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THE STONES OF NEWTON (SCOTLAND)

Abstract

The origin of the Sarmatians is largely unknown. Usually, ancient and present scholars for Sarmatians indicate a confederation of nomadic peoples active in history mainly in the period from about the VII century BC to the VI century AD. The area of the Sarmatian migrations comprised the basins of the rivers Ural, Volga, Don, Dnepr, Danube and the Carpathian Mountains. According to some scholars, the Sarmatians and the Slavs were related peoples, according to others, the tribes' and the king's names and some toponyms reported by ancient scholars indicate that the Sarmatians were peoples of Iranic origins.

In 175 AD the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius concluded a treaty with the Sarmatian tribe of the Iazyges (gsl. name from 'iazik': *language, people, people speaking the same or his own language*) by virtue of which 5500 Iazyges cavalrymen were sent to the northern border of Great Britain in groups of 500, because of the difficulties in that region.

On the first stone of Newton (Scotland) one can identify:

- A front inscription written by an alphabet formed by a mix of ancient Greek letters, Latin letters and other signs,
- An Ogham inscription on the left side written by one of the various variants of the Ogham alphabet.

The word Eziki in the front inscription indicates an inscription of Iazygian origin.

In this paper we propose a translation of both the inscriptions, based on similarities with old and modern Slavic languages. The inscriptions appear to refer to different contexts, written probably by different writers, but linked to the presence of a Iazygian community or a community preserving Iazygians' traditions. The symbols on the second stone are rather different with respect to the tamgas and other typical symbols of the Sarmatian culture. However, some possible Iazygian influences on said symbols can be recognized. The possible relations between the first and second stone of Newton, if any, could reside in a general funerary context.

Introduction

The origin of the Sarmatians is largely unknown. Usually, ancient and present scholars for Sarmatians indicate a confederation of nomadic peoples active in the history mainly in the period from about the VII century BC to the VI century AD. The area of their migrations comprised the basins of the rivers Ural, Volga, Don, Dnepr, Danube and the Carpathian Mountains. In many occasions Sarmatians were in contact with the Roman Empire both for reasons of trade and war. Many Roman commanders and emperors fought different Sarmatian peoples like the Iazyges, the Roxolans and the Alans. Appreciated mainly as cavalrymen, the Sarmatians were included also in the Roman Army.

Siestrzeńcewicz [1], Vol. I, pp. 1-3, admits that the Sarmatians and the Slavs were related peoples and migrated together from the ancient Media, while Harmatta [2], pp. 50, 58-97 and Lebedinsky [3], p. 25, admit, according to the tribe names, the kings' names, and toponyms recorded by ancient scholars, that the Sarmatians were peoples of Iranian origins. Lebedinski [3], p. 197, reports also the Sarmatian funerary tradition (sepultures of Giorgippa - Kuban, Russia) of placing on the mouth and the eyes of the decedent gold plaques; sometimes two gold plaques for the eyes were connected in the form of spectacles.

The Iazyges in Scotland

Lebedinsky [3], p. 58, reports that in 175 AD the emperor Marcus Aurelius reached a treaty with the Iazyges (Gsl. name from 'iazik': *language, people, people speaking the same or his own language*) by virtue of which 5500 Iazyges cavalymen were sent to the northern border of Great Britain in groups of 500, because of the difficulties in that region.

The presence of these Iazyges was not temporary but became long-term. In fact, a Latin inscription of 238-244 AD found at Ribchester (Bremetennacum) mentions a unit of 500 Sarmatian cavalymen, and the camp of the Sarmatian veterans (Bremetennacum Veteranorum) existed up to the beginning of the 5th century. It is assumed that slowly these Iazyges fused with the local populations, and after the permanent abandonment by the Romans in 410 AD of Great Britain, the remaining Iazyges' communities partly escaped towards the Continent and partly toward Scotland under the push of the Anglian and Saxon invasions. According to Littleton et al. [4], pp. 23, 62, these Iazyges cavalymen, and their first chief Lucius Artorius Castus could be at the origin of the legend of King Arthur.

The spreading of Iazyges' communities toward Scotland, in our opinion, is testified by the inscriptions and symbols on the stones of Newton (Scotland) (cf. Figs. 1, 2) described by Stuart [5].

The two stones of Newton

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the two stones of Newton (J. Stuart [5], Plates I, XXXVII).

On the first stone one can identify:

- a) A front inscription on the front side which, because (cf. Fig. 3) of the clearly recognizable word Ezigi at the end of the fourth line and the swastika tamga symbol (cf. Ольховский [6], Fig. 8, tamga no. 168), can be recognised as a possible Iazygian inscription. The tamgas are marks used by ancient peoples, as well as some present peoples, for indicating various concepts like: the personal belonging to a family or tribe; the personal or communitarian possession of goods like cattle, the limiting borders of owned lands, a solar or power concept, etc.
- b) An Ogham inscription on the left side, written in one of the various variants of the Ogham alphabet. The Ogham alphabets form a family of similar alphabets each composed normally by 15 consonants and 5 vowels and some diphthongs. The letters are represented by strokes located on the left side, on the right side, or crossing a guideline



Figure 1. The first stone of Newton.



Figure 2. The second stone of Newton.

or an edge of a stone. A list of Ogham alphabets is in the Book of Ballymote [7,8]. The guideline or the edge is often started by a keystone.

On the second stone it can be identified:

- i) A symbol similar to a spectacle with a notch on the left side.
- ii) A snake symbol with a superposed N symbol.

Stuart [5], Plate I, observes that the two stones, in 1856, were erected near the House of Newton but they were both removed from earlier and probably original sites. The first stone was removed about twenty years before that date from a spot surrounded by a wood about a mile south of the House of Newton, near the Pitmachie farm. For this reason this stone in literature is also referred to as Pitmachie Stone. When the terrain near the stone was being excavated, several graves were discovered in a sandy ridge near to the stone. The graves were described to Stuart as “having been made in a hard gravel without any appearance of flagstones at the side or elsewhere”. From this passage, as far as can be understood, the

decedents were not incinerated but inhumated, as in the Sarmatian tradition. The second stone was removed about sixty years before that date, from a place on the march between the Land of Rothney and Newton about half a mile west of the first stone.

The First Stone

The front inscription

In the past many attempts have been made for translating the inscription on the front side of the first stone. Of interest, among others, is the attempt of Waddell [9], according to which the two inscriptions would represent a bilingual inscription, the first written in an Aryan Phoenician alphabet and the second in Ogham alphabet both having the meaning: This Sun-Cross (Swastika) was raised to Bil (or Bel, the God of Sun-fire) by the Kassi (or Cassi-bel[-an]) of Kast of the Siluyr (subclan) of the "Khilani" (or Hittite, palace-dwellers), the Phoenician (named) Ikar of Cilicia, the Prwt (or Prat, that is 'Barat' or 'Brihat or Briton).

However, in looking to the front inscription it seems that the actual alphabet is a mix of ancient Greek letters, like gamma, lambda, tau, mu, Latin letters, like F and I, and other signs, rather than an Aryan Phoenicians alphabet. Several letters appear also to preserve similarities with Sarmatian tamgas (cf. Ольховский [6], Figs. 7, 8, tamgas 93, 115, 168, 178, 190, 204, 221). The list of Sarmatian tamgas in [6], Figs. 7, 8, is not exhaustive, because, as the author observes, many tamgas have been lost. The Iazyges appear not to have developed an original alphabet, thus it is not surprising to see that the writer used alphabetic letters and signs borrowed from cultures by which he was influenced. Our spelling of the first inscription is shown in Figure 3.

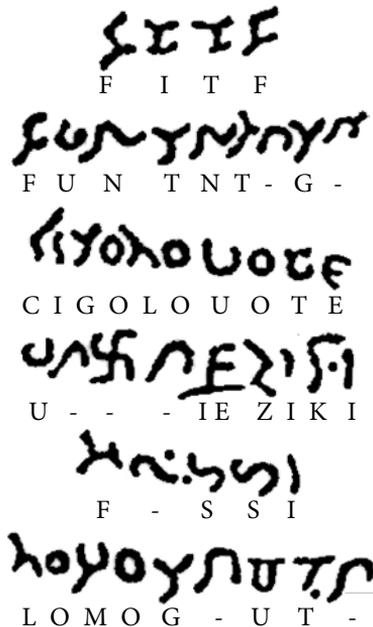


Figure 3. Front inscription - spelling

Note that because of the difficulty in engraving the stone the same letter could also assume different orientations and proportions, and because of the elevated number of letters in each row it appears that each row is composed by several words written in continuo, i.e. without separation. To the herdsman's staff like sign and the swastika, each indicated by a “-“, have not been given a sound value because we consider them sacred signs, similar to the various solar symbols chiselled out in different places among the words of the inscription on the gravestone of the Old Bulgarian king Persian [10], p. 177. Further, the presence of dots could indicate a different or slightly different pronunciation of the corresponding letter.

The spelling of the inscription is then as follows:

FITF FUNTNT-G- CIGOLOUOTE U- - - IEZIKI F-SSI LOMOG-UT-

which, tentatively, by using similarity with ancient and modern Slavic languages, can be subdivided into words and rendered as follows:

VID TI V VUN NA TEGA KI GLAGOLATI U - - - IEZIKI V SSILO MOGUSHT
and finally translated as:

Know you, who are outsider (from outside), the great power and the Iazyges belong to the Speaking one (God).

Comparison and parsing

VID	(FI(T)) = O.Ch.Sl. VEDI – <i>know</i> ;
TI	(T(I)) = gsl., Blg., Cz. TI – <i>you</i> ;
V	(F) = gsl. V – <i>in</i> , here in the sense of <i>from</i> ;
VUN	(FUNT) = gsl. VUN – <i>outside</i> ;
NA TEGA	(NT - G -) = Blg. NA TOGOVA, NA TOJA, Sln. NA TO – <i>to whom</i> ;
KI	(CI) = Sln. KI, Blg. KOI, Gsl. KTO– <i>who</i>
GLAGOLATI	(GOLOUOTE) = O.Ch.Sl. GLAGOLATI - <i>to speak</i> ;
U	(U) = I – Dial. Variant of E - <i>he is</i> , TOI I = Dial. Blg. He is. Perhaps U was optional and sometimes was pronounced as I (like in the Welsh language);
- - -	Combination of the herdsman's staff like sign, swastika, herdsman's staff like sign – see below;
IEZIKI	Iazyges, gsl. name from ‘iazik’: <i>language, people, people speaking the same or their own language</i> ;
V	(F) = gsl. V – <i>in</i> ;
SSILO	(SSILO) = gsl. SILA – <i>power, force</i> ;
MOGUSHT	(MOG - UT -) = gsl. MOGUSHT- <i>great</i> .

The exact meaning of the herdsman's staff like sign and its necessity among the words of the inscription are hard to identify. The meaning of the sign could be: protection, a meaning quite suitable for a stone inscription, but its meaning could also be: power or royal power, just like among the Egyptians. The swastika tamga symbol could well represent, in this context, a solar concept like in some cultures. The meaning of the combination of the herdsman's staff like sign, swastika, the herdsman's staff like sign, indicated by a “- - -“, and

the word IEZIKI could be: royal, noble Iazyges, or Iazyges to whom the royal power is given by the Sun (God). However, other meaning also are possible: Iazyges, keepers of the sacred; Iazyges, keepers of the law (herdsman staff like sign = keeper, swastika = sacred, law).

The Ogham inscription

The inscription on the left side, except for the two V-signs, appears to conform to the Ogham alphabet 29a of the Book of Ballymote [7,8], from which we derived the meaning of the strokes.

The reading of the inscription should be started from the upper left edge of the stone. In fact, the writer, unaware of the length of the text to be engraved, started to write from the top left side of the stone. After having reached the lower portion of the edge, he was obliged, for allowing a good reading, to continue the edge of the stone by a guide line on the front side of the stone, turned toward the top.

Our spelling of the inscription is shown in Figure 4.

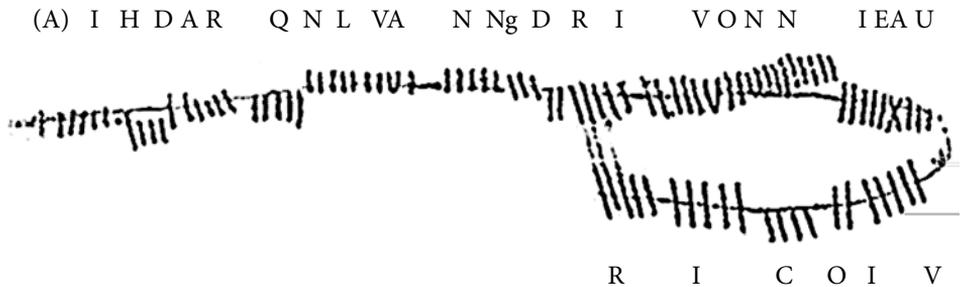


Figure 4. Ogham inscription - spelling

The spelling of the inscription is then the following:

AIHDARQNLVANNgDRIVONNIEAUVIOCIR

which can be subdivided into words and rendered as follows:

(A) IHDAR QNL VA NNg DR IVO N NI E AUVI OCIR

and finally translated as: Idhar died in Anng, dear him, he is not here buried.

Comparison and parsing

(A) starting key of the guide line;

IDHAR Nom., Iazygian / Sarmatic proper name. Note that the reading Aidhar would also be possible if the starting key would be included. The meaning of the name is unknown, but in the root the gsl. verb: ITI, Russ. verb ИДТИ can be recognised;

QNL past of the gsl. verb KONCHITI, Russ. verb КОНЧИТЬ, to finish, to end, to terminate – *died*;

VA gsl. V – *in*;

NNg place name - unknown;

DR gsl. drag – *dear*;

IVO (or IV)	gsl. poss. pron. – <i>his</i> , here probably in the sense: <i>his body = him</i> ;
N (or ON)	gsl., O. Ch. Sl. on – <i>he</i> ;
NI E	gsl., old Blg. Dial. NIE – <i>is not</i> ;
AUVI	O. Ch. Sl. OVA – <i>this</i> , in the sens of <i>here</i> ;
OCIR	participle, old Ch. Sl. verb okorpati – digged, excavated (grave, burial = excavation), here in the sense of <i>buried</i> . Possible abbreviation of OCIRTY.

The absence in the inscription of words like MAC (MACUI) – son of, progeny of, UA – grandson of, TALAMH – earth, LIA, LIACC – stone, which are commonly found in Ogham inscriptions appears to exclude an Old Irish, or Gaelic origin for this inscription.

Second Stone

The symbols on the second stone are rather different with respect to the tamgas and other typical symbols of the Sarmatian culture. However, some possible Iazygian influences on said symbols can be recognized. The spectacle symbol, identified as a fibula by Stuart [5], could reflect the Sarmatian spectacle funerary tradition mentioned above and would mark, in a broad sense, in both the cases, the presence of a nearby sepulchre or sepulchres. The symbol beneath the spectacle is a snake with a superimposed “N”. According to Littleton et al. [4], page 195, it could be an animal symbol reminding of the “animal style” representation typical of steppe cultures. This symbol, in our opinion, could identify, like a tamga, a particular tribe, clan or village to which the sepulchre/s belonged.

Conclusion

As can be seen, the inscriptions on the first stone of Newton are far from a bilingual inscription of possible Aryan Phoenician origin. They appear to refer to different contexts, written probably by different writers, but linked to the presence of a Iazygian community or a community preserving Iazygians’ language and traditions. The possible relations between the first and second stone of Newton, if any, could reside in a general funerary context.

Abbreviations

Nom.	Nominative	Sln.	Slovenian	Dial.	Dialectal
Gsl.	Generally Slavic	O.Ch.Sl.	Old Church Slavonic	Part.	Participle
Russ.	Russian	Blg.	Bulgarian	Pron.	Pronoun
Poss.	Possessive	Cz.	Czech	Dial.	Dialectal

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Povzetek

Newtonova kamna (Škotska)

Izvor Sarmatov še ni zadovoljivo pojasnen. Nekdanji in sedanji učenjaki jih običajno označujejo kot zvezo nomadov, ki je delovala predvsem v času od VII. stol. pr. Kr. do VI. stol. po Kr. Območje sarmatskih selitev obsega porečja Urala, Volge, Dona, Dnjepra, Donave ter Karpate. Nekateri menijo, da so bili Sarmati in Slovani sorodna ljudstva, drugi pa, da imena plemen, kraljev in nekatera krajevna imena kažejo, da so bili Sarmati iranskega porekla. Leta 175 po Kr. je sklenil rimski cesar Mark Avrelij s sarmatskim plemenom Jazigov (spl. slov. ime iz 'jazik': *jezik, ljudstvo, ljudje, ki govorijo isti jezik*) zavezo, po kateri je poslal 5500 jaziških konjenikov v skupinah po 500 na severno mejo v Veliki Britaniji, kjer je imel težave.

Na prvem kamnu ob Newtonu lahko ugotovimo:

- čelni napis, napisan z znaki, ki so mešanica grških in latinskih črk ter drugih znakov,
- ogamski napis na levi strani.

Beseda Eziki na čelnem napisu kažejo na jaziški izvor napisa. Predlagava prevod obeh napisov, ki temelji na podobnostih med nekdanjimi in sedanjimi slovanskimi jeziki. Napisa kažeta na različna ozadja; napisala sta ju različna pisca, vendar sta vezana na skupnost Jazigov oziroma skupnost, ki je ohranila jaziške navade.

Simboli na drugem kamnu so precej drugačni ter vsebujejo tamge in druga značilna znamenja sarmatske kulture. Prepoznamo pa lahko verjetni jaziški vpliv na ta znamenja. Ozadje morebitne povezanosti med prvim in drugim kamnom z Newtona bi lahko bilo pogrebno.