

V.

ON THE INSCRIPTION AT NEWTON-INSCH, ABERDEENSHIRE.

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The inscription upon the stone at Newton-Insch consists of six short lines, of which the letters are partly those of the Anglo-Saxon Runic system of characters, but more of them those of the Romanesque alphabet introduced by the Christian church, and which gradually superseded the Runes through the influence of the clergy.

In 1867-68 I perceived this inscription to be demonstrably written in the Anglo-Saxon speech, and closely assimilated to the dialect of the Northumbrian gospels. And a paper of mine was read before this Society and printed in its Proceedings.

It seemed to me that the four latter lines could be clearly made out so as to bear the test of the severest Anglo-Saxon scholarship, and my reading was given accordingly.

The first two lines were, however, found to be so perplexing that I suggested two provisional readings for each of them, and I might have done better to leave these two lines altogether apart and unattempted for that time.

It happened very recently that the excellent photographs of the inscription came once more under my attention after a lapse of twelve years.

Before long I thought to perceive a most important element in the second line (the most difficult of all), such as had never been anticipated.

This was a term of nationality in the genitive plural, namely—GUMYRA, the softened form for CUMYRA, and signifying "of the Cumbrians"; just as we write Mont-gomery instead of Mont-comery, "Mount of the Comrians"; thus conforming in English to the laws of Welsh, Cambrian, and Cumbrian grammar.

The inscription is now read thus—

ETLTG (ETHELTOG)
 GUMYRA-MYTH':
 STONOWOETH'
 URGWELISI
 HUSSI
 NOVOY-DUTR.

The Princely Ruler	Principes Dux
Of the Borders of the Cumbrians :	Limitum Cambrorum :
The Stonewrit record	Lapidis carmen
In Yore-Welsh	Antiquè-Wallicè
(His) Home-living	(composuit)
Niece-Daughter	Domestica
(hath composed).	Neptis tanquam Filia.

The final syllable *MYP'* (*myth'*) *MYPA* is also a genitive plural, "of the bounds or Borders." *GUMYRA-MYTHA*, "of the Cumbrian Bounds."

Now, what have we in the first line? A chief cause of my failure to read the first line satisfactorily in 1868 was that I conceived its final character to be the same as that at the beginning of the word, namely a Runic *æ* or a Romanesque *e*. Whereas it now appears to be no other than a Romanesque *g*, like that at the commencement of the second line, which it nearly resembles. The first character in the first line is, as has just been observed *e* or *æ*: the next seems to be *tl* in combination, for shortness; the next is *t*, and then *g*. But what can *ETLTG* mean, or how can it be pronounced? The answer must be that it is a title of rank, subjected to contraction because familiar and well-known. We are to supply the vowels and read *ETEL-TOG* or *ETHEL-TOG*, Princely Commander, or Ruler.

In the fifth line my former reading of *thussi* has been abandoned, as the word seems to be *HUSSI*, doubtless the same as *HUSE* in standard Anglo-Saxon, and being the feminine form of *HUSA*, he who lives in one's house, a home-inmate. And instead of dividing the compound word forming the last line as *NOVO-YDUTR'*, Nevve-Daughters, Niece-

Daughters, I now read rather NOVY-DUTR, Nevey-Daughter, as the plurality is not clear.

For an account of the Government of Cumbria under the Scottish Crown by Princely Rulers, with powers like those of the Lord-Wardens of subsequent times, see Chalmers's *Caledonia*, chapter v.