

II.

SOME STRAY INSCRIPTIONS—(1) RUNES ON STANDING STONE AT OYKELL BRIDGE; (2) ON BRACKET AT GLENEAGLES; (3) ON THE KINDROCHIT BROOCH; (4) THE ATHOLL MOTTO; (5) TWO CARVED STONES OF THE URQUHARTS OF CROMARTY. By W. MACKAY MACKENZIE, M.A., F.S.A.Scot.

STONE AT HOTEL, OYKELL BRIDGE, ROSS-SHIRE.

In the garden of the hotel at Oyzell Bridge some 15 miles from Lairg, but on the Ross-shire side of the river, stands a monolith of dark mica schist 10 feet 6 inches high and about 2 feet 6 inches wide (fig. 1). Some modern initials have been cut on the stone, but on the dexter side of the eastern face is a vertical inscription in runes spaced out in four groups. The runes are of the Scandinavian type.

This inscription has long been under a cloud, and one investigator after another has been drawn to it only to lose interest within a very short time. As, however, the stone is still capable of deceiving even the elect, the latest instance having occurred a very few years ago, it is desirable to have the matter cleared up. In the words of a local correspondent: "As the stone has already caused inquiries which are likely to be recurrent, it would be well to have its history recorded in some place where it could be looked up at any future time."

The story of the erection of the stone is this. In the days of a previous tenant of the hotel, some forty or forty-five years ago, a resident English angler found time hanging heavy on his hands, as the river was low and fishing very poor. He therefore conceived the idea of having this great boulder brought from the bed of the stream and set on end. By the help of many men and horses and, as it is carefully noted, abundance of whisky, the task was accomplished. In the



Fig. 1. Standing Stone at Oyzell Bridge, Ross-shire.

Northern Chronicle, Inverness, of 1st February 1922, a native of the district writes that he remembered well the finding and erecting of the stone, and knew the men who were engaged in the work. He also affirmed that at that time there were no runic inscriptions or letters upon it. The next stage is a visit to the hotel by four gentlemen upon a walking tour with scientific interests. One of these was a well-known antiquary. A passion for cutting one's name upon any prominent object is of course very ancient and world-wide. In this case, however, something more seemed to be called for, and the antiquary in question, no doubt for this or some such reason, supplied the names of two members and the initials of another or of the two others in Scandinavian runes, with which he was quite familiar. The result we see. One

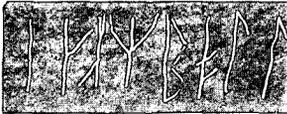


Fig. 2. Runes on Stone at
Oykell Bridge.

group of runes is sufficient to clinch this account (fig. 2). It shows the letters I (or J) K (or C)AMBELL, the significance of which is obvious. An imperfect set of lines on another part of the same face can be set down as a first attempt which failed.

I have kept this account entirely impersonal, and it is not necessary to record the other names or initials. Anyone particularly interested can easily decipher these for himself. Enough has been said to relegate this inscription to its proper category—that of “Bill Stumps his mark.”

AN INSCRIBED IMAGE BRACKET AT GLENEAGLES.

Near Gleneagles House, Perthshire, is a small late featureless chapel. Inserted in the interior of the entrance wall is a corbel or bracket of close-grained sandstone projecting a foot from the wall and measuring 14 inches across the surface. On the convex front, below a moulded margin, is a boldly cut shield, on which the arms of Haldane of Gleneagles are impaled with those of Erskine (fig. 3)—*dexter*, quarterly 1st and 4th, a saltire engrailed (for Haldane); 2nd, a saltire between four roses (for Lennox); 3rd, a bend chequy (for Menteith): *sinister*, a pale (for Erskine). The supporters are likewise divided—an eagle on the Haldane side (fig. 4), a griffin on that for Erskine. The heraldry thus records a Haldane-Erskine marriage. Below the shield is a band or scroll bearing groups of letters in five sections, the letters being Gothic minuscules 1 inch in height with some signs of abbreviation (fig. 5). The undulating character of the surface of the scroll, with the intrusion on it of parts of the heraldic design, has made it necessary to confine the lettering to short sections and so imposed compression.

Some time ago a reading was provided in which the first word was taken to be *cystar*, an abbreviation of *cystarna*, and the second *cyst* with a sign of contraction to stand for *cyst[arn]arum*, signifying "Cistern



Fig. 3. Front View of Heraldic Bracket at Gleneagles.

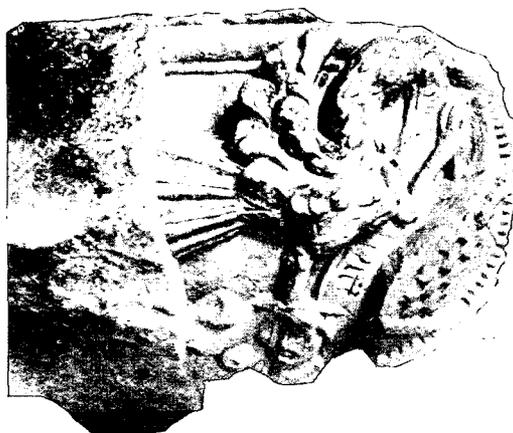


Fig. 4. Side View of Heraldic Bracket at Gleneagles.

of Cisterns," the assumptions being made that there was in question a variant spelling of *cisterna* and that the object was a font or holy water stoup. But nothing in the nature of a font meets the case, as

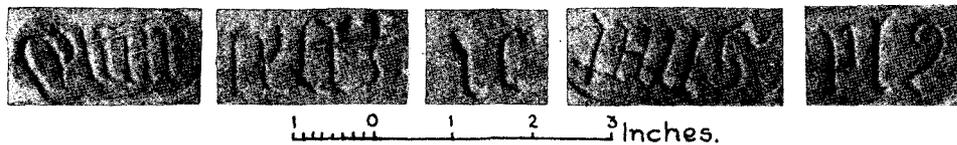


Fig. 5. Inscription at Gleneagles.

the surface is quite flat. The central pair of letters are in no doubt. They obviously stand for I C, that is, *Jesus C(h)ristus*. The fourth panel was read from the cast upside down, so that the interpretation may be disregarded. A critical question arises in the final panel, which was believed to give the Arabic figures 412 and to represent the date 1412.

That Arabic numerals cut on stone should occur so early in Scotland

is not inconceivable. At Corstorphine Church we have the dates 1429 and 1455 cut in these numerals on the ingoing of the south doorway in the chancel. In the Gleneagles inscription, however, not only is there the strange omission of the millennial figure which should go in front of the 4, but it must be remarked that the shapes of the figures are quite wrong for the time and very unlike those at Corstorphine.

On the face of it, this reading in itself is therefore not at all plausible. In any case, even if "cistern" could be used for a font, the thing is not a font. We may therefore approach the problem with an open mind. Taking the final sign as our starting-point, we can see that it is the familiar contraction for the genitive termination *orum*, and the word can be read as *piorum*. The group immediately preceding gives us the letters *panis*, which may be expanded as *pro animis*. We thus reach a quite familiar mediæval formula, *pro animis piorum*—"for (on or behalf of) the souls of the pious." The I C is as already explained.

The first two words begin with a similar enigmatic sign which will be cleared up presently. The contractual sign at the end of No. 2 is the ordinary one for *us*, and the combination preceding it is to be read as *Crt*, the whole apparently a compression of the name *C[h]r[is]tus*. The corresponding letters in the first word are *Mar* for *Maria*. The group preceding each of these names must thus be part of a known formula and is to be read *ave*, the turn upwards to the left in each case standing for a *v* overwritten and also suggesting the *e*. The initial *a* as here used, in so far as it differs from the other *a*'s, owes its character to its position at the beginning of the word. As to the medial *a*'s in *Mar* and *panis*, it is to be observed that after the middle of the fifteenth century the old looped minuscule *a* was giving place to a square letter with a horizontal bar, as we see it here. The rather coarsely formed letter *s* and the *t* with the long, heavily scored cross-stroke in *Crtus* are in use, at earliest, about the close of the fifteenth century. But the marriage indicated by the impaled arms gives us a closer approximation in time. James Haldane of Gleneagles married Margaret, daughter of Robert, fourth Lord Erskine, and the marriage contract is dated 14th December 1518, Haldane being then under age.¹ Some subsequent stage in the first quarter of the sixteenth century is thus a probable date for the bracket, though it may be of a few years later: Haldane died in 1547.

The inscription as a whole thus reads: *ave Maria ave Christus pro animis piorum*, with the initials I C in the centre. The bracket was apparently for an image of the Mother and Child.

Two difficulties occur as to the second phrase. First, *Christus* is in

¹ *Scots Peerage*, vol. v. p. 609.

the nominative, not the vocative, case. If the transliteration is correct, this might be set down to that indifference to grammatical rectitude not without other examples in mediæval inscriptions. In the second place, it must be confessed that *ave Christus*, even if established, is not strictly an appropriate form of address. To that extent again it is not quite satisfactory. On the other hand it cannot be dismissed as impossible, in view of the usage witnessed to by *The Myroure of Oure Lady* (fifteenth century) written for the Augustinian nuns of Sion (Surrey): "Some saye at the begynnyng of this salutacyon Ave benigne Jesu and some saye after Maria mater Dei wyth other addycyons at the ende also."¹ There was evidently a good deal of popular looseness in the treatment of a familiar formula, *Ave* becoming rather an invocation than a salutation.

THE KINDROCHIT BROOCH.

The circumstances of the finding of an engraved silver-gilt brooch (fig. 6) during excavations at Kindrochit Castle were explained in the previous volume of the *Proceedings* (1925-6, p. 118), where it was stated that the meaning of the inscription (fig. 7) had not been determined. The letters are Gothic and are treated decoratively in connection with a floral design but are thrown into relief by cross-hatching of the field. Such inscriptions usually start from the sinister side of the pin and continue clockwise. Following this rule I read :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
A	M	I	I (or J)	O	S	U	E	N	L	I	A	U	D	I

No. 11 has been almost wholly obliterated. No. 14 is a difficult form which I could not so far parallel but which had apparently originated in a D. In No. 2 the first limb of the M is given by the down stroke of the A, a very usual resource. The I of No. 3 seems to be quite definitely separated from what goes before. The questions now are: Is this a continuous inscription in full or are the letters merely initial? Are there abbreviations? What is the language? Is it, as suggested, a magic formula?

If we surrender the necessity of beginning the reading with the first letter on the sinister side of the pin, we are struck by the collocation in the two succeeding panels of JO SUE, which are unmistakable. This suggested the old French form JO SUI for the modern JE SUIS—

¹ *Early Eng. Text Soc.*, p. 79. Cf. also the mediæval hymn, *Ave verum corpus*.
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I am. Acting on the assumption that it might be an inscription in old French copied on a late brooch, I spaced out the letters thus :

JO SU EN LIAU DI AML

This looked promising; but if it were a copied inscription there would

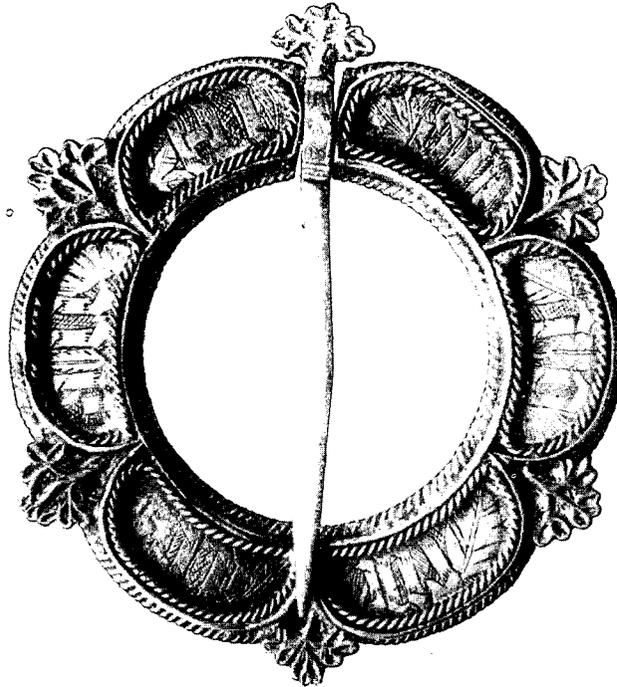


Fig. 6 The Kindrochit Brooch.

probably be examples of a similar formula on earlier brooches. The forms assumed are in twelfth- or thirteenth-century French. A little



Fig. 7. Inscription on the Kindrochit Brooch.

investigation settled the matter. An article in the *Archæological Journal* for 1916¹ gave two examples of antique silver brooches similarly inscribed

¹ Vol. lxxiii. pp. 298-301.

in twelfth-century northern French but in Lombardic lettering. On one brooch were the words:

i.e. JO SU ICI A TI VCI
 JE SUIS ICI A TOI VOICI
 I am here for thee, Behold!

The other came much closer to the Kindrochit case, as it read:

i.e. JO SU ICI EN LIU DE AMI
 JE SUIS ICI EN LIEU D' AMI
 I am here in place of a friend.

If we leave out ICI, this is just the inscription on the Kindrochit Brooch. The article says that other examples are known with slightly varying inscriptions to the same effect. The brooch, then, is a love-token or love-brooch with a fixed formula, which is also known on mediæval rings. In the British Museum is a gold ring with clasped hands and a legend on the outer face, half of which is our inscription again:

JO SUI ICI EN LIU DE AMI.

This ring is said to be English of the fourteenth century.¹

We can now infer what happened in the Kindrochit case. The maker of the Scottish brooch copied from an old, perhaps well-worn, inscription, probably in Lombardic lettering. It is likely he had no proper knowledge of either the script or the language. Hence the A (No. 12) in spelling LIEU and the I (No. 15) for E in DE. Apparently he did not know what to make of No. 11 as he got it and just produced something like it. Such lapses are only too common in mediæval inscriptions. Even in their own time blunders crept into the French lettering on these early brooches.

THE ATHOLL MOTTO.

On part of the building of Balvenie Castle, as described in the same volume of the *Proceedings* (1925-6, p. 144), appear the arms of John Stewart, fourth Earl of Atholl (1542-79), with the motto, as there read, FVRTH FORTVIN AND FIL THI FATRIS. This is the legend which is now standardised in the case of the Murray house and branches as FURTH FORTUNE AND FILL THE FETTERS. So it appears in Crawford's *Peerage* (1716) and Nisbet's *Heraldry* (1722). But no one has ever been able to extract any intelligible meaning from these words.

¹ *Catalogue of Finger Rings*, etc. (Franks Bequest), by O. M. Dalton, p. 162, No. 1006. I owe this reference to Mr A. O. Curle. Cf. for other cases *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, vol. iii. p. 38, and *Catalogue of the Loan Collection of . . . Jewellery, South Kensington*, 1872, No. 859.

In the paper referred to the suggestion is put forward that the motto should run FILE THY FETTERS. The same amendment was made in a version of some three hundred years ago as FILE OFF THY FETTERS;¹ and John Macky in his *Journey through Scotland*, published in 1723, actually repeats this in the form FURTH FORTUNE AND FILE THE FETTERS, "which," he writes, "I desire all the Heralds of Europe to explain."² This version of the motto, then, gives no more satisfactory meaning than the other. It is indeed obvious that filing off the fetters must precede and not follow a going forth.

In Workman's *Heraldic MS.* of about 1565-66 the motto appears as FURTH FORTOUN AND FIL THY FETTERIS. It seems to be established by these two earliest occurrences that FILL THY is the correct sequence. The subsequent modifications appear to have sprung from a desire to get some sort of meaning into the sentence. The results are unsuccessful, because the attack was made in the wrong place.

I suggest that the obscurity is due to a misunderstanding of the final word. That is not in origin FETTER but FERTER, in its old general sense of a small box or casket. This word was commonly used to signify a casket containing holy relics, as when the King "offerit to Sanct Serfis *fertier* 14/."³ Bellenden in his translation of Boece tells us that Alexander III. "take up the bonis of his grandame Sanct Margaret, and put thame in ane precious *fertour* of silver." In the Latin original the words are *capsulae argenteae . . . imposuit*, where *capsula* is a small box. The relics of St Ninian were carried at the annual festival in a *fertir*.⁴ The composer of this motto, concerned to maintain the alliteration, has had recourse to this word as the only possible one in that place, so that the meaning of the whole is "Forth Fortune and fill thy coffers." Money and valuables were kept in strong boxes. The double meaning has a parallel in the Scottish use of "kist" or chest for coffin: in this sense indeed "kiste" occurs in the life of St Ninian just noticed.⁵

The plural of FERTER would be FERTERIS, but in time, as the rule was, this would be syncopated to FERTRIS. The occurrence of a group of three consonants in the middle of a word was too awkward to persist, and the first R was likely to drop out or be assimilated to the following letter. This it is which has given rise to the form read at Balvenie as FATRIS. In the life of St Ninian we have even the verb form *fe(r)terit*,⁶ where the first *r* does not appear in the MS. but has been inserted by the editors. The plural of "fetter" would follow an analogous course.

¹ Stevenson's *Heraldry in Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 211.

² *L.H. Treas. Accts.*, vol. iv. p. 176.

³ *Legends of the Saints*, Ninian, l. [for line] 733.

⁴ As cited, line 617.

⁵ P. 152.

⁶ As cited, line 732.

SOME STRAY INSCRIPTIONS: THE URQUHART CARVED SLABS. 181

Thus in Barbour's *Brus* we have *fetrys* for "feters." But the word of more familiar use would in time oust the other, particularly when "feters" as shrines ceased to exist in Scotland. Thus would arise the misunderstanding of what was in origin a plain exhortation: "Go forth Fortune and fill thy coffers."

THE URQUHART CARVED SLABS FROM CROMARTY CASTLE.

There has recently been added to the Museum a sculptured slab which, as Hugh Miller wrote, "has, perhaps, more of character impressed upon



Fig. 8. Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty.

it than any other piece of sandstone in the Kingdom."¹ It is 5 feet $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, 2 feet 9 inches wide, and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and bears, in addition to

¹ *Scenes and Legends*, p. 94.

other matter, the Urquhart arms with the initials of Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (fig. 8), to whose order and—in part at least if not entirely—after whose design it was prepared. It is dated *A(nno) M(undi) 5612*, *A(nno) C(hristi) 1651*.

The stone (fig. 9) was originally inserted over the chimney in the hall of the castle of Cromarty, till the building was pulled down in 1772 by a new proprietor, who erected in its place a mansion after the taste of the time. Much decorative work on the old castle was broken up, but

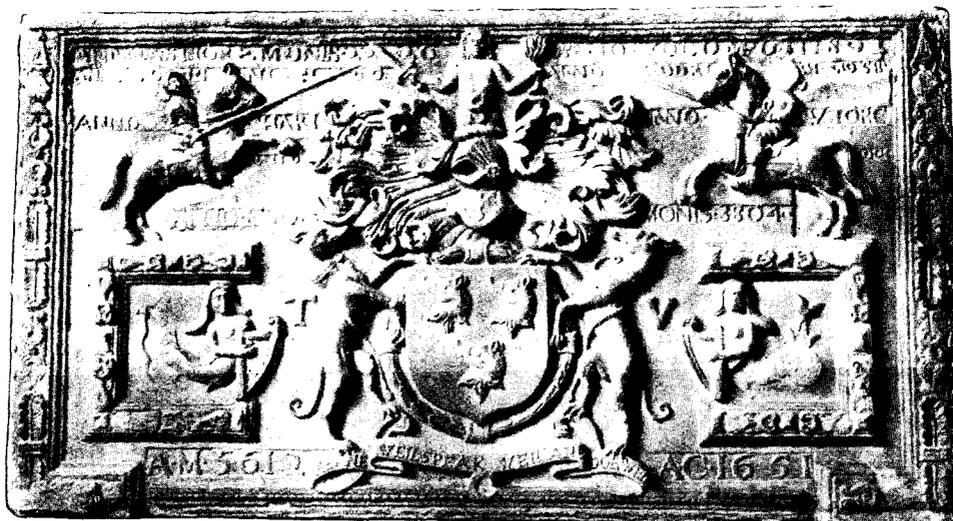


Fig. 9. Sculptured Heraldic Stone from Cromarty Castle.

this stone with another also carved was preserved. I am indebted for its subsequent history to the private correspondence of a Cromarty lady, herself a granddaughter of Urquhart of Greenhill, a relative of the main stock, who was both landed proprietor and herring merchant in the town.¹ His granddaughter was seventy-eight years of age at the time of writing (1847). Thus seventy-five years after the event she could tell how the stone was brought from the old castle to her grandfather's house in the town. When the house was sold, this Urquhart *palladium* was sent to Colonel Gordon as nearest of kin, who gave the stone to Mr Urquhart of Braelangwell, a small estate in the neighbouring parish of

¹ On Urquhart of Greenhill, see Hugh Miller's *Scenes and Legends*, chap. xvii. Greenhill is now Rosefarm. To Miss F. D. Middleton, Rosefarm, I owe the opportunity of seeing this correspondence, which is in the possession of F. Fortescue Urquhart, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, who has kindly allowed me to use it.

Kirkmichael. Next appeared a Thomas Urquhart, who had been a captain of a West India ship and about 1818 came north and purchased the property of Kinbeachie, an old Urquhart seat in the parish of Resolis, which had belonged to his grandfather. He claimed to be head of the old family, but his link with the Kinbeachie branch was illegitimate. Nevertheless he took possession of the stone and gave it place in Kinbeachie House, which is now a roofless ruin. Thomas Urquhart left no family, and Kinbeachie passed to other hands. At some time the ancient, much-wandered relic was brought from the house and inserted in the side of a porch built on to one of a row of cottages near by occupied by the workers on the farm. There it reposed as a local curiosity till the farm was acquired last year by the Board of Agriculture, who presented the stone to the Museum. It was removed and brought to the Museum at the expense of a number of ladies and gentlemen of the name of Urquhart, for whose kindly respect and generosity all of us owe them a meed of thanks. Surely no such stone has been so happy in its fate to find at every stage reverent hands to save it from destruction. It has suffered little damage; a small patch on the upper dexter corner has been at some time repaired in plaster.

The slab bears abundant evidence of colour, but some at least of what we see has been due to renewal, not always of the original tints. Thus the ground of the shield is still gold, but the three boars' heads should be red with tusks and tongues of blue, whereas they are coloured black with the original red showing where the later coat has peeled. It is further clear, as Sir Thomas himself incidentally records, that these impossibly posed boars' heads were, to begin with, bears' heads. Some points about the heraldic achievement will come up in the course of what follows. It may here be remarked that the helmet is given a decorative position and does not rest, as it should, on the shield.

The other ornamental features of the slab speak for themselves. They are carved in relief; where the word ANNO is incised in the upper dexter corner this is done on the plaster repair. Much of the decorative detail is of rather unusual design, including the device of the broken frame for the sirens. Sirens, however, are familiar on the plaster ceilings of the period. On each side is a repeating ornament of two opposed leaves and two lyre-shaped devices culminating in a vase supporting a finial. This device is returned along the bottom margin, but the main part of this is occupied with an egg-and-spindle ornament. The top margin is plain except for the inner moulding, which is carried all round. We may take note of the horsemen, each wearing a helmet open in front with gorget or neck-piece, a cuirass or back and breast pieces, and armour for arms and thighs, with riding boots. Each carries

a spear or horseman's "staff," as it was called, "charged on the thigh," in military phraseology. This "staff" or lance was obsolete or regarded as obsolete in the European armies of the time and had no place among the mounted men of the English New Model army. But the Scottish cavalry, like the cavalry of Spain, kept to the old weapon with quite effective results on more than one occasion. At Dunbar Drove (1650) the front rank of the Scottish cavalry was composed of lancers, and by their means Cromwell's horse were at first thrown back in confusion. So far as I know, this is the only contemporary representation of a Scottish lancer. It may be taken to prove that the work on the slab was done in Scotland, and not, like Sir Thomas's printing, in London.

What specially calls for notice is the intrusion of various names and dates on the upper part, which are of a character unparalleled on any other monument. This is no ordinary impersonal heraldic slab of the kind found in many Scottish castles since the fifteenth century. For explanation of these features and for the significance of the date 1651 we must turn to the career and labours of Sir Thomas Urquhart.

It is not necessary, nor is this the place, to enter upon any exhaustive account of that extraordinary personage. Much has been written upon him by various hands. But the stone is too plainly stamped with his personality for that to be left out of account.

Sir Thomas succeeded his father in the Sheriffdom of Cromarty and its lands with other property in Aberdeenshire in the year 1642, being thirty or thirty-one years of age¹ and inheriting, he tells us, "twelve or thirteen pounds sterling of debt, five brethren all men, and two sisters almost marriageable, to provide for, and less to defray all this burden with by six hundred pounds sterling a year" than his father had inherited without debts.² Inevitably the burden of debt was increased by damage done to the property and personal losses in the wars of the time,³ besides other changes. For Sir Thomas was a Royalist, though of that persuasion in his usual individual manner. Divine Right he counted among the "*pie fraudes* and political whimsies."⁴ He writes of himself that "He never received money from King nor Parliament, State nor Court, but in all his employments, whether preparatory to or executorial in war, was still his own paymaster, and had orders from himself."⁵ Such an utterance is very characteristic. In another place he explains that the Treatise in hand could not have been written had he not been

¹ The contract of his father's marriage with the fourth daughter of the fourth Lord Elphinstone is dated 9th July 1606 (Fraser-Macintosh's *Antiquarian Notes* (1913), p. 207). Sir Thomas says he was born five years after the marriage (*Works*, p. 340). The references are to the Maitland Club edition of Urquhart's writings.

² P. 340.

³ Pp. 373-4. Cf. *Acta Parl. Scot.*, vol. vii. p. 479.

⁴ P. 276.

⁵ P. 275.

allowed out of confinement on parole, "such an antipathie I have to any kinds of restraint wherein myself is not entrusted."¹ It was all but an effluence of his supreme egoism. He lived in a world of his own, in which his own family and himself, his own transcendent merits and his transcendental schemes in literature and science, and his personal trials "as another Andromeda, chained to the rock of hard usage," bulked more largely than any other elements. A very considerable part of his *Logopandecteisio*n or *Introduction to the Universal Language* is taken up with a recital of his enormous sufferings at the hands of his creditors, and rhetorical denunciations of usury and avarice. Whatever aversion he might have had from the Presbyterian theory of government on its merits, was made adamant by the fact that the ministers of the three parishes of which he was practically sole heritor had secured or were pressing for augmentation of stipend, while the minister of Cromarty, because Sir Thomas would not authorise "a professed enemy to his House" to erect a pew in the parish church, "did so rail against him and his family in the pulpit at several times . . . more like a scolding tripe-seller's wife than good minister."² The treatise *Ekskubalauron*,³ more familiarly known as the *Jewel*, was written for the laudation of Scotland in general and Sir Thomas in particular: "seeing Scotland was never loaded with so much disreputation, for covetousness and hypocrisie, as it is at this present; and that the Knight for whom this treatise is intended, hath, as a patriot, some interest in the good name thereof."⁴ Sir Thomas is throughout referred to in the third person and the writer professes to be someone anxious only to do him a service, "having before my eyes some known treatises of the author, whose muse I honour, and the straine of whose pen to imitate is my greatest ambition."⁵ Yet even if the style did not betray in every sentence the writer to be Sir Thomas himself, his own words make so much clear. For he cannot refrain even from applauding his own deception, when he writes of the book, "It mentioneth Sir Thomas Urquhart in the third person, which seldom is done by any author in a Treatise of his own penning."⁶

Whatever the contents of these treatises, however, their purpose was one and the same. Sir Thomas had joined the army of Charles, who had been crowned at Scone on 1st January 1651, and followed it to its defeat at Worcester on 3rd September, where he was captured. His experiences as a prisoner were as exceptional as all the other

¹ P. 408.

² P. 281.

³ A Greek-Latin compound for "gold out of mire." *Auron* is the Latin *aurum* (gold) Graecised.

⁴ P. 211.

⁵ P. 292.

⁶ P. 183.

happenings of his life. He was at first confined in The Tower, but "a most generous gentleman Captain Gladmon" spoke in his favour to the Lord General Cromwell, "that reverend preacher, Mr Roger Williams of Providence in New England," before he had even set eyes on Sir Thomas, made "frequent and earnest solicitation" on his behalf, and on the recommendation of Cromwell himself he was released on parole to the extent of London.¹ As a result he hurriedly published in 1652 and 1653 the two treatises just mentioned, and what he says in the *Jewel* (1652) is merely repeated at length and in fuller detail at the end of its successor: "The scope of this Treatise is, for the weal of the publick in the propagation of learning and vertue throughout the whole Isle of Great Britain, in all humility to intreat the honourable Parliament of the Commonwealth . . . to grant to Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty his former liberty, and the enjoyment of his own inheritance, with all the immunities and priviledges thereto belonging."²

Another literary effort by Urquhart, with the same end of speedy release in view, is more notorious. This was the tract entitled "PANTOXRONOXANON³ or A Peculiar Promptuary of Time Wherein (not one instant being omitted since the beginning of motion) is displayed A most exact Directory of all particular Chronologies in what Family soever: And that by deducing the true Pedigree and Lineal descent of the most ancient and honourable name of the VRQVHARTS in the house of CROMARTIE, since the Creation of the world until this present yeir of God 1652." This tractate, like all Urquhart's books, was printed and published in London, since Scotland suffered "for want of able and skillful printers." The meaning of this announcement is that a complete pedigree of the Urquharts and their associated families was provided, in order to serve as a standard of reference for the chronology of all other families. It was to be a new Calendar. Further, this production was but anticipatory of "the great chronicle of the house of Urquhart," in which Sir Thomas was "to make mention of the illustrious families from thence descended, which as yet are in esteem in the countries of Germany, Bohemia, Italy, France, Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, and several other nations of a warmer climate, adjacent to that famous territory of Greece, the lovely mother of this most ancient and honourable stem." It is this ancestral connection with Greece that led Sir Thomas to make such a use of barbarously compounded Greek words as titles for his books and names for supposititious ancestors and to find all the place names of his shire explicable as "pure and perfect Greek." Finally he was resolved, he says, "for

¹ Pp. 408-9.

² P. 179.

³ The last part of the compound should be CANON or KANON not CH(=X)ANON.

confirmation of the truth in deriving of his extraction from the Ionian race of the Princes of Achaia, and in the deduction of all the considerable particulars of the whole story . . . to produce testimonies of Arabick, Greek, Latin, and other writers of such authentic approbation, that we may boldly from thence infer consequences of no less infallible verity than any that is not founded on faith by means of a Divine illumination, as is the story of the Bible, or on reason, by vertue of the unavoidable inference of a necessary concluding demonstration, as that of the elements of Euclid." This attractive task was never undertaken.

The pedigree consists of 153 names of male ancestors and 146 names of mothers. For most they are mere names, but a surprising number are furnished with some amount of biographical detail. The list begins with Adam "surnamed thè Protoplast" and ends with Sir Thomas himself "agnamed Parresiastes," that is "free-speaker." Incidentally the line of mothers includes "Termuth, who was that daughter of Pharaoh Amenophis which found Moses amongst the bulrushes," a lady who "by many is supposed to have been the Queen of Sheba," and other women famous in themselves or the near relatives of men of fame. From this ingenuous compilation come the names on the slab, these being as it were signal personalities in the long succession of Urquharts.

Taking these in order of succession we find prominence in the mid-field of the slab given to ESORMON, "sovereign Prince of Achaia," the first to be called Urquhart, *i.e.* in the Greek *Ourochartos*, "fortunate or well-beloved." "He had for his arms, three banners, three ships and three ladies in a field *dor*, with the picture of a young lady above the waste (? waist), holding in her right hand a brandished sword, and a branch of myrtle in her left, for crest; and for supporters, two Javanites after the souldier-habit of Achaia, with this motto in the scroll of his coat-armour" (in Greek, of course): "These three are worthy to behold." This is a record of coat-armour 2139 years before Christ. Esormon was sixteenth in order from Adam. The lower name in the top dexter corner is MOLIN, "of whom are descended the Clanmolinespick in Ireland." He is No. 40 in the succession, and a part of Africa "after his name, is till this hour called Molinea." "The Scotobrigants were the race of Molin in Spain," and Molin's son married the sister of Hiber, "after whom Ireland was called Hibernia." This son's mother-in-law was Scota, and his second son was therefore called Scotus, "of whose progenie, shortly after, the surname of Scot took its beginning." Molin is thus an important link. The fiftieth is RODRIGO, who, "being invited by his kindred the Clanmolinespick into Ireland, bore rule in that country all the days of his life, with so much applause and good success, that of whom is descended

the Clanrurie, of which name there were twenty-six rulers and kings in Ireland before the days of Fergus the first, King of Scots in Scotland." CHARUS, who has place beside the dexter horseman, is not found under that name in the printed pedigree, but his date corresponds there to APSICOROS, who married a daughter of Marcus Coriolanus, the tragic Roman. ASTIOREMOM in the top dexter corner was No. 83 in line and brought about a change in the family heraldry. He flourished in 361 B.C. and killed the first king of the Picts in a duel, thus winning a great battle at Farnua (Farness) near Cromarty. "For his valour, honesty and eloquence . . . he was induced to change his old motto and embrace this" (again in Greek): "*Mean, speak and do well,*" which device continued ever afterwards. I have no hesitation in attributing this didactic formula to Sir Thomas himself. Astioremon it was also who changed the myrtle branch in the hand of the lady in the crest to a palm. What the object in this place on the slab is intended to be, it is hard to say. Of LUTORK, the eighty-fifth in succession, who flourished 335 B.C., much is said. In defiance of all historic chronology he is married to a sister of Fergus the first, with whom he served as captain-general of the forces. The place where the marriage was celebrated was called "Glen-Vrquhart or Glenurchi (*i.e.* Glenorchy in Argyll), and that in honour of the Odocharties, Ochonchars, Clanrurie, Scotobrigants, Clanmolinespick and Esormon, who were all of Lutork's predecessors and surnamed Urquharts." VOCOMPOS in the top sinister corner is also the subject of a long note. His date is 775 A.D. and his two brothers were named Phorbas and Hugh, from whom "the name of Forbes and Macky had their beginning." Hector Boece, it is admitted, gave the Forbeses a different origin, but, it is severely remarked, "without other ground then the meer ambition of the said Boece for the honour of his own name"—an unpardonable offence, apparently, in the case of anybody not named Urquhart. Vocompos, too, changed the three lions' heads of the family arms for three *bears'* heads erased, having killed three bears in the Caledonian Forest, and the supporters to two greyhounds. Of the change from bears' heads to boars' heads Sir Thomas has nothing to say.

Such a composition does not call for the heavy hand of historical criticism. Only we may demur when at the beginning of the fourteenth century William de Monte Alto, an historical figure, is introduced as an Urquhart in the direct line. He was a Norman of a family located in Wales as well as in Forfarshire and other parts of Scotland, and the name subsequently became Mowat through the French form Mohaut. This particular branch held the hereditary Sherifdom of Cromarty in the late thirteenth century. In the early fourteenth century the

Sheriffdom was possessed by the Earls of Ross, and on the resignation of William, Earl of Ross, was conferred upon Adam Urquhart. The index of charters¹ records a grant to this effect in 1358, but it is possible that this is merely a confirmation. In any case the first Urquhart in the Sheriffdom was called Adam—a happy coincidence in view of the pedigree—but had no connection with the Monte Alto or Mohaut family.

The figures on the slab must now be explained. At the base we have A.M., "the year of the world," 5612 equated with the "year of Christ," A.C. 1651. But the other figures are in neither category. Esormon, for example, was born, we are specifically told, in the year of the world 1810 and lived 2139 years before the incarnation.² But the stone says "in the year of Esormon 3804." This must be taken to mean that the year 1651 was 3804 years since the birth of Esormon, and so with the others. In fact, however, each date so calculated, except that of Vocompos, is two years short of the proper number—Astioremon, indeed, by a further slip, 202 years wrong. With these exceptions, the numbers are really calculated for the year 1649, when the contents of the stone may have been designed. That it may depend upon an earlier version is further suggested by the circumstance that one of the names on the stone, that of Charus, does not appear in the printed pedigree, where chronologically its place is taken by APSICOROS. On the other hand, in the summary at the end of the print CHAR does have place. But the issue is not worth further analysis. Only the slab cannot be later than the early part of 1651, since Sir Thomas was a prisoner from September in that year and had but five months' leave to visit his home in 1652. And 1651 has its difficulties, since in that year and the next the estate of Cromarty "was sequestrat by the English" and the furniture of the house and plenishing of the home farm sold for behoof "of the then pretendit Commonwealth of England."³ The circumstances of the actual production of the stone are therefore somewhat mysterious. Nor do we know where it was cut; the admirable sculpture, particularly of the greyhounds, shows a very skilled hand, which is scarcely likely to have been local, but may have come from no farther than Morayshire.

I have necessarily confined myself to a consideration of that part of the personality of Sir Thomas which is stamped upon this slab. But there was another side, that of the man whose library was his pride, a collection of books of which "there were not three which were not of mine own purchase . . . compiled like to a compleat nosegay of flowers, which in my travels I had gathered out of the garden of above sixteen several kingdoms";⁴ who "would be glad, that in every parish of

¹ *Reg. Mag. Sig.*, vol. i. p. 597.

² *Acta Parl. Scot.* vol. vii. p. 479.

³ *Works*, p. 153.

⁴ *Works*, p. 402.

Scotland there were a free schoole and a standing library in the custody of the minister, with this proviso, that none of the books should be embezzled by him or any of his successors, and he impowered to perswade his parishioners in all he could to be liberal in their dotations towards the school, and magnifying of the library"; desiring also "encouragement to the stationer and printer; that being the noblest profession amongst merchants, and this among artificers."¹ But beyond all this is the fact that in 1653 he produced his translation of the first two books of Rabelais, while a third book was issued from his papers after his death. What he had accomplished is recognised as the most successful of all translations from one language to another, a conveyance of the spirit of the original as well as the meaning. As James Boswell is the greatest of biographers, so Sir Thomas Urquhart is the greatest of translators. Both were Scotsmen, and no one would have gloried so effulgently in



Fig. 10. Carved Slab from Cromarty Castle.

this pre-eminence as Sir Thomas himself. He had the true interests of the literary man, to whom nothing else mattered so much as his art: "as it is perceivable," he wrote, "that all Scots are not Presbyterians, nor yet all Scots Papists, so would not I have the reputation of any learned man of the Scottish nation to be buried in oblivion, because of his being of this or this, or that, or yon, or of that other religion."² The stone has thus a further interest as a link with a classic of English letters and the only memorial of a distinguished Scotsman.

Through the kindness of Lady Ross of Cromarty I am able to show you another carved slab (fig. 10) from the old castle of the Urquharts. After the demolition of the castle, it was inserted in the wall of an underground passage leading to the sunk flat of the new house, and there it remained for at least a century. It was thus a good deal marred by damp and exposure before being placed above a room mantelpiece in Cromarty House. Owing to the overlap of its stone frame at either end,

¹ *Works*, p. 282.

² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

its full extent is not seen. In the central circular panel the hunter winds his horn, while the others are occupied by animals in action, and below is a double design of a dog pursuing a deer on either side of a stiff festoon of flowers. The upper space is occupied with crudely attached grape-bunches flanked by winged heads, and a thistle slipped appears between each of the two outer pairs of panels. These details are together typical of the seventeenth century, but before the time of Sir Thomas Urquhart, who, in any case, having no interest in sport, would not have selected such a design. He tells us how, when a gentleman visitor went walking and wading in pursuit of wild-fowl, he himself remained behind "in diversion of another nature, such as optical secrets, mysteries of natural philosophie, reasons for the variety of colours, the finding out of the longitude, the squaring of a circle, and wayes to accomplish all trigonometrical calculations by sines, without tangents, with the same compendiousness of computation, which, in the estimation of learned men, would be recounted worth six hundred thousand partridges, and as many moor-fowles."¹ His interests were thus very remote from those of the country gentleman of the time; he would not have troubled to procure such a memorial as this. The stone dates, in all probability, from the time of his father, also called Sir Thomas, that is somewhere about 1620, or possibly was prepared for the new house which the elder Sir Thomas built in 1633. The work as a whole is much cruder, both in design and execution, than that of the slab in the Museum, but on the other hand has suffered much from exposure to weather.

¹ *Works*, p. 331.