zoomorphic figures, but is almost as elaborately sculptured as the Arthurlee cross-shaft near Barrhead.³ The Arthurlee example, however, includes the figures of two animals carved in relief, whereas the shaft of the Capelrig Cross bears interlaced work only in its remaining panels. The fractured head and arms have never been recovered.

The name "Capelrig" suggests some connection with an ecclesiastical building. While no ruins of a church or chapel are known in the neighbourhood, old Capelrig House, now the Holm Farm, is on the site of a seat of the Knights Templar later taken over by the Hospitallers.⁴ At Mr Elliott's invitation I inspected the lower part of some of the buildings at Holm Farm, and it was clear to me that the walls, of great thickness, were ancient.

St Conval, an Irish disciple of St Kentigern, was the patron of the district. Foundations in his honour existed in Renfrewshire at no great distance from Capelrig. Pollokshaws, in the immediate neighbourhood to the north and now part of Glasgow, possessed a church dedicated to the saint. Relics of Conval were honoured at Inchinnan where, in-

¹ *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. iii., fig. 376 and p. 361.

² *Ibid.*, pt. iii., pp. 454 and 456, figs. 475 and 475D, and p. 457.

³ *Ibid.*, pt. iii., fig. 474, p. 454.

⁴ *New Statistical Account (Renfrewshire)*, vol. vii. p. 521.

cluding the shaft of a free-standing cross, are some magnificent examples of the early Christian art of Scotland. Like so many others in the Scottish hagiology, St Conval's name is often met with in corrupted forms.¹ It is quite likely that the earliest ecclesiastical foundation at Capelrig may have been dedicated to this saint, whose *cultus* was so widespread in the district during the early part of this era as almost to exclude that of any other.

The field boundaries and land immediately surrounding the site were carefully examined, and on the north and south line, at a distance of 133 yards due south of the site of the cross, was noticed the outline of some ancient structure, though much disguised by a stable partly built over it at the Holm Farm. This was possibly the site of the original ecclesiastical foundation, the name of which is enshrined in the name "Capelrig."

In my opinion the presence of the base-stone in which was set the Capelrig Cross, the portions of the pavement which probably surrounded it, and the fact that the pedestal was sunk deeply in the clay bottom indicate that the monument could never have occupied any other situation than that from which it was removed recently.

Notes on the Capelrig Cross would be incomplete without mention of a legend associated with it. The site of the monument is one of the points of a triangle, the second point of which is in the middle of the Ryat Linn Reservoir, 1½ mile west by south of Capelrig. Where the third point may be is not known, but great wealth will be found by him who, discovering it, digs in the centre of the triangle.

About 300 yards north-east of the cross-shaft, in the Deaconsbank Golf Course and to the north of the Glasgow and Ardrossan branch of the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway (Caledonian Section), is an outcrop of indurated sandstone much of which has been quarried. The stone is of the same class as that from which the cross was hewn. There are traces of concentric rings on the western edge of the outcrop, and 7½ feet to the east is a fairly well-preserved cup with two encircling rings. A few yards to the west of the rock is a singularly well-preserved mediæval circular stone-roofed doocot of solid masonry, its eight pigeon-holes with broad ledges all facing south. It very closely resembles a similar structure at Dunure Castle, Ayrshire.² This pigeon-house may have belonged to the vanished monastery which, with the lands of Capelrig, became a temporal lordship after the Reformation.

¹ Ruins on the Fereneze Hills near Barrhead are pointed out as "St Connal's Chapel." The name is often written "Conual," and it is found as "Connally" in the designation of one of two large stones in the Blythswood policies, Renfrew. The stone is supposed to have miraculously served as a boat to convey the saint from Ireland.

² *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, vol. iii. pp. 341-4.

About a quarter of a mile to the east of this site and close to the railway, in Rouken Glen Park, there is, flush with the surrounding turf, another outcrop of rock, on which is an assemblage of cup-marks some surrounded by rings. Most of these sculpturings are so well preserved that they can be seen from the railway.

By the removal of the Capelrig Cross to Glasgow and by its addition to a collection already rich in Celtic monuments, augmented opportunity will be given to many to study and compare carvings executed in an age when art born of much pious zeal produced some of the most beautiful and interesting monuments ever made by human hands.

Posterity should be for ever grateful to the generous donor and to those who long laboured to rescue the cross from the complete decay and oblivion which would have been its certain fate.

I wish to record my thanks to the Museum authorities at Kelvingrove, through whose courtesy I obtained every facility to make further examinations of the shaft, which were necessary in order that revised drawings might be prepared on account of its removal to Glasgow, and the discovery of the pedestal. To them also I am indebted for the information given me regarding the excavation at Capelrig, which, to my great disappointment, I was unable to attend. Mr James Campbell, Glasgow, deserves every praise for his assiduous work in preparing the diagrams from my rubbings and measurements.

ST BLANE'S CHAPEL, LOCHEARNHEAD.

As a prefix or suffix "Blane" occurs in several Scottish place-names. It is a corruption or perhaps an anglicised form of "Blaan," the name of a missionary of the early Church.

Born in Ireland, St Blaen came to Scotland and founded a religious house on an eminence above the Allan, not far from the confluence of that river with the Forth. This height, known as Dunblane, became later identified with the Perthshire town of that name. The early foundation, said to be an offshoot from that in Bute, was followed by others, until the site was crowned with the pre-Reformation Cathedral of Dunblane, which stands as the successor of St Blaen's monastic settlement.¹

St Blaen's death is supposed to have taken place in A.D. 590; his commemoration is on the 11th August.² The *cultus* of this holy man became popular and fairly widespread, as is evidenced by several

¹ *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, vol. ii, p. 86.

² Michael Barrett, O.S.B., *A Calendar of Scottish Saints*, p. 118.

dedications bearing his name. One church was erected in his honour in Dumfriesshire, while the ruins of Kilblaan Chapel in Bute and the monuments there are well known to the west of Scotland antiquary.¹ A chapel was dedicated to this saint in Argyll, the parish name of Kilblane being derived from the foundation.

In the summer of 1925, while spending a holiday in the Balquhiddy district, Perthshire, my attention was drawn to a site named "St Blane's Chapel" figuring on the inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey Map, Sheet 46. I made numerous visits to the ruins, and a careful study of the site makes me feel that the result of my investigations is worth reporting.

Lochearnhead has already been noted as productive of antiquities. The late Mr D. Haggart, F.S.A.Scot., Killin, recorded a number of boulders on which occur numerous cup-marks behind the Free Church Manse at Creggan.² I took the opportunity to examine these sculpturings, and, in spite of their fairly exposed situation, can say with all confidence that they must be among the best preserved markings of this class in the county. A little to the south-west of the boulders, in a field opposite the small holding called Druidsfield, there is a dome-shaped, circular, grass-covered mound, 4 to 5 feet in height and about 15 feet in diameter, which is probably a burial cairn. Mr Stewart, the tenant, told me that he would be glad if the mound did not exist, as by its covering so large an area it caused much waste of arable land. It is to be hoped if the mound is ever threatened to permit of agricultural work being carried on over its site, that steps will be taken to ensure a scientific demolition and careful examination.

In the National Museum is an axe-head of green mottled quartzite, purchased in 1887 and said to have been found in a cist at Lochearnhead.³

Mr Peter Anderson, the tenant of Carstran Farm, told me that many years ago a labourer, whom he had engaged to lay field drains, in digging unearthed a small vessel which, unfortunately, was broken by the pick. My informant stated that it was a quaich-like cup, but not knowing then the possible importance and value of the discovery, had not taken home the pieces.

The ruins of St Blane's chapel are most picturesquely situated near the south shore of Loch Earn, about 20 yards from the water's edge and on the lands of Carstran Farm, about 1½ mile from Lochearnhead Station (parish of Balquhiddy). The remains, in common with those of so many ancient Highland chapels, are of a plain rectangular building;

¹ *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, pt. iii. pp. 407-11.

² *Proceedings*, vol. xxii. pp. 282-3.

³ *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, p. 32, No. AF 290.

they measure 40 feet 10 inches long and 15 feet 7 inches wide internally. The walls are 2 feet 4 inches thick, and in no place now exceed 2 feet 1 inch in height; in parts they are almost reduced to their foundations. In the few places where thick turf does not cover the stones, binding them together, it is apparent that the remains are of a structure of plain undressed masonry; no vestiges of mortar are to be found. Doubtless land-gathered stones or material from the loch-shore was used. The uniform height of the ruins would indicate that when the ancient place of worship became disused a convenient quarry for former holders of the land was available. A portion measuring 14 feet of the south wall and foundations has entirely disappeared. That a doorway existed on this side is certain, as no trace of an entrance is to be found on the remaining three sides.

A peculiar feature is that the site is on irregular ground. The eastern and western ends are built on well-constructed embankments. That on the east is 3 feet 6 inches in height, and varies from 8 feet 2 inches in width on the south to 12 feet on the north. The ground falls towards the shore of the loch on the north. The western end is banked up to the height of 2 feet 4 inches, and the banking extends beyond the walling for 4 feet 6 inches.

There are four prominent boulders and two outcrops of the living rock at this site. One of these outcrops, measuring 7 feet 8 inches in length, 4 feet 3 inches in width, and 1 foot 10 inches in height, is situated in a north-easterly direction from the corresponding end of the chapel, and another outcrop, somewhat similar in appearance, lies to the south-east at a distance of 32 feet 6 inches from the south-east end of the ruins.

A remarkable stone, almost triangular in shape, is to be seen 25 feet to the south of the chapel and opposite the gap in the wall. The horizontal surface, 6 inches above ground, presented by this stone is so perfectly smooth that the inference that it was prepared so is irresistible. It seems to be too large to have been one of the stones from the ruins, and doubtless occupies its original position.

Embedded in the eastern embankment are two small boulders. Almost in line with the ruined south wall, a thick boulder stands with its north face partly embedded in the bank. A very careful scrutiny was made of these stones, but no markings could be detected except in the case of the last. This stone presents features of interest and of a problematic nature. Its base, 2 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, is 2 feet 8 inches from the rounded top. The boulder is almost uniformly 12 inches in thickness, but narrows to the north and south. A small incised Latin cross of almost identical size is borne on the south and east faces.

The symbol on the east face is very badly weathered, but seems to have been originally cut to the depth of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. The cross on the south face is so well preserved that it is quite visible even from a fair distance; it is cut to the depth of nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. The longer arm of each cross measures $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches and the shorter $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches. In each case the width of the carving is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. The cross on the south face owes its better condition to the fact that the high ground sloping from the south protects the stone on which it is carved, whereas that on the east face is exposed to strong easterly winds blowing up Loch Earn. (Plan (fig. 2) shows the disposition of the boulders in relation to the ruins of the chapel.)

These rude crosses are of a type I have already recorded at St Fillan's Chapel, near Crianlarich¹ and at Ach-na-Cille, North Knapdale.² A cross of precisely the same appearance I noticed on an ancient schistose slab, measuring 3 feet 4 inches in length by 1 foot 4 inches by 5 inches, built into the lower part of a window in the south wall of the ruined church at Balquhiddier. It is not referred to in Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, although the other pre-Reformation

monuments in the churchyard are illustrated and described (vol. ii., Plates lxxvii. and lxxviii., Nos. 1-9, and pp. 32-3). In the Balquhiddier example the longer arm of the cross measures 5 inches and the shorter $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches. It is cut out to the depth of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch and is well preserved.

As in similar ancient Highland churches, the orientation of St Blane's Chapel at Lochearnhead closely follows canonical practice in that its longer dimensions lie nearly east and west. The actual orientation is $16^{\circ} 34'$ west of true north.

So much has already been written on the subject of the orientation of churches which presents itself, that it is not my intention to hazard an explanation as to the seemingly great divergence existing here. If we assume, as I believe we may, that the stone with the two crosses carved on it is the dedicatory stone, a departure from custom is apparent. Authorities, including Pio Martinucci, insist that this stone shall be placed at the north-east corner of the church; here it is situated on the south-east.³ Certain rubricians claim that the first stone shall

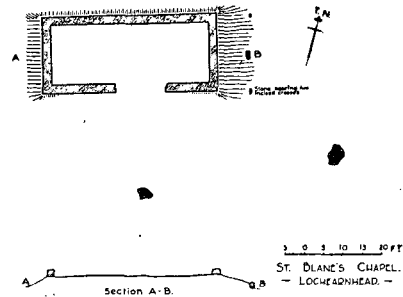


Fig. 2. Plan of St Blane's Chapel, Lochearnhead.

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. lviii. p. 124.

² *Ibid.*, vol. lix. p. 150.

³ Le Vavasour, *Cérémonial de la Consécration des Eglises*, p. 5.

be rectangular and worked to a smooth surface, but Martinucci urges the contrary ("Lapis iste non esto lævigatus nec pumice expolitus, sed ferme rudis . . .").¹ According to this rubric the stone answers, but the number of crosses is unusual, as by rule each face should bear a cross.

I suggest that the stone was an important one in a pre-Christian setting, of which the prominent stones and the two outcrops of living rock referred to formed part. Nothing is more usual than to find an ancient ecclesiastical foundation on or near an earlier sacred site, and evidence is not lacking of ancient ecclesiastical buildings (some succeeded by modern structures) erected in the neighbourhood of megaliths or even within pre-Christian stone-settings. Standing-stones, solitary or few in number, are met with in many churchyards, and parallels are to be found to the example referred to in this paper.

At Ysptytg Kenwyn, Cardigan, a circle of stones is built at intervals into the wall enclosing the churchyard.² The ruins of Maplescombe Church in Kent furnish the case of prominent sarsen-stones within the area bounded by the walls of the edifice.³ A stone circle once stood in the kirkyard of Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire, and more than one of the pillar stones have been encountered quite near to the wall of the church while digging graves.⁴

Mr Walter Johnson mentions many other examples, including pre-historic stones built into church foundations. One case, particularly, is worthy of notice as having a possible similarity to the remains on the shore of Loch Earn. He refers to a tall standing-stone about 4 yards from the north-east corner of the church at Rudstone, near Bridlington. The monolith, of which the name is said to signify "Roodstone," if regarded as a pillar, may have been called a cross, although bearing no carving of the Christian symbol. Certain it is that the monument gave its name to the village which, immediately after the Norman Conquest, was called "Rodestan." Having regard to the veneration in which it had been held, the founders of an early church here would look upon it as most useful to their own purpose, and, to quote from Mr Johnson's work, "to consecrate an existing stone would save much labour."⁵ What is suggested in the case of the Yorkshire church may well have been performed at the dedication of the chapel forming the subject of this paper.

While I cite an Italian authority of an age long posterior to the

¹ *Manuale Sacrarium Cereemoniarum*, vol. vi. p. 249.

² Walter Johnson, *Byways in British Archaeology*, p. 48.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

⁴ *Proceedings*, vol. xxxvi. p. 577.

⁵ *Byways in British Archaeology*, p. 43.

SCULPTURED SLAB AT KILMARONOCK, DUMBARTONSHIRE. 137

building of the ancient Highland chapel of St Blane, the canon dealing with the shape, inscription, and position of the dedicatory stone is, of course, based on very ancient practice.

SCULPTURED SLAB AT KILMARONOCK, DUMBARTONSHIRE.

Kilmaronock, in the Lennox, is a Dumbartonshire parish bounded on the north-west by Loch Lomond. On the north the boundary is the river Endrick, which here separates the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling.

In the *Old Statistical Account*¹ the name "Kilmaronock" is said to signify the "cell, chapel, or burial-place of St Maronock, or St Marnock," and the revised account, written nearly fifty years later, persists in this derivation.² Other authorities, including the late Dr W. F. Skene, affirm that Ronan, a contemporary of Modan of Rosneath, is the tutelary saint of the locality, and that etymologically the parish name affords an excellent instance of a peculiarity in Celtic nomenclature, where it was desired to show a lasting mark of affection to the memory of a holy and beloved missionary. As the saint's name ends with the diminutive "an," this diminutive is changed to "og," and to the first syllable is prefixed "mo," meaning "my."³ "Moronog," so formed, and signifying "my little Ronan," has, in the course of time, become altered to its present and apparently anglicised form, "Kil," or "cell," etc., remaining unchanged except for the initial letter. Professor Watson says: "It is probably Rónán of Kingarth, who is commemorated in Kilmaronock, near Dumbarton."⁴

The writers of the parish accounts confused the name of Ronan with that of Marnock or Marnan, who died about A.D. 625, or more than a century before the patron of Kilmaronock, whose death is presumed to have taken place in A.D. 737 at Kingarth, Bute, of which he is said to have been abbot.⁵ While the first interpretation seems an obvious one, it is strange that local tradition, which has retained St Ronan's name to this day, should have been completely ignored.

Reference is made in the first *Account* to an ancient well in a wood about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the west of the parish church, as St Marnock's Well, but on the Ordnance Survey Map, 6 inches to the mile, Dumbartonshire, Sheet XIV., N.E., the spring figures as "St Ronan's Well," and the church is shown as being "on the site of St Ronan's Church." It has been claimed

¹ Vol. ii. p. 202.

² *New Statistical Account (Dumbartonshire)*, vol. viii. p. 211.

³ *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 282 (footnote).

⁴ *Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p. 309.

⁵ Michael Barrett, O.S.B., *A Calendar of Scottish Saints*, p. 23.

that the well in question, which is situated within very easy walking distance of Ross Priory, a mansion-house situated on the south-east shore of Loch Lomond, inspired Sir Walter Scott when residing there in the early part of last century. If this be so, literature is indebted to the locality for one of the most popular of the Waverley Novels, although the scene of the famous author's *St Ronan's Well* is laid in the Border country, with the romantic story woven round the "Dow Well" at Innerleithen.¹

The well itself, enclosed in roughstone masonry, is scarcely 2 feet in depth and little more in diameter. The water, of excellent quality, is drawn off to a filtering tank hard by, whence it is led to the Mains Farm $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to the north. Fortunately, the ancient appearance of the stonework is not impaired in any way by the piping, which has been so laid as to be visible only where it actually leaves the spring.

It is probable that Christianity was introduced in the district by St Kessog before the days of St Ronan. A chapel in honour of the Luss martyr, to whom are so many dedications in the county, is known to have existed in pre-Reformation times at Aber, two miles to the west of Kilmarnock.² Some ruins of an ecclesiastical structure there, known as St Kessog's, were to be seen until removed for building purposes in the middle of last century.

The original situation of St Ronan's Church seems to have been in the western part of the parish at a place called Shanacles, where were found many years ago some stone coffins and other remains of burial. Near Shanacles, a name derived from "sean," "old," and "eaglais," "church," is another steading known as Old Kirk. The late Mr Guthrie-Smith states that it was not until 1855 that the last trace of an ancient burying-ground disappeared from here.³

It may be conjectured that in the early part of the fourteenth century the principal church came to occupy the site on which the present structure, built in 1813, now stands. The *Old Statistical Account* of the parish, written nineteen years before that date, refers to the building then existing as having "much the appearance of antiquity."⁴ Doubtless this was the pre-Reformation church of St Ronan, which, with its lands, was, in 1325, granted by Robert I. to the Abbey of Cambuskenneth.⁵ No trace of this foundation now remains save that many of the graves in the churchyard are indicated by plain slabs, of uniform size, probably flagstones from the flooring of the old church.

¹ James M. Mackinlay, *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs*, pp. 56-7.

² *Trans. Glasgow Arch. Soc. (N.S.)*, vol. iii. p. 355.

³ J. Guthrie-Smith, *Strathendrick and its Inhabitants*, pp. 126-7.

⁴ Vol. ii. p. 205.

⁵ *Caledonia* (new edition), vol. vi. p. 905.

SCULPTURED SLAB AT KILMARONOCK, DUMBARTONSHIRE. 139

An interesting sculptured recumbent slab of grey sandstone (fig. 3) furnishes evidence that burials must have taken place here a considerable time before the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century. It was found some years ago by Mr Frank Cullen when cutting down long grass in a neglected part of the cemetery to the south-west of the church, and was pointed out to me by him in April 1926 when I visited the place.

The lower part of this monument is broken off, and the slab now measures in its greater length (on the left side) 3 feet 10 inches; it is almost uniformly 1 foot 9½ inches in width, and is 5 inches in thickness. A small piece of the top right-hand corner was missing when the slab was shown to me, but it was recovered as the result of a search in the grass near by.

The carvings, all incised and enclosed by a broad outline, consist of a large Latin cross centrally placed on the slab. Below the left arm of the Christian symbol is a sword, the cross-guards of which impinge on and are carried beyond the marginal frame and within the shaft of the cross to the left and right respectively. The top left-hand corner contains a circle, inside of which is a smaller and similar concentric figure almost entire, together with parts of radial lines, one of these being carried diametrically through the circles.

Below the right arm of the cross and completely filling the space between it and the lower end of the slab are carved peculiar designs. These are three ill-made squares graduated in size, the largest being placed immediately under the arm. The square of intermediate dimension is placed 6 inches below the first and the smallest 3 inches below the second one. A narrow shallow line, parallel to the shaft of the cross, indefinite by the flaking of the stone in two places between the upper figures and inside the topmost, connects all three squares, and now passes through the second and third only. Close to this stem and on either side of it is a number of fret-like geometrical patterns, including a small cross pedestalled at both ends and surmounted by a large tau. Frets project from the central line and inwardly from all sides of the middle square, but some figures are quite independent. In the topmost square small portions of a diagonal

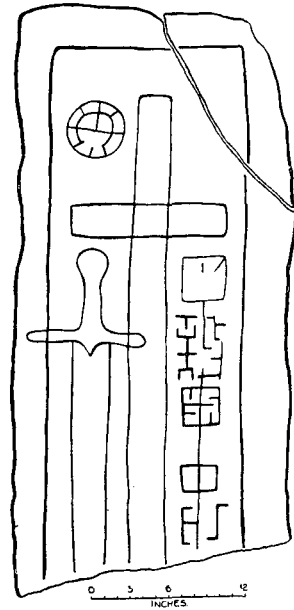


Fig. 3. Cross-slab at Kilmaronock.

line and connecting stem remain. More carved work probably existed, as the stem is abruptly terminated by the irregular break, which also mars the appearance of the cross and sword. Unfortunately, all search for the missing fragment of stone was of no avail, but so unusual are the carvings that it is impossible to surmise what the complete assemblage may have been. The illustration is reproduced from a rubbing.

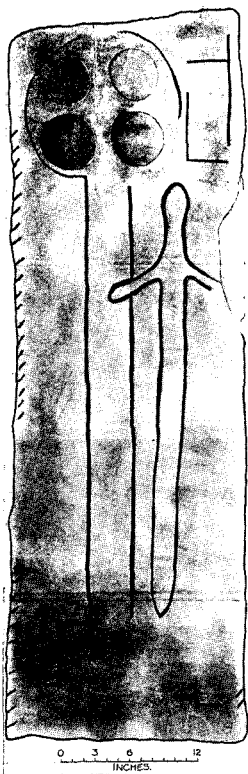


Fig. 4. Cross-slab at Luss.

Evidently this slab would mark the place of sepulture of a person of considerable standing, but it would seem clear that the stone no longer occupies its original position. That it was a monument in memory of one not in Orders, but of a layman, can be assumed. In accordance with mediæval practice, in the case of the latter the upper part or head of the stone would be to the west; for an ecclesiastic the reverse usually prevailed.¹ Here the stone, lying unevenly on the ground with the upper part to the north-east, makes it appear likely that it was moved when the old church was taken down in the early part of last century.

In conversing on these matters with Mr Callander, Director of the National Museum, I learn that recently there have been discussions as to the different types of ancient western Scottish swords. It may, therefore, be interesting to compare the weapon carved on the cross-slab just described with three other examples previously recorded in the Loch Lomond district.

These monuments are referred to in the *Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society*.² The first one mentioned is at Luss, and lies east and west a few yards south of the parish church (fig. 4). Unfortunately, the illustration,³ dimensions, and description⁴ given are inaccurate. The text states that the measurements of the stone are 6 feet 3 inches for the length, and 21 inches across the top or western end and 20 inches at the foot. Actually the length is 5 feet 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The width at the head is correctly given, but the slab broadens downwards to 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It is not possible to state definitely, without dislodging the stone, what its

¹ *Byways in British Archaeology*, p. 244.

² *Trans. Glasgow Arch. Soc. (N.S.)*, vol. v. pt. i. pp. 23-7.

³ *Ibid.*, fig. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.

exact thickness may be. Probing below ground, however, shows that in most places the thickness averages at least $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

As illustrated in the paper mentioned, the slab appears to bear rope-band moulding along the sides, but only vestiges of such ornamentation can now be seen on the edges of the sculptured surface. On the sides of the stone, however, a complete moulding of this type occurs; it is well preserved and very clearly defined. The sepulchral monument bears a cross with a long shaft in double outline, commencing below the head of the cross and terminating on the left in two steps. The cross is equal-armed. In the interspaces between the arms are shallow saucer-like depressions $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep, with the exception of the upper left-hand one, which is but half that depth and indistinct near the top. On each side of the upper part of the head is an arc $\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide, narrowing to a mere scratch at the top.

The arc on the left is a continuation of the shaft outline which it joins immediately below the lower of the hollows of the cross-head on the corresponding side. While the other arc is broken off, or weathered away, on the opposite side, it may have formed part of a circular figure which surrounded the head, but, from the appearance of the break, it is unlikely that the circle was complete twenty-five years ago, as shown in the previous sketch. Moreover, the sheltered position of the stone and the good condition of the principal sculpturings, which are also incised, make it difficult to credit that so much could have weathered away in a period which is negligible when the antiquity of the monument is taken into account.

Close to and on the right of the head of the cross are the outlines of a rectangle which, when entire, would measure 9 inches by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The longer side, which is nearer the edge of the slab, is extended towards the top for $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This figure is omitted in the original drawing.

Carved on the right of and parallel to the shaft of the cross is a sword with long depressed quillons. One of these guards encroaches on the shaft; the other, however, is partly missing on account of a break in the stone at this point. The outlines of the weapon are nearly as broad as those of the shaft and, like them, unevenly cut; the sculptor seemingly cared little for the straightness or regular width of his lines. In the notice I have quoted the sword is shown to be stepped; this error is possibly due to the presence of faint traces of steps, corresponding to those on the opposite side, cut below the weapon. The drawing here reproduced from a rubbing of the actual surface indicates the exact nature of the markings.

The two remaining examples are to be seen within the ruins of St

Kentigerna's conventual church on the island, Inchcailleach, close to Balmaha, on the opposite shore of the loch.

One of these slabs bears incised on its surface a large stepped or Calvary cross with a sword superimposed.¹ The other, decorated with rope-band moulding on the edges, has carved on it a sword surrounded by interlaced work.² The plaits are badly weathered but the upper part is still fairly clear, and is a good example of a cross with a circular head formed by interlaced cords. As in the case of the Luss monument and the first stone referred to on Inchcailleach, the weapon has depressed cross-guards, but these are much shorter than on either of the two other examples mentioned in these notes. In point of resemblance the sword is very similar to one I noticed at Kilmun, Argyll, in the summer of 1924.³

As typified on these three Loch Lomondside monuments the weapons are practically identical, the prominent characteristic of similarity being the short depressed cross-guards. It will be noticed in the case of the sword at Kilmarnock that the guards are at right-angles to the blade. At Rosneath, also in Dumbartonshire, I have noted a cross-and-sword slab on which the weapon has the same type of guards,⁴ the only difference being that, on the example there, the straight guards terminate in discoidal pommels, whereas at Kilmarnock they are merely rounded off.

¹ *Trans. Glasgow Arch. Soc. (N.S.)*, vol. v. pt. i., fig. 1, and p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, fig. 3, and p. 27.

³ *Proceedings*, vol. lix. p. 152.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146.