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The Mote of Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick

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Trevelyan, who discovered the figure on Lustymore Island, about twelve miles below Enniskillen. Major Trevelyan gave its dimensions as roughly 25½ inches in length, 20 inches from the top to the hands, and 10 inches from the nose to the top of the head. In reply to a query as to whether there was any ancient building on the island into which the figure could have been originally built, Major Trevelyan stated that he was told there was a monastery on the island, but as far as he knew there are no traces of its remains.

A general account of these figures was given in the *Journal*, vol. xxiv, p. 77, to which a list of those then known was added, pp. 78–81, and pp. 392–394. Persons anxious for further information are referred to this account. It may be noted that in the list on page 80, No. 25, a figure built into the wall of the church on White Island, Lough Erne, is described as a Sheela-na-gig. This appears to be a mistake, as the Rev. J. E. McKenna, in *Lough Erne and its Shrines*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, states on page 21 that two figures built into the southern and eastern walls of the church on White Island have been erroneously referred to as Sheela-na-gigs, but they do not belong to this type of figure. The above example from Lustymore may be added to the list, also one discovered and preserved by Lord Langford, K.C.V.O., at Summerhill, Co. Meath. In the description of Kiltinane Castle, near Clonmel, by Lieutenant-Colonel Cooke, *Journal*, vol. xxxix, p. 278, it is stated that “in the old church adjoining the castle are also very perfect specimens of the ‘Sheela-na-gig.’” My own recollection is that one example was built into the castle, and another into the church. There are no doubt other references to these figures in the volumes of the *Journal* since the former lists were compiled, and there are probably several unpublished examples in the country.—E. C. R. ARMSTRONG.

**The Mote of Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick.**—Though having no desire to intervene in the interesting controversy, as to whether motes used for defensive purposes existed in Ireland before the Norman invasion, I think that while Mr. H. T. Knox’s paper on the Connacht earthworks is passing through the *Journal*, is an opportune time to submit drawings and a view of this important earthwork at Kilfinnane, which is undoubtedly an ancient artificial mound fortified in a manner different from the Norman mote and bailey: as it is to be hoped that such surveys of existing earthworks may help materially in determining the question.

Mr. Westropp refers briefly to Kilfinnane mote in his paper on “Irish Motes and Norman Castles”<sup>1</sup>; he explains that Kilfinnane is called “an old Irish downe” by Petty, in his survey of 1657; and that there is no record of a castle there until long after 1400. He believes

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, vol. xxxiv, p. 325.

it to be the Treada-na-riogh near Drumfinghin, named in the "Book of Rights" as one of the royal forts of Cashel.<sup>1</sup>

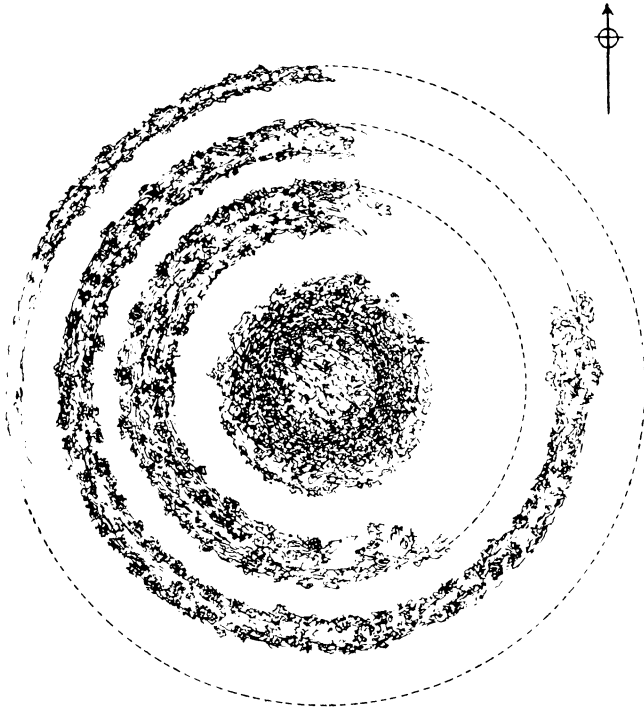


FIG. 1.—PLAN OF MOTE AT KILFINNANE.

Mr. Orpen does not mention Kilfinnane in his paper on the same subject<sup>2</sup> in 1907, which is, to a great extent, a reply to Mr. Westropp. At that time I felt that it would be very helpful to have this earthwork measured and illustrated in the *Journal*. Some time after an opportunity



FIG. 2.—SECTION OF MOTE AT KILFINNANE.

offered, and with the assistance of two fellow-members of the Society, Dr. George Fogerty and Mr. J. Whitton, I measured it, and took the

[<sup>1</sup> The dimensions can be ascertained from Mr. Lynch's careful description. To save space, it was considered necessary to omit the scales which Mr. Lynch supplied to his original drawings.—Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> "Motes and Norman Castles in Ireland" (*Journal*, vol. xxxvii, p. 123).



VIEWS OF MOTE AT KILFINNANE.

levels from which I prepared the accompanying drawings. Dr. Fogerty kindly provided the photographs.

This earthwork occupies a commanding position overlooking the great plain of the Co. Limerick; the mote, which is roughly circular on plan, is about 34 feet 6 inches high above the level of the ground outside the outer vallum, and 54 feet in diameter on top; the top is level and there are no traces of stone work of any kind. The escarpment has worn down with time, and no doubt the incline is not now so steep as it was originally; the same applies to the ramparts. The inner vallum is 16 feet 4 inches high over the outer ground, 26 feet wide, at the base, and 9 feet at the top. The next vallum is 10 feet 8 inches high, 15 feet 6 inches wide at the base, and 6 feet wide at the top. The outer vallum is 5 feet 4 inches high, 9 feet wide at the base, and at present measures 3 feet wide at the top. The entire diameter of the fort is 337 feet north to south. The greater part of the outer vallum has been removed, and considerable portions of the others also. There is a small stream flowing outside the outer vallum to the north.

In the "Book of Rights," amongst the seats of the Kings of Cashel, we find<sup>1</sup>

"Druim Caein, Druim Finghin of the wood,  
And with it Treada na riogh."

Druim Caein was no doubt portion of Sliabh Caein, now Slieve Riach, as O'Donovan explains. This mountain is close to Kilfinnane, and on its north-eastern side stands a royal fort, Dun gClaire. Treada na riogh O'Donovan explains as Tre-dui na riogh, the triple-fossed fort of the Kings, which he suggests as the name for the great mote of Kilfinnane, but, strange to say, he locates Druim Finghin as an extensive ridge of high ground situated in the counties of Cork and Waterford. This is a mistake, as "Finghin of the wood" would explain the place-name Kilfinnane; for *Coill*, which is generally anglicized Kill, means a wood, "and with it" was "Treadanariogh," thus connecting all three place names with this part of Munster.—P. J. LYNCH, *Fellow*.

**The FitzGerald slab in the Dingle Churchyard, Co. Kerry.**—This slab lies, broken in two, in the middle of the burial ground on the south side of St. James's Church in Dingle, formerly called Dingle I Coush, *i.e.* the fort of O'Cush (Dr. Joyce).

The slab has been illustrated and described on pages 185–186 of volume I. of the *Journal* of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead in Ireland,<sup>2</sup> where it is stated that about the year 1880 it was placed in its present position on a block of masonry, for its better

<sup>1</sup> O'Donovan's translation, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> A rubbing of this slab (taken in April, 1911, by Lord Walter Fitz Gerald) forms one of a series of illustrations in a paper on "The Fitz Gerald's of Ireland," which appeared in a recent number of the *County Kildare Archaeological Journal*.