

VII. *Remarks on Governor Pownall's Conjecture concerning the Croyland Boundary Stone. By Mr. Pegge. In a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Milles.*

Read May 9, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

IT always gives me pleasure when I see gentlemen of known parts and learning reviewing any of our national antiquities, as one has a reasonable expectation of having them better illustrated; for though the modern antiquary may not perhaps be superior to his great predecessors in point of substantial literature, nor even equal them, yet he is possessed of some very singular advantages; he not only stands upon their shoulders, but is sure to be divested of all local prejudice and personal partiality; he is not to be led away by every idle, perhaps legendary, story; nor will he pronounce hastily, without examining carefully and closely, by calling to his aid reason, experience, and probability; all which he will employ with liberality of sentiment, as well as with accuracy of description and expression.

WHEREFORE,

WHEREFORE, Sir, as I had formerly seen myself the Terminus, or little obelisk, belonging to Croyland Abbey in Lincolnshire, I turned with avidity to Governor Pownall's Observations upon it, in the third volume of the Archaeologia. And considering the fracture at the upper end of the stone, as represented in the cut [a], and the history of its original extracted by the Governor from Ingulphus, his conjecture concerning AIO and the other founders appeared to me at first sight to be attended with a very high degree of probability, and I congratulated him in my own mind on the felicity of it. But, upon second thoughts, certain objections against his hypothesis have occurred to me, which, with all deference to the Governor's great learning and sagacity, I will here take the liberty to state to you, relying on his liberal mind to receive them with the same candour with which I mean to propose them.

THE Governor supposes, that as five monks of Croyland, of which AIO is the last named, settled the boundaries of the abbey-lands in the reign of king Edward, about A. D. 948, the inscription is at present imperfect, the first four names being broken off; and that *Aio* in the inscription,

Aio hanc petram Guthlacus habet fibi metam,

must mean the last-mentioned monk, and consequently that the inscription has been hitherto mistranslated by those who have taken it for the verb *Aio*, or *I say*.

My first remark is, that the names of AIO and his companions cannot, with propriety, have any place here, since the stone was not erected by them, but by Turketulus, the abbot, as is expressly asserted by the historian [b]. The five monks

were

[a] See the plate, p. 96. copied from Dr. Stukeley's *Itinerar. Curios.*

[b] Cancellarius Turketulus *jussit* cruces lapideas terminorum innovari.
Again,

were assisting, no doubt, in ascertaining the limits of the abbey-lands, but the crosses were erected by the authority of the abbot.

I OBSERVE next, that the inscription is evidently intended for a *Leonine*, or rhyming verse; a species of versification which, tho' not so common as afterwards, was yet not unknown at this time [c]. But now, if you detach the word *Aio* from the rest, and make it depend upon a former part of the legend now broken off, you will absolutely spoil the verse; *Aio* consequently can never be a proper name. But here it may be asked, Can this be a verse, when so lame in the metre, *o* in *Aio* being in scanning to be cut off? I reply, It may be an hexameter verse nevertheless, tho' a bad or a faulty one; false quantities, and other offences against rules, and even against grammar, occurring perpetually in the miserable productions of the baser Latinity. This, however, is no mighty mistake, the like being found in the best authors.

I OBJECT further, and lay great stress upon it, that if you regard the figure of the stone as there represented, running taper to the top, in the nature of a small obelisk, there could not be room for the other four names, *Clarenbaldus*, *Swartingus*, *Thurgarus*, and *Brunus*. One cannot imagine, supposing any manner

Again, *posuit tunc Turketulus crucem lapideam et in boreali parte dictae insulae tunc posuit aliam crucem lapideam*; which, it seems, is the cross in question. Once more, *ex boreali parte crucis lapideae per praedictum Turketulum ibidem affixae.*

[c] Zac. Sylvius in Praef. ad Schol. Salernit. c. iv. says, *origo ejus vetus et incerta.* See also Fabricii Bibl. Lat. ii. p. 538, et iii. in Indice v. Leonini versus, and Mr. Warton's Hist. of Engl. Poetry in Dissert. ii. The famous Epitaph on Bede,

Hac sunt in fossa Bedae venerabilis ossa,

is probably as old as A. D. 948. Archbishop Usher must therefore be wrong in thinking the first extant example was in Gul. Pictavenfis. Usserii Sylloge Epit. Hibern. p. 123. 138.

of.

of proportion to have been preserved in the original figure, that more than a third part is broken off, and yet the lost letters, upon the Governor's hypothesis, are more in number than those which now remain on the base, or broadest part, of the stone [d]. Certainly, considering the contracted space in the upper part, the pillar must have been of a most disproportionate length, of a height very inconsistent with the nature of a terminus, and, I may add, of a weight ill-adapted to the softness of the soil here [e], to receive 37 letters more than those we now read.

THIS last observation, Sir, is founded on the figure of the stone in the Governor's cut, and is intended to show, that even under the broken and tapering form there given, we cannot receive his interpretation. But to come to the truth of things: the original stone has been lately visited by our worthy member *John Lloyd, Esq; F. R. S.* who made a *fac simile* of it; and in his draught here annexed, Plate VI. the stone is complete, having never been longer than it is at present, and is in fact a parallelogram. And therefore though upon Stukeley's representation, one might reasonably imagine a portion of it to have been broken off, yet now we can be sure there never were any more letters upon it than those which now appear. I conclude, that though it is indeed a singular and most extraordinary incident, that the name of the monk last-mentioned should coincide with the first word of the inscription, and the Governor's conjecture grounded upon it

[d] The present inscription consists, in his type, of 35 or 36 letters, but there are 37 lost. I have presumed, in making the computation, that the names were latinized, the rest of the inscription being in that language.

[e] Turketulus ordered his crosses "in proximâ solidâ terrâ infigi, ne fortè lapsu temporis per aquarum alluvionem in flumina corruerent, prout antiquae cruces . . . intellexerat corruisse." Ingulphus.



3f. 2In.

AIO
HANC
PETRA
CVTLA
CVS. H. T
SIBIME
TA O

1f. 3In.

X 9I

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was doubtless very acute and ingenious, yet it comes out at last, that the legend having been never larger than at present, our antiquaries have heretofore rightly interpreted it, and we consequently have no reason to desert them.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL PEGGE.