

ACCOUNT

OF A

STONE WITH A RUNIC INSCRIPTION,

PRESENTED TO THE SOCIETY BY THE LATE

SIR ALEXANDER SETON OF PRESTON,

AND OF

*SOME OTHER INSCRIPTIONS OF THE SAME KIND IN THE
ISLE OF MAN.*

SEVERAL Runic inscriptions having been communicated to the Society, it seems proper to give an account of them in one article, as one may help to illustrate another.

The first that falls to be noticed, is on the stone presented to the Society a number of years ago by Sir Alexander Seton, and now set up on the north side of the Castle Hill, of which a drawing is given (Pl. xvi.) It was brought from Sweden, having been situated originally on a piece of ground called Little Ramsin garde



“ church of Kirkmichael. The flat sides of the pillar are covered
“ with hieroglyphical images of men and horses, wild beasts, and
“ warlike instruments.”

Pl. xvi.

The inscription, as given by Mr Oswald, is copied in No. 2, and is read thus :—*Ivalfir sunr Thurulfs ains rauda risti krus thono aft Fridu mudur sino ; i. e.* Ivalfir, son of Thurulf the Red, carved this cross in memory of Fridu his mother.

At the end of the border, which contains the inscription, there is the figure of a man holding a spear in his hand, and a shield on the other arm.

Pl. xvi.

The next Runic inscription communicated by Mr Oswald, is described by him thus :—“ This inscription is upon one of the “ faces of a square-sided pillar in Kirkbradden Church-yard. Some “ figures are also to be seen upon this stone.” See No. 3, where it is read thus,—*Thurlior Neait risti krus thono aft Fiafir sna ruthor sun eaos.....* This is by no means clear, nor can a satisfactory explanation be given of it. It seems to have been equally obscure above a hundred years ago, when copied for Gibson’s edition of Camden’s Britannia, where it stands thus, p. 1458, (No. 4.) *Thurlior neaki risti krus thono aft Fiak, sun sin aruthor sun eaors.....i. e.* Thurlior Neaki engraved this cross in memory of Fiak his son..... The rest has not been interpreted, and is probably erroneously copied, owing to the stone being damaged or worn.

This, as well as the former inscription, is represented in Gough’s edition of the Britannia, vol. iv. p. 510 ; but the copies there are not better, perhaps not so correct as in Gibson.

In Gough’s edition, the last six words are read, *Fiak sun sin frudur sun safrsagh* ; which, written in the Runic character, would

appear as in the second line of No. 5. of the plate. But still this reading does not admit of a satisfactory interpretation.

The plate shews there are other indistinct marks at the end of the inscription ; and perhaps the person who copied it may have mis-read some of the letters. If the word *fruthor* is the right reading, the *f*, having two strokes to the right, has been mistaken for *o*, or broad *a*, which has two strokes to the left of the upright stalk common to all the Runic characters. But this suggests the probability that *fruthor* is a mistake for *bruthor*, a word that frequently occurs. However, none of these conjectural emendations enable us to give a clear interpretation.

If we were clear of this difficulty, still the unknown word *safrsagh* would present another. That word does not agree with Mr Oswald’s copy ; and we must, in the meantime, be content to impute the obscurity to the inscription being damaged by time and the weather.

There are other two inscriptions represented in both Gibson’s and Gough’s editions of the Britannia (No. 6, 7.) I know not whether these stones are still preserved, not having seen or heard of them while I was in the island. The first inscription, No. 6 is imperfect, the stone being broken, and said to be built into the wall of the church of Kirkmichael. As far as legible, it runs thus :—*Laifa fustra Guthan than son ilan..... a raisti krus thana aftar Malmura fustra sina Toirluf Katlskona as a.* *Fustra* signifies a foster-son or daughter ; and the inscription seems intended to commemorate that the stone was set up by, or in memory of, such a relation. This inscription is No. 1. of Gibson’s edition, p. 1458.

Pl. xvi.

The other inscription is No. 4. of Gibson's edition, p. 1458, and reads thus :—

Sontulf ain suarti raisti krus thono aftir Arin Oianiuf Kuana sina; i. e. Sontulf the Black engraved this stone in memory of Arin Oianiuf his wife. This is sufficiently clear except the word *Oianiuf*.

The following remarks on the inscriptions No. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are by the Reverend Dr Jamieson.

Both these inscriptions are given by Gough in his Additions to Camden's Britannia, vol. iv. p. 510. The first, as here exhibited, agrees almost exactly with the plate in Camden.

Mr Beauford of Athy, in Ireland, has read it thus: *Ivalfir sunr Dural fas sins randa risti crus Afrinde mudur sino*; rendering it, *For the sins of Invalfir, the son of Dural, this cross was erected by his mother Afrinde*.

Another translation has been given as that of Sir John Prestwick (Beauties of England, p. 286, 287): *Walter son of Thurulf, a knight right valiant, Lord of Frithu, the father, Jesus Christ*. The literal version seems to be—*Jualfir the son of Durulf, also the Red, erected this cross in memory of Fride, or Fridu, his mother*.

The language is the old Norwegian, or Norse, which is now most purely preserved in the Icelandic.

Thurulfs is, according to the Icelandic, the genitive of *Thurulf*, or *Thurulfr*, like *haffs*, the genitive of *haff*, pelagus, the sea; vide Run. Ion. Gramm. p. 11, 12. The proper name Thurulf seems to be compounded of *Thor*, or *Thur*, the name of one of the Scandinavian Deities, and *Ulf*, or *Ulf*, lupus—i. e. the Wolf of Thor.

Eins is used as the genitive of the Icelandic *Einn*, unus, unicus. But here it cannot signify *only*, as might appear at first view, because it does not agree with *Sunr*, filius, which is in the nominative; therefore we cannot render it, *the only son of Durulf*. It is also used in the sense of *similiter*, likewise; and in this signification it may either refer to the term *Rauda* as a sort of surname, or *sobriquet*, given to *Jualfir* from his complexion, *also called the Red*; or it may be conjoined with this as the proper name of another person, perhaps the workman who engraved the stone. It appears from *Wormii Monumenta Danica*, that the name of the person thus employed was frequently added to that of him who was at the expence of the monument.

Risti literally signifies *secavit, incidit*, from Icelandic *rista*, *scindere*; *litteras runicas in ligno exarare*; Haldorson Lex. *Risthi*, says Wormius, *de Sculptore dicitur*; Monum. p. 254.

Crus is undoubtedly for cross. It occurs very often in the Danish inscriptions. The letter, which occurs here, is rendered K in the account given by Junius, prefixed to his Gothic Glossary, p. 18. Astle, in his Origin and Progress of Writing, gives it as corresponding to Roman C.

Thono is the same with Icel. *thann*, the accusative of *thesse, hiccce*. Run. Ion. p. 62. I have not met with *thono* in the *Monumenta Danica*; but it appears in the form of *Dena*, p. 509, 510; of *deni*, p. 497; and of *dina*, p. 501. Thus it has been greatly varied in form, according to the province or the humour of the inscriber, if not the ignorance of the workman.

Aft or *eft* is found in a great many Danish inscriptions as literally signifying *after*; metaphorically, *in memory of*; as in Wormius, Monum. p. 483. *Niculas Tailn grua runr eft fadur*;—

Nicolas Tailn cut these *runæ*, *in memoriam patris*. *Thurgudrist stin dena eft Thrunt sun sin*;—*Thorgud erected this stone in memory of Throndo, his son*; p. 510. *Eftir* is also frequently used in the same sense; as p. 496, *Dolafr Siaia sun raisti stain aftir Alaf*; “Dolaf, the son of Siaia, erected this stone to Olave.”

Fridur is a proper name for a woman, still common in Iceland; probably from *Frid-r, formosus*. Vide Haldorson.

How Sir John Prestwick could found his translation, it is not easy to conjecture. It must have been merely guess-work. The first word cannot be rendered *Walter*; but this was more modern than *Jualfir*. And he seems to have adhered to the same rule of interpretation; for he has rendered *Eins rauda risti crus*, a knight right valiant. Had he been a Scotchman, on the same principle of translating the Norse by the words which it most nearly resembled in his own language, he would certainly have read, *ane royster richt crous*. *Dono* he seems to have viewed as a contraction for *Domino*, although the construction might present some difficulty. He was, however, determined to find out a lordship for his brother knight; and he accordingly makes him *Lord of Frithu*. The mode in which he has translated *Mudur* and *Sino*, plainly signifying *his mother*, throws a bar in the way of ridicule. *Sino* he had most probably viewed as equivalent to *filio*.

The version given by Mr Beauford is not quite so absurd. It savours, however, of the same propensity to assimilate to our own language; for, besides a variety of other deviations from the reading as given in the plate, in order to find out the guilt of *Jualfir*, for which the erection of this stone is supposed to have been an atonement, he has converted *eins* into *sino*. He has also

made his good mother, to whom he meant to do honour, do penance for him.

There is less agreement between the copy of the second Runic inscription transmitted to me and that given by Gough.

Durliorneit appears in the former as if one word; but, in Gough's, the marks of separation are inserted after *Durlior*, and what follows may be read *neaki*. Mr Beauford reads the whole inscription thus: *Durlifr nsaci risti crus dono Aftfiac sunsin frudur sun Safrsag*: rendering it, *For Admiral Durlif this cross was erected by the son of his brother, the son of Safrsag*; Camden, iv. 510. The name, in the copy of the inscription which accompanies this version, as well as in that now exhibited, is unquestionably *Durlior*. That the initial word terminates in this manner is most probable. In Gough's copy, the semicolon is subjoined to *r*.—*Nsaci* cannot be the true reading, as it does not admit of being pronounced. Mr Beauford has read the following letter as denoting *s*. But I find no proof of its being ever thus used. According to Wormius and Junius, it is *e*. The next letter has the same power, though different in form. According to the copy sent to me, the word would be *nceit*; but if it be read as Mr Gough gives it, we have *neaki*. It certainly required as much ingenuity to discover an admiral here, as for Sir John Prestwick to convert the term *Rauda* into a Knight. Sir John had something more like reason on his side, as he perhaps thought of Danish *Ridder*, which denotes a knight. But as I can find neither, I shall offer no conjecture whatsoever as to the meaning; especially as the true reading seems uncertain.

Aftfiac appears as if one word in the copy sent from Man; but

in the engraving given by Gough, the mark of distinction intervenes between *aft* and *fiaf*. It must be observed, however, that, according to Gough's transcript, *Fiac* is the reading, the final letter being C or K, not F. Mr Beauford has improperly conjoined the words. But there can be no reasonable doubt, that they had at any rate been originally meant as distinct, from the frequent use, as has been already seen, of *aft*, as signifying *in memory* of the person whose name is subjoined. Instead of reading "For Durlifr, this cross was erected by his son," &c. we must certainly render it, "Durlior erected this cross in memory of *Fiaf*, or *Fiac*, the son," &c. What appears as *sr na rudur* in my copy, is, according to Gough, *Sunsin oruthur*, for *bruthur*, probably by an error of the workman, who had made *o* instead of *b*. Thus the meaning would be, *the son of his brother*. Mr Beauford, as he before, by mistaking *e* for *s*, reads *nsaci*, here substitutes *safrsag*, for what, according to Gough, is *Eaorsh*, and in the latter transcript *Eaosh*. In Gough's *fac-simile* several abbreviations are added, which do not appear in the copy transmitted.

Plate xix. K. Two other inscriptions found in the Isle of Man have also been communicated by Mr Oswald. He gives the following account of the first of these.

"Inscription upon a whinstone which was found about 40 years ago, six feet under the surface, when the foundation of the present church of St Ann or Santon parish was laid. The stone is rough, in its natural state. The characters are strongly marked with some rude instrument. There is a burying-ground all round the church, and several Druidical *tumuli* in the neighbourhood."

On this inscription Dr Jamieson makes the following observations:—

"In regard to the inscription on a whinstone found on laying the foundation of the present church of St Ann, it seems evident that *N* is a combination of *AV*, and that — is the contraction for *UM*. Thus, I read it as barbarous Latin for *AVITUM MONUMENTUM*, signifying the monument or tomb belonging to ancestors. The characters seem pretty nearly to resemble the old Teutonic, as given by Astle, Tab. i. page 64. The initial *M* in *monumentum* has the precise form of that of the specimen of Roman uncials which he gives from a most ancient copy of the Four Gospels preserved in the Harleian Library; vide Tab. xi. p. 84. This M.S. is, he says with great reason, asserted to have been written in Italy above eleven hundred years ago. The form of this inscription had most probably been furnished by some Latin priest."

The other inscription, communicated by Mr Oswald, he describes as follows:—

"This inscription is cut upon a stone, somewhat like an altar or pedestal to a statue. It is mutilated. It lies at Castleton, and is said to have been brought from Cumberland to this island; but this is uncertain. No distinct trace of the Romans is any where else to be seen in the country."

I have examined this stone; and it appears to be a Roman altar similar to many found in Britain. That it came from thence is a probable supposition, since we are nowhere informed that the Romans ever occupied the island; and it has hitherto afforded no other monument of that people.

I was told that it was found in digging a foundation for the

Governor's house in Castle Rushin. It has suffered damage, by which some letters are obliterated; and, having copied the inscription without having seen any other copy whatever, I find that mine differs in some respects from Mr Oswald's.

The third line seems to be an improved reading, since MF combined in one character may very properly be read *Marci filius*; and the remainder of that line I would read *Filius*, or *filii Voltiniae*.

ELENSIS, in the fifth line, I have read ETENSIS, having nothing but the stone before me, though I do not pretend to guess of what word either of these fragments may have made a part. Many corps of the Roman army had names ending with the syllables *—etenses*, or *—tenses*. In the *Notitia Imperii*, among the *Legiones Comitatus*, sub dispositione viri illustris magistri militum per Thracias, there are mentioned DIVITENSES Gallicani, AUGUSTENSES, &c. The next word in the same line I have read PRÆF. for *Præfectus*. The sixth line, which immediately follows, has in the beginning a chasm, ending with VS, where Mr Oswald has IB, which is not easily referred to any word I know: But as COH. T..... follows, it leads one to suppose that the preceding word might be *Præfectus*, denoting the chief officer of a cohort. The remainder of the word which began with T being lost, we may conjecture that it was *Tungrorum*, of which name several corps are mentioned in the *Notitia*, and the name frequently occurs in such inscriptions. The beginning of the next line, which is indistinct, may have been the end of this word. There are two provinces of *Narbonne* in Gaul; and the word here probably describes the country of the person who erected this altar.

Any one who will take the trouble of examining the stone itself, which stands at Castle Rushin, will be enabled to judge with more certainty which of the copies is most accurate. The obscurity arises from the face of the stone being chipped or broken.