NOTES ON THE RUNIC ROODS OF RUTHWELL AND BEWCASTLE.
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The two lovely crosses preserved—the one in the parish church of Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, and the other in the parish churchyard of Bewcastle, Cumberland—are of perennial interest to archæologists. In this paper the former will be referred to as a cross, and the latter, for the sake of distinction, as an obelisk. The cross stands within a parish church built on the lowlands washed by the Solway seas : the obelisk has a more lonely site in a parish churchyard on the rolling uplands of Cumberland, within a Roman Camp, beside a Roman way into Scotland. There was a dedication to St Cuthbert in both churches. Various traditions tell how the Cross of Ruthwell was brought by sea, was shipwrecked, was found carved and inscribed, was removed as the result of a dream to a place where it could by heaven's decree pass no further, so that over it a church was erected, and within the church the monument grew till it touched the roof.[1]

[1] Nicolson's " Diary " in *Trans. Cumb. and West. Antiq. and Arch. Soc.* (N.S.), ii. pp. 195–7, 1901 ; Pennant, *Tour*, pp. 85–6 ; Sinclair, *Stat. Acc.* ; Duncan, *Stat. Acc.*

I. RUTHWELL CROSS.

As a result of the operation of a general law of the Reformed Church of Scotland at the Reformation, of an edict of the General Assembly of Aberdeen held on 29th July 1640, and of a more explicit order of the General Assembly, met in St Andrews on 27th July 1642, the " Idolatrous Monuments at Ruthwall " were ordered to be destroyed.[1]

The parish minister of that later date — Rev. Gavin Young (1586–1671)—probably carried out that order.   He did it with some degree of reverence, and left the slightly broken stones within the church to form seats for the worshippers.

In 1690 the Rev. James Lason, the Episcopal minister of Dumfries, informed Archdeacon William Nicolson of Carlisle, the eminent antiquary, of its existence, and sent a copy of the inscriptions to him. Nicolson visited the cross in 1697 and in 1704, and left accounts of his discoveries, which are now published from his letters and diary.[2]   The cross shaft was then broken into three or four parts.   Nicolson forwarded copies of the inscription to Hickes, who published them in his *Thesaurus*[3] (1646–1715).   Dr George Archibald, a native of the county, early in the eighteenth century, left an account of the cross, now published in the Macfarlane *Geographical Collections*.   In his day the stone was " broken in two pieces." [4]

Alexander Gordon, in 1726, in his " *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, gave an account of the cross, and " faithfully copied and exhibited " the inscriptions on two fine plates.[5]

Pennant visited Ruthwell in 1772, and found that " it originally consisted of two pieces." [6]

[1] Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk*, pp. 279, 333.
[2] Nicolson's " Diary " in *Trans. Cumb. and West. Antiq. Soc.* (N.S.), i., ii., iii., iv., v., *var loc.*
[3] *Linguarum Veterum Sept. Thesaurus*, pt. iii. p. 5, 1703.
[4] *Geog. Coll.*, iii. 187, 189, Scot. Hist. Soc. Publication, 1908.
[5] Lond., 1726, pt. ii. pp. 160–161.
[6] *A Tour in Scotland*, Chester, 1774, pp. 85–6.

Richard Gough (1735–1809), the antiquary, employed A. de Car-donnel to draw and engrave two plates, exhibiting the cross in his *Vetusta Monumenta*.[1]

An account of the cross, written by Mr John Craig, minister of Ruthwell, and published in Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 1794, states that the monument then lay in the churchyard " broken into two or three fragments." [2]

In 1802 the next minister, Henry Duncan (1774–1846), pieced the fragments together and erected the shaft within the manse grounds, and added a new transom in 1823. In 1832 Dr Duncan gave an account of the cross to the Society of Antiquaries. It was accom-panied by a fanciful interpretation of the Runic inscription by Mr Thorleifur Gudmonson Repp, and by very accurate drawings.[3] Dr Duncan also wrote an account of the cross for the *New Statistical Account*.[4]

In 1840 John Mitchell Kemble had the honour of correctly inter-preting the runes and associating them with portions of a recently discovered Anglo-Saxon poem entitled " The Dream of the Holy Rood." Kemble's papers were published in the *Archæologia*.[5]

Since that day the monument has engaged the attention of many antiquaries, students of English literature, and architects, such as Professor George Stephens,[6] Copenhagen, Dr Daniel Wilson,[7] Dr Daniel H. Haigh,[8] Dr John Stuart,[9] Dr Wilhelm Victor,[10] Mr George F.

[1] Lond., 1789, vol. ii. (*Soc. Antiq.*, Lond.), plates 54, 55.

[2] Edin., 1794, x. pp. 220, 226 note.

[3] *Arch., Scot.*, vol. iv., pt. ii. pp. 313–26, plates xiii, xiv, xv ; *Ibid.*, pp. 327–336.

[4] Vol. iv., 221–227.

[5] Vols. xxviii. pp. 327–372 ; xxx. (ii.) pp. 31–41.

[6] *Old North. Runic Mons.*, London and Köbenhavn, 1866.

[7] *The Archæology, &c.*, Edin., 1851, pp. 543–549.

[8] *The Conquest of Brit.*, pp. 37–40 ; *Arch. Æliana*, i. (N.S.), 1857, pp. 161–187.

[9] *The Sculpt. Stones*, Edin., 1867, vol. ii. pp. 12–17, plates xix–xxii.

[10] *Die Northumbrischen Runen-steine*, Marburg in Hessen, 1895, pp. 1–13.

Black,[1] Bishop Browne,[2] Professor Albert S. Cook,[3] Professor W. R. Lethaby,[4] Mr J. Romilly Allen,[5] Dr Joseph Anderson,[6] and Sir Martin Conway,[7] and many others.

In 1887 the cross was declared an " ancient monument " under the provisions of " Ancient Monument Protection Act, 1882," and at the instance of the then parish minister—the Rev. James M'Farlane (1889)—it was removed and set up in the church within a specially constructed apse.

" Under date of August 25 in this year (1887) there is the following entry in Mr M'Farlane's pocket-book : ' The cross completed in its new site by Mr Dods, Dumfries—

> Complete height, 18 feet 1 inch.
> In socket, 9 inches.

It stands 17 feet 4 inches, showing all that was originally shown on base.   It stood before, 15 feet 6 inches from the grass.' "[8]

In 1894 moulds for the casts, now seen in public museums, were made by Italian workmen.

The reverence of Mr M'Farlane, as illustrated in a *Memoir* of his life, amounted to a passion for this cross.   The account of his work in restoring the cross to the church reads like a romance. But this son of Levi was a poet as well as a pastor, and as a lover of the antique beautiful is a man deserving everlasting remembrance.

[1] *The Academy*, No. 804, p. 225, 1 Oct. 1887.

[2] *Ibid.*, No. 931, pp. 170–1.

[3] *Ibid.*, No. 930, p. 153, " The Date of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses," Newhaven, 1912.

[4] *The Burlington Mag.*, vol. xxi., No. cxi., June 1912.

[5] *Early Christ. Mon.*, Edin., 1903, pt. iii. pp. 443–448.

[6] *Ibid.*, pt. i. pp. xxix–xxxi ; *Scot. in Early Christ. Times*, Edin., 1881, sec. ser., pp. 232–246.

[7] *Burling. Mag.*, vol. xxi., No. cxii., July 1912.

[8] *James M'Farlane*, Edin. (P.P.), 1892, p. 83.

II. Bewcastle Obelisk or Cross.

Early in the seventeenth century Lord William Howard sent " the head of a cross at Bewcastell " to " the lord of Arundell," who in turn forwarded it to Cotton.   Cotton sent a letter to Camden, who owned that an inscription on it baffled him.[1]

This occurred probably in the year 1615.

In 1629 Henry Spelman transmitted a copy of the inscription to the Danish antiquary, Dr Olaus Worm ; who replied stating that the inscription was in Gothic or Runic letters, and probably to be read— " *Rino fatu Runa stina d,*" which signify " *Rino lapides hos Runicos posuit.*" [2]

In 1685 Archdeacon Nicolson gave a full account of the obelisk in a letter to the Master of University College, Oxford, which was published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of that year.[3]   The substance of the communication is that the inscription " is at present so far lost, that in six or seven lines none of the characters are fairly discoverable save only . . . (five), and these too are incoherent and at a great distance from each other."   On the north side he deciphered " Rynburu," and on the south the words " Gag Ubbo Erlat," *i.e. Latrones Ubbo Vicit.*   In 1703 Nicolson again visited the obelisk and " could not make out even this inscription." [4]

Wanley, in 1705, refers to the inscription on the cross-head as recorded in a Cotton MS., and exhibits the letters, reading them, Rynas Dryhtnes = *mysteria Domini.*[5]

In 1742 George Smith, in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* gave a copy of the main inscription and also drawings of the stone.[6]

In 1794 William Hutchinson, in *The History of the County of Cumber-*

[1] Camden's *Britannia,* 1607, in Bodleian Library, on slip of paper.
[2] *Danicorum Monumentorum Libri Sex,* Hafniæ, 1643, pp. 161–168.
[3] Oxford, 1742, vol. xv. 1287–1291.
[4] *Britannia,* 1772, 180.
[5] *Antiquæ Lit. Septen.,* Oxon., 1705, 248 ;   *Cat.* Cott. Lib., 1802, 575.
[6] *Gent. Mag.,* xii. 132, 318, 368, 529.

land, gave an account of the obelisk, accompanied by a plate.   While accepting Smith's reading, he employed a friend to decipher the inscriptions, some of which were " confused and imperfect," and others he accepted with " great doubt." [1]

In 1801 Mr Henry Howard of Corby Castle, after two "days' employment on the spot," produced careful measurements, delineations, and copies of the inscriptions, and, as a result of these, read a paper to the Society of Antiquaries in May 1801.   It was published along with his drawings in the *Archæologia.* " On the whole," writes Mr Howard, " indeed little more than the vestiges of this inscription remain." [2]

Samuel Lyson's delineation of the inscription on the obelisk for the *Magna Britannia* in 1816 resembles the representation given by Howard, but is not identical with it.[3]

In 1840, when Mr John M. Kemble wrote his learned paper on " Anglo-Saxon Runes," he avers that on the obelisk " the hardly legible remains of a long runic inscription may still be traced." [4]   Only one word, CYNIBURUG or CYNIBURUH, was legible to Kemble.   All this uncertainty regarding the identification of the runes was removed on the advent of the Rev. John Maughan, B.A., rector of Bewcastle (1836–1874), and his contemporary, the Rev. D. H. Haigh of Erdington.   Unfortunately they did not agree in their transcriptions and translations.

Mr Maughan set himself to clear up the mystery, and began to clear the stone itself.   His practical methods were ingenious;   his literary results startling.   In " A Memoir on the Roman Station and Runic Cross at Bewcastle, with an Appendix on the Roman inscription on Caeme Craig and the Runic inscription in Carlisle Cathedral," published

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[1] Carlisle, 1794, vol. i. 80–89.
[2] *Archæologia,* 1808, 2nd edit., xiv. (art. xviii.) 113–118.
[3] Lond., 1816, vol. iv., cxcix.
[4] *Archæologia,* xxviii. p. 347.

in 1857, Mr Maughan writes : " I covered the inscribed parts with mud and sods for a few months, which process entirely removed the thick coat of moss and lichens with which the letters were so thickly covered, without doing any injury to the stone."   Thereafter he made dry rubbings, which he found to be unsatisfactory.   Thereafter he made a mould, and from it a cast, " without any great result."   He next coated the stone with paint, pressed soaked slips of paper into the incised letters, line by line, and after the impressions were dry took rubbings off the moulds.   He concludes his account of his carefulness in these words : " From those rubbings, combined with the previous processes, and a repeated dwelling of the eye upon the letters, and countless tracings of the depressions and marks with the point of the finger, I have succeeded in gaining such knowledge of the almost worn-out characters, that I now venture to offer a version of this interesting inscription." [1]

Maughan's reading and translation of the Runic letters in 1854 run as follows :—

1.	+ Thissig beacn	This beacon
	Thun setton	slender set up
2.	Hwætred Wæthgar Alwfwolthu	Hwætred Wæthgar Alwfwolthu
	Aft Alcfrithu	in memory of Alcfrid
3.	Ean Kyniing	ane King
	Eac Oswiuing	and son of Oswy
4.	+ Gebid heo sinna	pray thou for them their sins
	Sawhula.	their souls. [2]

A casual inspection of the stone now makes one wonder that it required so much industry to make out what seems to be a series of pretty clear characters.   And the discoverer even quotes from Gibson's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1695, the sentence probably furnished by Nicolson, " There is an inscription, too, but the letters are so dim that they are not legible." [3]

[1] Lond., 1857, p. 17, note 21.   [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.   [3] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

The other letters Maughan found on the west face were KSS, part of Kristtus; and †GESSUS KRISTTUS. This unique spelling of the Holy Name makes it suspect. On the top of the south face appear ‡LICE, a dead body ; and on each flat horizontal margin of the panels the words ECGFRI[THU]; RICES[TH]ÆS; KYNINGES FRU[MA]NGEAR. This translated runs, " In the first year (of the reign) of Ecgfrid, King of this Kingdom of North-umbria," and Maughan adds, " *i.e.* A.D. 670, in which year we may conclude that this monument was erected." [1]

On the north face Maughan discovered near the top, GESSUS ; and, in descending order, WULFHERE, MYRCNA KYNG ; KYNESWI[TH]A, KYNNBUR[THU]G.

Stephens improved upon Maughan's reading by adding the word FRITHES ; and he translated the words, " In the first year of the King of ric (realm) this Ecgfrith lie (he) in frith (peace)." [2]

About the same time as Mr Maughan, the Rev. D. H. Haigh of Erdington, near Birmingham, treated these inscriptions with a generous imagination, and published his results in a paper read to the Society of Antiquaries at Newcastle in January 1856.[3] It was entitled " The Saxon Cross at Bewcastle." Five years afterwards he modified his transcription in his *Conquest of Britain by the Saxons.*[4]

Thissig bec	This sigbecun
Un settae h	settae Hwaetred
Waetred eōm	ēm Gærfae boldu
Gaerflwold	
Uæfter barae	æftær baræ
Ymb cyniñg	Ymb Cyning
Alcfridaeg	Alcfridae
Icegædhe	gice gæd heosum
Osum sawlum	sawlum.

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[1] *Memoir*, p. 27.

[2] *Old North. Run. Mon.*, i. 403.

[3] *Arch. Æliana* (N.S.), Newcastle, 1857, i. 149–167.

[4] Lond., 1861, p. 37.

His translations were :—

This beacon of honour	This memorial
set Hwætred	Hwætred set
in the year of the	and carved this
(f(e)lwoldu) great pestilence	monument
after the ruler	after the prince
after King	after King
Alfred	Alcfrid
pray for	pray for
their souls.[1]	their souls.[2]

Maughan, however, prints another reading by Haigh to this effect :

" +[TH]IS : sig becun settæ Hwaetred Witgær Flwoldu Roetb(ert) umæ cyn[ing] Alcfri[th]ae gegidæd hissum saule." [3]

Haigh also found inscribed these words :

+Gessu, Oslaac Cyning Wilfrid Preaster, Cyniwisi, Cyniburug, Cristus, Eanfled, Cyñgn, Ecgfrid, Cyñing, Cyniburug, Cynñgr, Oswu, Cyniñgelt.

This is how Maughan describes Haigh's methods of transcription :— " He then scraped the moss with the point of his knife in the places where he fancied the letters were lurking, and afterwards took a rubbing on strong dry paper." [4]

In the *Memoir* Mr Maughan dealt severely with Mr Haigh's views and readings.

The version of Canon Isaac Taylor is given in facsimile in his article on " Runes " in Chambers' *Encyclopædia*.[5] On the whole it resembles Haigh's version, but has variations. The alphabet, which accompanies it, enables one to read it thus :

+thissigbek unsettaeh wætredeom gærfbold ur(?)ftorbfra thumbgkuning alkfridæg ikegædhe osumsawlum.

The version of Maughan, with a few unimportant emendations, has

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[1] *Arch. Æliana*, i. 152, 153.   [2] *Conquest*, p. 37.
[3] *Memoir*, p. 33.   [4] *Memoir*, p 37.
[5] *Lond. and Edin.*, 1892, ix. 25.

been accepted by such authorities as Stephens, Calverley, Colling-
wood, Browne, Hodgkin, Champneys, and others.   And the transla-
tion arrived at is :

"This victory-column thin (or lofty) set up Hwætred, Wothgar, Olwfwolthu,
after Alcfrith once (lately) King and son of Oswi.   Pray for the high sin of his
soul." [1]

So far back as 1889 Mr J. Romilly Allen, with great shrewdness,
observed : "Unfortunately the inscription on the former (Bewcastle
Cross) is so much obliterated that it cannot be read with any degree
of certainty." [2]

After such an array of evidence, and that recorded by expert
examiners, all going to show how faint and indecipherable the inscrip-
tions on the obelisk at Bewcastle have been for centuries, it would be
hazardous now to dogmatise as to the most accurate version of the
runes.

The only word which appears to have been observed by all, or the
majority, of the investigators was CYNIBURUG, in some form or
other.   That word and a few letters in the name of Prince Ealhfrith
were sufficient for speculators to recall a well-known passage in Bede
as to the Romance of Oswy's son and Penda's daughter.[3]

Of the letters composing the all-important name Alcfrithu, the
letter R is the only one constant among all the readings.   Smith has
triu; Howard, *bfriu*; Lyson, *bfrir*; Maughan, *alkfrithu*; Haigh,
roetb[er]tu and *baræ*; Taylor, *bæræ* ?; photograph, *kfri*; later
authorities, *alcfrith*.

This introducing of the unusual *c* or *k* into the name of Prince
Ealhfrith, and the discovery of the letter *th* in conjunction with the

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[1] Calverley, *Notes on the Early Sculpt. Crosses*, p. 44.
[2] *Mon. Hist. of Brit. Church*, p. 208.
[3] *Hist. Ecc.*, iii. cap. 21 ; Plummer's edition, ii. 176, 198, 405.

next letter *u,* are both noteworthy incidents. It is also worthy of remark that both Haigh and Taylor find the name *Alcfridaeg* in the seventh line, where Maughan finds *Eac Oswiu*[*ing*], and, *vice versa,* they do not obtain it in the fifth line, where Maughan reads it.

It would not affect the argument in favour of a late origin for the obelisk and the cross to concede that Bede, who was a contemporary, and likely to know the facts of the case, was right in distinguishing between Prince Ealhfrith, the legitimate son of Oswiu, and his elder but illegitimate half-brother Ealdfrith. The latter, all the same, being a very learned man, was more likely than his half-brother to have inspired the founder of the cross, if he did not erect it himself. But the word *Alcfrithu* gives rise to suspicion. The Anglo-Saxon name *Ealhfrith* is spelled *Alchfrid,* then *Alhfrid, Alhfridh,* but never *Alcfrith* or *Alkfrith* in early MSS. of Bede and other writers. In Eddi's *Life of Bishop Wilfrid* we find *Alhfritho (Aluchfritho* in MS. A), *Alchfrithus (Ealhfridus)* ; and in Fridegoda's Life (tenth century) *Alhfridus (Alfridus).* In a little work included in the works of Symeon of Durham, entitled *De Regibus Saxonicis,* of late date, the name *Alcfridus* stands for King *Aldfrith.* Florence makes the Prince *Alhfrid* of the Whitby Conference succeed Ecgfrith, and this *Alhfrith* (*i.e.* Aldfrith), "rex Northanhimbrorum," die at Driffield in 705 A.D.

But Alcfrith was not the only notable personage in early times who bore a name composed of the sacred name for peace—*frith.* There was Ecgfrith (685), Wilfrith (709), Frithebert (766), Frithestan (932), Guthfrith, King of Northumbria (927), and many others.

The Alcfrith, chosen for identification with the obelisk at Bewcastle, is the obscurest of them all, and is a mere spectre flitting over an ancient chronicler's page and then disappearing mysteriously. To account for his unrecorded extinction Mr Maughan wrote : " It has been presumed that Alcfrid fell a victim to the plague (of 664). If so,

it is not unreasonable to suppose that he breathed his last in his Saxon city of Bewcastle, and that he was buried here." [1]

VARIOUS DATES ASSIGNED TO THE CROSSES.

Nicolson, Gordon, Smith, Chalmers, " time of the Danes."
1840. Kemble, seventh to ninth centuries.
1856. Haigh, 665.
1857. Maughan, 670.
1865. Dietrich, before 794.
1866. Stephens, 680; afterwards, about 670; also Sweet, Browne, Hammerich,
      Calverley, and others.
1880. Müller, 800–1000.
1887. Allen, ninth to eleventh centuries.
1887. Stokes, eleventh century.
1888. Bradley, eighth century; Skeat, middle of eighth.
1890. Cook, tenth century ; 1913, twelfth century.
1890. Vietor, before 750.
1892. Anderson, 800–1000.
1912. Rivoira, first half of twelfth century.
1912. Lethaby, seventh century.
1913. Hewison, about 946 for Ruthwell; little earlier for Bewcastle, before
      middle of tenth century.
1913. Professor Cook attributes both monuments to King David I. (1080–1153).

[The foregoing and supplementary facts are included in a book by Dr King Hewison, entitled *The Runic Roods of Ruthwell and Bewcastle*, fully illustrated with photographs, shortly to be published in Glasgow.]

[1] *Memoir*, p. 24.