

Master Malrubius

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 20 Jul 2001

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Alice Turner — 20 Jul 2001, 13:59

Here's a tasty tidbit from a book called -Celtic Sacred Landscapes-, by Nigel Pennick (p 161):

"In the region of Gairloch [in Scotland], the 'old rites' of the divinity Mhor-Ri, 'The Great King' (also known as St. Maree, Mourie or Maelrubha), were observed until the nineteenth century. In 1656, officers of the Dingwall presbytery attempted to suppress the observances of Mhor-Ri, 'findeing, amongst uthier abhominable and heathenishe practices, that the people in that place were accustomed to sacrifice bulls at a certain tyme uppon the 25 August, which day is dedicate, as they conceive, to St Mourie,as they call him...and withall their adoring of wells and uthier superstitious monuments and stones.' The rites included 'sacrificing at certain times at the Loch of Mourie...quherein are monuments of Idoloatrie', and also the 'pouring of milk upon hills as oblationes'. The cultus was important far beyond the Gairloch region, for strangers and 'thease that comes from forren countreyes' were reported as participants in the 'old rites'. But the presbytery was unable to supress this popular deity. Writing in 1860. Sir Alexander Mitchell tells us that the 'people of the place often speak of the god Mourie'. Another writer of the same period tells of the god's holy hill, called Claodh Maree, which was the Scottish parallel of Icelan's Helgafell, whose benevolent power was active wherever it could be seen. 'It is believed...that no-one can commit suicide or otherwise injure himself within view of this spot'.

"On the island of Maelrubha in Loch Maree, the sacred oak tree of Mhor-Ri was studded with nails to which ribbons were tied. Buttons and buckles were also nailed to it. [...] Thomas Pennant visited Loch Maree in 1774 and witnessed the proceedings in which the derilans, the officiating pagan priests on the island, had sufferers drink water from the well before they were 'thrice dipped in the lake'. The well is now dry and the island is privately owned."

-alga