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A SYSTEM OF transliteration FOR OLD ENGLISH Runic INSCRIPTIONS.

The study of the Old English runic character has an interest not generally recognised even by specialists. In the first place, it is descended from the native character of the Germanic peoples, East, North and West; in the second, its special development in this country throws useful light on the pre-history of Old English; and, in the third, a cursory glance at "Cædmon's Hymn" or "Bede's Death-Song" will show how vastly superior as an instrument for recording the sounds of Old English it is to the latin alphabet, which had eventually to borrow from it for use in England the characters 'þ' and 'w.' Inscriptions such as those on the Ruthwell Cross and the Franks Casket are among the most valuable monuments of archaic Old English, and these, together with a selection of less well-known examples, will be given below in the notation I suggest. For some years past I have been using it in pamphlets privately printed for class purposes, and I have now been asked to expound the system for the benefit of a friend who wishes to adopt it in a forthcoming paper.

Of the twenty-four characters of the original *futhorc* fifteen (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 22) have come down with little or no change in form or value. Three (12, 13 and 15) are otiose, of which 15 is a mere fossil. Five (6, 7, 18, 23 and 24) following the phonological development of their names, have taken on different values, while the character which originally occupied the fourth place has lost both its name and its value (originally *a*) and has been transferred to the twenty-seventh place. Its name (**ansuz*) however retains the fourth place, and having developed to *ōs* in Old English is associated with 'o,' the first of the seven new characters added to the Old English *futhorc*; 23, which originally carried

the value *o*, has come to be used for 'œ' in consequence of the *i*-mutation of the initial of its name, which has developed to *æðil*. Of the remaining six characters 25 is a combination of original 4 and 11: Germanic *ai* became *ā* in Old English and a new character was needed for 'a,' since original *a* had become 'æ.' 27 is a combination of 2 and 11, used to represent the *i*-mutation of *u*. 28 represents the Old English development of Germanic *au*. 29 is a specifically Northumbrian character invented to distinguish the back from the front *c*, while 30 represents a further phonetic refinement, being used, as in the Ruthwell Cross 'kyniŋc' and 'uŋkæt', for the back stop before a front vowel. 31, also Northumbrian, was invented to distinguish the back from the front *g*.

THE 'FUÐORC' USED IN OLD ENGLISH INSCRIPTIONS.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8:	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16:
ƿ	ʀ	þ	ƿ	ƿ	ʀ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	þ	l	*	ʃ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ
f	u	p	o	r	c	g	w:	h	n	i	j	3	p	(x)	e:
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24:	25	26	27	28	29	30	31:	
ʀ	ʃ	ƿ	ƿ	ʀ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	
t	b	e	m	l	ŋ	œ	d:	a	æ	y	æa	k	k̄	ḡ:	

6 and 7 are often used for the back as well as for the front varieties of the consonants; it is unsatisfactory therefore to represent them otherwise than by 'c' and 'g.'

12 carried in the *fuþark* the value *j*, which I retain in my conventional notation, though in Dover 'j3slhêard' and in Thornhill III 'jilsuiþ' it is used for *g* followed by a front vowel.

13, which may originally have carried the value *hw* (represented by a single character in the Gothic alphabet), is used for *h* in Ruthwell 'almezttig' and Uswick 'toroztredæ,' for *i* in Dover 'j3slhêard,' and for *g* (probably representing the second element of the diphthong *ei*) in Thornhill III 'êate3nne.' The most satisfactory compromise is '3': i/h is clumsy and e/o , used by Vietor, definitely inaccurate.

15, which originally carried the value -z or -R, is a fossil in Old English. In runic *alphabets*, it is sometimes used for *x* for which a separate character was not provided in the *futhorc*.

22 is transliterated 'ŋ' (a character borrowed from the phonetic alphabet, where it is used for the guttural nasal), since it is most satisfactory to represent a single character by a single letter wherever possible.

28 is transliterated in the customary fashion, though the first element of the diphthong was pretty certainly *æ* rather than *e* and the quality of the second element varied in different parts of Northumbria. The circumflex is added to indicate that the diphthong, whatever it may have been, is represented by a single character.

29 always represents a back consonant and is most satisfactorily transliterated 'k'.

30 is of rare occurrence and may be transliterated 'k̄'.

31 may be transliterated 'ḡ', a method of indicating Orm's 'flat-topped *g*' I suggested in *The Modern Language Review*, xxiii, 228.

'Bind-runes' are indicated as in Thornhill II "gebid/daþ'.

APPENDIX.

THE RUTHWELL CROSS.

North-East.

39.¹ . . . geredæ hinæ ḡod almezttig

40. þa he walde on ḡalgu gistiga

41. [m]odig f[.] men (*omission*)

42. (*omission*) [b]uḡ[a] (*c.* 30 characters lost).

South-East.

44. ic riicnæ k̄yniŋc

45. hēafunæs hlafard hælde ic ni dorstæ

¹ The figures refer to the corresponding verses of "The Dream of the Rood."

46-47. (*omission*)

48. *bismærædu unket men ba ætgad[ræ] ic [wæs] mip
blodæ [b]istemi[d]*

49. *bi* (c. 40 characters lost).

South-West.

56. krist wæs on rodi

57. hweþræ þer fusæ fêarran kwomu

58. æppilæ til anum ic þæt al bih[éald]

59. *sar[æ] ic wæs mi[b] sorgum gidrœ[f]d h[n]ag* (c. 18 characters lost).

North-West.

62. mip strelum giwundæd²

63. aledun hiæ hinæ limwœrignæ gistoddun him
licæs [hæa]f[du]m

64. [bih]êa[l]du[n] hi[æ] þe[r] (c. 20 characters lost).

THE FRANKS CASKET.

Top:—ægili

Front:—hronæs ban | fisc flodu | ahof on ferg | enberig |
(r. to l.) warþ gasric grom þær he on greut giswom |
(l. to r.) mægi

Left:—oplæ unneg | romwalus and reumwalus twœgen |
gibroþær | afoeddæ hiæ wylif in romæcæstri

Back:—her fegtap | titus end giuþeasu | (roman) hic fugiant
hierusalim | (runic) afitatores | dom | gisl

Right:—h1r h2s s3t4þ 2n h4rmb1rg4 5gl? | dr3g3þ sw4 |
h3r3 1rt51 g3sgr5f s4rd6n s2rg4 5 | nd sif/7 t2rn4 |
risci bita | wudu

(Of the arbitrary runes, 1=e, 2=o, 3=i, 4=æ, 5=a, 6=œ, 7=u).

THE LANCASTER CROSS.

gibidæþfo | ræcunibal | þcupbereh

THORNHILL (WEST RIDING).

I. +epelbe | rht : settæfte | repelwini : ? ?

II. +jilsuiþ : arærde : æft | berhtsuiþe . becuun | onbergi
gebid/daþ | þær : saule

² Mr. Alan S. C. Ross and Mr. G. Turville Petre read 'giwundad.'

III. +êadred | setæfte | êate3nne

KIRKHEATON (WEST RIDING).

eoh : woro | htæ

URSWICK (NORTH LANCASHIRE).

+tunwinisetæ | æftertoro3 | tredæbeku | næfterhisb | æurnæge-
bidæsþe | rs au | læ | lylþi | swo

OVERCHURCH (CHESHIRE).

folcæ³arærdonbec[. . | . .]biddaþforeæþelmun[. .]

THE THAMES SCRAMASAX.

F N A C R L X P H I + 2 C Y T B M X H I M P F F A T

f u p o r c g w h n i j z p (x) s t b e ŋ d l m œ a æ y é a b é a g n o þ

SANDWICH (KENT).

ræhæbul

DOVER (KENT).

+j3slhêard

The readings given above are based on personal examination of the monuments. Characters seriously damaged are printed in *italic*, lost characters which can reasonably be inferred in [*italic*].

BRUCE DICKINS.

³ 'æ' is perhaps a blundered or damaged character abandoned by the carver.