

IV.

THE TREASURE OF TRAPRAIN—THE INSCRIPTION ON THE FLASK.

BY ALEX. O. CURLE, F.S.A.Scot.

One of the most interesting pieces of the treasure from Traprain Law is the small silver flask, by reason of the inscription which it bears. This inscription occurs around the base of the neck of the vessel, formed in Roman capitals by small dots or punctulations. All the letters are perfectly fashioned, and with one exception unambiguous. This letter which occupies the first and fourteenth places in the inscription until recently was believed to be unique, and in as much as it resembled both a P, and an F, led to diverse renderings of the inscription.

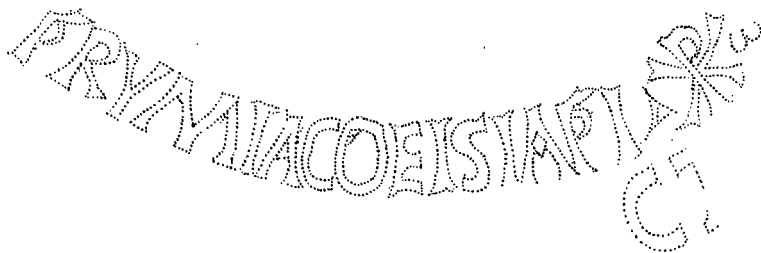


Fig. 1.

In describing the treasure,¹ I expressed the opinion that the letter was an F, and gave my reasons for so thinking; interpreting the inscription tentatively as *Frymiaco eisia fict* (fig. 1) for *Frymiaco Eisia Fecit*; i.e. Eisia made this for Frymiacus.

Opposed to this, M. Theodore Reinach has propounded a totally different rendering which has been adopted by other authorities in France. On the assumption that the doubtful letter was a P² he has deciphered it thus, *Prumiaco e(cce)sia(e) Pict(avensis)*, suggesting that by *Prumiacus* was intended the town of Prigny in Les Moustiers, and that *Pictavensis* connoted the diocese of Poitiers in which Prigny was then situated.

Unfortunately, at the time of publishing the account of the treasure, I was unaware of the existence of an inscription on a late Roman memorial stone preserved in the Museum of the Carmarthenshire

¹ *Treasure of Traprain*, p. 19.

² *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, Appendice aux Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Année 1922; *ibid.*, 1926, p. 49.

Antiquarian Society in Wales, in which the ambiguous letter appears in a position which leaves no shadow of doubt as to its identity, occurring as the first letter of the word *Fidæi* (fig. 2).

To this inscription my attention was drawn by Professor Macalister of Dublin University. It is in rustic hexameters, and runs thus:

“Servatur fidæi Patrisq(ue) semper amator
Hic Paulinus jacet, Cultor Pientis(s)imus æqui”;

or, rather, it is recorded to have so run, for the stone has been broken for many years, and the fragment with the concluding word has been lost. Professor Macalister further adds in his letter to me: “There is nothing to identify the virtuous Paulinus, but he has been supposed to have been a person of that name who was tutor of St David and was alive in A.D. 545.” If this attribution is correct, it shows that this form of letter continued in use for probably a century and a half after its employment in the Traprain inscription.



Fig. 2.

The Welsh inscription is recorded with a photograph of the stone in the *Carmarthenshire Inventory of the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Wales and Monmouthshire*, p. 35, fig. 44, also in Hübner's *Inscriptiones Britannicæ Christianæ*, p. 29. In the former the letter of importance to us is not very clearly shown and in the latter it is shown incomplete. It is, however, also reproduced, and more clearly, in the *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society*, vol. xv. 1921-2, p. 21. To make assurance doubly sure, I applied to the Rev. George Eyre Evans, the Hon. Secretary of the Carmarthenshire Society, for a squeeze of the word *Fidæi*, which he most courteously procured for me. It left no doubt as to the identity of the letter in both inscriptions. Whatever meaning the inscription on the flask is intended to convey it cannot therefore be a reference to the church of Prigny in Poitiers.

As is shown above, I am much indebted to Professor Macalister, also to Mr Eyre Evans for the trouble he took to obtain the squeeze from which the illustration is reproduced.

MONDAY, 12th March 1928.

WILLIAM K. DICKSON, LL.D., in the Chair.

A Ballot having been taken the following were elected Fellows:—

Captain RONALD R. BRUCE BANNERMAN, M.C., 10 Duppas Hill Terrace, Croydon.

Mrs JESSIE PATRICK FINDLAY, The Loaning, Kennoway, Fife.

WILLIAM MACKIE GREIG, 17 East Road, Kirkwall, Orkney.

Rev. GEORGE D. HENDERSON, B.D., Professor of Church History in the University of Aberdeen, 41 College Bounds, Aberdeen.

GEORGE HAROLD HILL, F.R.A.I., Librarian and Curator, Public Library, Buxton.

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Rev. GORDON QUIG, M.A., B.D., The Manse, Monifieth, by Dundee.

DAVID RANDALL-MACIVER, M.A., D.Sc., 25 Corso d'Italia, Rome.

The following Donations to the Museum were intimated and thanks voted to the Donors:—

(1) By JOHN ROBERT FORTUNE, Airhouse, near Oxton.

A Collection of Stone and Flint Implements and other objects found by the donor on the farm of Airhouse, parish of Channelkirk, Berwickshire. (See subsequent communication by J. Graham Callander, F.S.A.Scot.)

Oval Scraper of grey Flint, measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch, ground round the broader end, found at Ninewar, Duns, Berwickshire.

Large triangular Implement of grey Flint, dressed on one face along both edges and on part of the base, from Muircleuch, Lauder, Berwickshire.

(2) By Rev. J. B. Burnett, B.D., F.S.A.Scot.

Barbed and stemmed Arrow-head of yellow Flint with serrated edges, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch by $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch, found in a field at Standingstones, Cowie, Stonehaven, adjoining the standing stones on Kempstanehill.

(3) By RODERICK MACLEOD, F.S.A.Scot.

Woollen Bed-cover of brown, blue, and grey colours, the wool spun in 1815 with spindle and whorl by Betsy Mathieson in Drumbeg, Strathnaver, Sutherland.

(4) By Rev. JAMES M. PATTULLO, Minister of Morham.

Nine Glass Beads—seven of opalescent milky colour, and two black. The former are rudely faceted and the latter are of oval shape. Found in digging a grave on the east side of Morham Kirk, East Lothian. There had originally been a long stone-lined grave and at least another burial on the spot.

The following Donations of Books to the Library were intimated:—

(1) By W. BRUCE BANNERMAN, 4 The Waldrons, Croydon.

An inquiry into the Origin of the name of Stile Steele, with all variants of the same. By Col. J. P. Steel, F.R.G.S., Croydon, 1923.

(2) By WALTER DICKSON, F.S.A.Scot.

The Archæology of Ireland. By R. A. S. Macalister, Litt.D., LL.D., F.S.A., London, 1928.

(3) By FRANCIS BUCKLEY, Tunstead, Greenfield, Yorkshire, the Author.

Seventeenth Century Tea-spoons.

(4) By DAVID RANDALL-MACIVER, M.A., D.Sc., F.S.A., the Author.

The Iron Age in Italy: a Study of those Aspects of the Early Civilisation which are neither Villanovan nor Etruscan.

(5) By ROBERT T. SKINNER, M.A., F.R.S.E., F.S.A.Scot., the Author.

A Notable Family of Scots Printers. Edinburgh, 1927.

(6) By THOMAS SHEPPARD, M.Sc., F.S.A.Scot.

Hull Museum Publications—No. 144, Index; No 150, The Mammals, Birds and Insects of East Yorkshire; No. 151, Record of Additions; No. 152, Exhibition of Contemporary British Sculpture.

(7) By Rev. J. B. BURNETT, B.D., F.S.A.Scot., the Author.

The Kirks of Cowie and Fetteresso.

The following Purchases of Books for the Library were intimated:—

Strasbourg-Argentorate: Préhistorique, Gallo-Romain et Mérovingien.
Par Robert Forrer. 2 vols. Strasbourg, 1927.

Index to the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland
Antiquarian and Archæological Society, New Series. Vols. XIII-XXV
(1913-1925). Compiled by W. G. Collingwood, M.A., F.S.A. Kendal, 1928.