CHAPTER VIII

THE INSCRIPTIONS

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There are eleven inscribed stones in the present corpus. More than half of them belong to a widespread memorial tradition in northern England, and the first section concentrates mainly on these. Briefer notice of the remaining, rather heterogeneous, texts follows; their broader context is discussed in more detail, where appropriate, in the catalogue entries.¹³

VERNACULAR MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS IN THE NORTH

Up to eighteen examples of vernacular memorial inscriptions on stone are known from the north of Anglo-Saxon England (Fig. 15), and six or seven of them cluster together around Leeds in the West Riding. Four are from Thornhill (nos. 1–4, Ills. 727, 732, 737, 738), with another at neighbouring Dewsbury (no. 10, Ill. 230), and a sixth at Collingham (no. 2, Ills. 151–2) on the opposite, north-eastern, side of the modern city. The seventh is a less certain example from Leeds itself (no. 9, Ill. 516): it is known only from nineteenth-century drawings which show a fragmentary text that suggests, but does not prove, that it belongs here.

The inscriptions use the Old English language to commemorate, and/or to request prayers for the souls of, a deceased person (Page 1999, 141–3, 149–53; Fell 1994, 128–9). They employ a limited range of expressions and vocabulary for the central elements of their text: the monument is usually a becun ‘beacon, sign’; it is ‘set up’ or ‘raised’ by a sponsor æfter ‘after, in memory of’ the deceased, for whom the reader is often exhorted to pray. As discussed below, some of the eighteen examples contain all of these textual elements; others involve only one. Nonetheless, there is a fairly clearly defined group here, stretching from just south of the Mersey and the Humber (respectively Overchurch on the Wirral and Crowle in north-western Lincolnshire) to the north of Northumberland and Cumberland (Falstone, Carlisle and probably Bewcastle) and possibly beyond to Whithorn, Wigtonshire. In contrast there are no inscriptions from the southern half of England that share these features. There are two memorial-stones with vernacular texts, from Winchester and London, but they use different wording.¹⁴

The northern inscriptions can all be related to a formula expressed most fully on three monuments, as follows:

1. Great Urswick (Lancashire: Bailey and Cramp 1988, 148–9, ill. 564; see Ill. 852):

    Tunwini setæ
    after Torohtredæ
    bekun æfter his bæurnæ
    gebihdes þer saulæ

    Tunwini set up
    in memory of Torohtred
    a beacon in memory of his child [or lord]
    pray for his soul

¹³. The eleven inscribed stones from the West Riding of Yorkshire catalogued in this volume can be divided into two groups, non-runic and runic. The group in roman script, discussed in the catalogue by John Higgitt, includes: Dewsbury 1 (p. 129, Ill. 191); Dewsbury 5 (p. 135, Ills. 205–6); Dewsbury 10 (p. 142, Ill. 230); Ripon 1 (p. 231, Ill. 632); and Thornhill 1 (p. 256, Ill. 727). The second group in runes, discussed in the catalogue by David Parsons, includes: Collingham 2 (p. 119, Ills. 151–2); Kirkheaton 1 (p. 189, Ill. 456); Leeds 9 (p. 207, Ill. 516); Thornhill 2 (p. 258, Ill. 732); Thornhill 3 (p. 259, Ill. 737); and Thornhill 4 (p. 261, Ill. 738). Other supposed inscriptions, including Bingley 2 (p. 101); Healaugh 1 (p. 277); Middlemoor 1 (p. 212); Pippin Castle 1 (p. 288); and Settle 1 (p. 289), are briefly discussed in the catalogue or appendices by the main author.

¹⁴. Winchester Old Minster 6 (Tweedale, Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1995, 278–80) runs Her lið Gunni eorles feolaga, ‘Here lies Gunn, the earl’s companion’. London All Hallows 2 (ibid., 221–3) is reconstructed as . . . stan Welvir let settan [æfter Here–], ‘Welvir had this stone set up over Here–’. The latter clearly has some similarity to the northern group, and Higgitt does relate it to the ‘X setæ æfter Y’ type (in ibid., 222; Higgitt 1986b, 133), but the Scandinavian parallels cited by Page (1971, 178 [1995, 192]) may be more pertinent. Both geography and chronology (the London stone, like that from Winchester, is assigned to the eleventh century) tend to work against the association.
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The lines are in a loose verse-form (see further Page 1999, 149–50). The placement of becun and gebiddan gives the texts an alliterative structure, which might then be exploited to a greater or lesser extent according to circumstances and, perhaps, the inventiveness of the inscriber. In (1) the potential is carried through to the full because the personal names of sponsor and deceased alliterate, and because their relationship can be expressed by a term that starts with b: bæurn, probably for standard OE bearh ‘child’, but possibly for beorn ‘warrior, lord’; see below, p. 143. In (2) neither of these conditions is met, and the alliteration is limited to becun and gebiddan.

In (3), again, the personal names do not alliterate (though they do share a second element, and therefore rhyme, which may have been appreciated), and the relationship could not be — or at least was not — expressed with a b-word. Instead the carver found another way to develop the alliteration, by adding the tag on bærgi ‘on the hill or mound’, perhaps with reference to the site on Thorn-hill.

Some fragmentary inscriptions may originally have contained this ‘full memorial text’ with its three elements: the sponsor formula (‘X set up in memory of Y’), the monument formula (‘a beacon in memory of someone, or standing somewhere’), and the invitation to prayer. Dewsbury 10 (below, p. 142, Ill. 230) lacks the sponsor formula, but what remains suggests that it was probably there. It reads:

| Eo– […] | Eo– [set up] |
| – after Hroethberhtæ | in memory of Hroethberht |
| becun after comæ | a beacon in memory of his uncle |
| gebiddæ der saule | pray for his soul |

Although other interpretations are formally possible, the first incomplete word is likely to have been a personal name, perhaps one involving the common name-element behton; cf. Hroethberhtæ in the equivalent position at Falstone. The beornæ of the next line, incidentally, inevitably brings to mind his beornæ at Great Urswick, and — however apposite the label may have been in each case — the choice of word tends to reinforce the formulaic character of the texts.

Other possible examples are still more fragmentary. The sponsor and monument formulas were certainly present on the Wycliffe, North Riding, stone: Bada ... æfter Berehtwini, becun æfter ... (Ill. 853; Lang 2001, 267–9, ill. 1099), and very probably on Thornhill 1 (below, p. 256, Ill. 727). This latter is much damaged, so that only ... æftær Osberæ becæunæ gibiddæd dær saule can be read with some security, but the word-order is enough to suggest that it is another text of the familiar type. (It is argued below that the broken tops of three letters following becæunæ support a tentative reconstruction of becun on bærgi, parallel to Thornhill 2.) Both of these examples might have been completed with an invitation to pray. Similarly the fragment at Gainford, co. Durham (Ill. 857; Cramp 1984, 87, pl. 69.348) — which now evidences only part of one of the three elements, the beginning of a sponsor formula (a rihe setae) — could conceivably have gone on for several more lines and carried through the whole memorial-text pattern.

| Gilswiþ æwerde | Gilswiþ raised up |
| æfter Berhtswiþæ | in memory of Berhtswith |
| becun on bærgi | a beacon on a hill [or mound] |
| gebiddæ der saule | pray for her soul |
However, it is not at all certain whether these fragmentary texts would have closely paralleled the longer versions. Some complete inscriptions are simply shorter, while several record texts which are at variance with the details of the extended formulaic pattern. Short, but otherwise consistent with the elements so far discussed, is Thornhill 4 (below, p. 261, Ill. 738), which appears to be complete and consists only of the sponsor formula: *Eadred sete æfte Eateinne*, ‘Eadred set up [this monument] in memory of ?Eadthegn’. Collingham 2 (below, p. 119, Ills. 151–2) takes brevity to the extreme: it is doubtful whether anything more than the two words represented by the fragments æft– –swiði, ‘in memory of –swith’, was ever carved on the stone.

Other texts rearrange the familiar elements. The Carlisle cross (Ills. 854–5; Bailey and Cramp 1988, 84–5, ills. 196, 200) looks as if it would have combined the sponsor and monument formulas into more prosaic word-order: *Síg– sette dis [becan] æfter Siþberht’s* ‘S. set up this beacon in memory of S.’ The Yarm, North Riding, stone uses unusual word-order and mixes up Old English and Latin (Ill. 856; Lang 2001, 274–6, ill. 1127). It appears to run: *berhect sac’ Alla signum æfter his breoder assetæ* (less likely *after his breoderas setæ*). The syntax of this is unclear, but again the sponsor and monument formulas seem to run together, with the verb (probably in a variant form *assetan*) appearing at the end. The monument is not denoted by Old English *becan* but by the Latin equivalent *signum* ‘sign, symbol’, which is not only unique within the tradition, but all the more surprising since the relationship-term *breoder* ‘brother’ would have provided alliteration.

Of the very fragmentary texts, Crowle in Lincolnshire (Ill. 850; Everson and Stocker 1999, 148–50, ill. 150) reads *ælicbacen*, which preserves enough to show both that it is a *becan* text, and that it is unique: what precedes cannot be the end of a verb or an inflected personal name, though *ælic-becan* could be an otherwise unrecorded compound meaning ‘body-monument, grave-stone’. The surviving drawings of the Leeds 9 stone (below, p. 207, Ill. 516) show a first line that reads ‘cuni’, where ‘i’ could possibly be a misreading for ‘æ’, its arms lost in the broken right-hand edge of the fragment. If so, the text may have run *[be]can æfter*. The second line ‘onlaf’ might represent an English spelling of the Old Norse personal name *Óláfr*; Page (1969, 36 [1995, 167]) alternatively considers the possibility of reading Old English *laf*, a word that might either mean ‘relict, widow’ or ‘remains, corpse’. In any of these cases it is not possible to fit the pieces into the template of the full memorial text, though if the personal name *Onlaf* were intended, then sponsor and monument formulas might be here combined, as probably at Carlisle.

The Overchurch, Cheshire, inscription (Ill. 848; Page 1999, 55–6, fig. 14) — assuming it is almost complete — is extraordinary in several respects. It reads (after several editorial emendations): *fok awardon bec[an]; [ge]biddaþ [for]e *Æþelmunþ[de] ‘the people erected a beacon; pray for Æthelmund’, which could be regarded as reordering and telescoping elements of the sponsor, monument and prayer formulas. One or two other inscriptions simply call for prayers in terms which are closely comparable to the end of the Overchurch text. It is to be conceded, however, that these might as well be regarded as simple vernacular equivalents of Latin-language stones that read *ora(te) pro X* rather than as offshoots of the vernacular memorial series. Yet the clearest of them, the Lancaster cross (Ill. 847; Page 1999, 142–3, fig. 46), does contain a further complicating factor. It reads *giebidæþ foræ Cynibalþ, Cuþbere[ht]*, where ‘pray for Cynibalþ’ is clear, but the status of *Cuþbereht* is not. Possibly it is the name of the sponsor, and the whole text a closer parallel to the fuller memorial-texts than at first appears. A stone at Whithorn, Wigtownshire, Scotland (Ill. 851; Radford and Donaldson 1984, 29–30; Page 1999, 144) looks as if it may have had a simpler text along the lines *giebidæþ foræ Hwitu, ‘Pray for Hwit(u)*, though the ending *u* (which is perfectly clear) is not easy to explain, while most of *giebidæþ foræ* is now illegible and is supplied mainly by educated guesswork.

Thornhill 3 (below, p. 259, Ill. 737), like Thornhill 4, preserves only the sponsor element of the extended memorial formula ([*Æ*þelb[erh]t sett[e] æfter Epelwine]). Unlike Thornhill 4, however, it does continue with some further text: two runes within the rectangular inscription-panel, and one or more in the margin opposite. Unfortunately these characters are not easy to decipher, but a possible reading appears to be *ona* ‘pray’. The use of an admixture of Latin could be paralleled by Yarm, above, and might perhaps be explained here on grounds of space: with a rectangular panel to fill, and a main text that finished a little before the end, the short Latin word might have seemed a better option than a form of Old English *gebiddan*.

Finally there remains to be mentioned the main runic text of the Bewcastle, Cumberland, cross (Ill. 849; Page 1960; Bailey and Cramp 1988, 61–5, ill. 104). This is a badly weathered inscription which almost certainly suffered damage and some alteration in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the sections that can be read relate that text to the group discussed here. Although it is significantly longer, and was clearly more complex, than
any of the other memorial formulas, it seems to share much of their key vocabulary. A fairly cautious reading includes the following sequence: *Dis sigbeaen* [or *sigbeaen*] \(\ldots\) *setton Hwætred \ldots\) *aft Alcfri \ldots\) *gebiz* [for details see Page 1960, 38–9 [1995, 49–50]; he reads it slightly differently, but agrees in the essential features identified here, in Bailey and Cramp 1988, 61, 65]. Particularly notable is the form *sigbe(a)en*, equivalent to regular West Saxon *sige-beacen* ‘victory-beacon, cross of crucifixion’, a compound which — although it is not found in other surviving inscriptions — is both fairly well attested in manuscript texts, and clearly appropriate in sense. It spells out in full the connotations that the simplex *becun*, as an equivalent for Latin *signum*, seems to have carried in this memorial tradition (Higgitt 1986b, 134–5, 145). Although some details of the Bewcastle inscription were probably tampered with in the nineteenth century (Page 1960, 50–3 [1995, 62–5]), it is not easy to see how these sections of the text could have been altered to their present readings without betraying signs of the intervention.

These, then, are the eighteen northern inscriptions that can be grouped together as related vernacular memorials. Three preserve a distinctive, loosely alliterative text made up of three formulaic elements. Another four fragmentary inscriptions might have contained this full memorial text, though it is not possible to be sure that they were ever complete examples. The remaining eleven do not contain versions of this text, though most of them could be regarded as abbreviations, rearrangements, or variants of it. The West Riding has the most concentrated surviving cluster of memorial inscriptions, six or seven at three or four sites within twenty miles of each other. They are typical of the group overall. One (Thornhill 2) is a complete example of the full memorial text; two more are fragmentary (Thornhill 1, Dewsbury 10), but may well have been of the same type. Three others are certainly shorter (Thornhill 3 and 4, Collingham 2), one of them (Collingham 2) radically so. Two stones (Thornhill 3 and the Leeds 9 fragment) cannot simply be regarded as abbreviations of the longer formula, but diverge from it.

The appearance of these related texts is a rare indicator of a vernacular textual culture shared between sites in the Anglo-Saxon period. At a local level the inscriptions bear testimony to connections in one rather concentrated area of the West Riding. The cluster gains in interest in the light of historical evidence — explicit from the fourteenth century and later, but possibly implicit as early as *Domesday Book* — for an ecclesiastical connection between Dewsbury and a large surrounding area, including the adjacent Thornhill (Faull and Moorhouse 1981, 1, 216–18; Hadley 2000a, 248–9). This has been interpreted as evidence for a pre-Viking *parochia* centred on Dewsbury (see Chap. II, p. 20), and it is certainly striking that an eighth- or ninth-century textual link between Dewsbury and Thornhill can be demonstrated (a point not observed by the historical commentators). On the other hand, there is no evidence that the early *parochia* extended to Leeds or Collingham, and so there is no neat explanation for the whole West Riding group.

At a wider level the connections identified here traverse practically the whole of the kingdom of Northumbria. These connections are particularly striking in the case of the three full memorial texts, which relate Thornhill in the south to Great Urswick in the west and Falstone in the north. Just how the contact implied here worked, in terms of the relationship between literacy, craftsmen, sponsors and the Church, is unknown.

The extent of literacy in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria is a particular mystery. Inscriptions like these provide the best evidence on the question: there is little other historical or contextual information against which to judge them. Memorial stones in vernacular language and with requests for prayers were presumably erected to be read. How widely in society they could be read is not known. What is clear is that these public displays of literacy make regular use of two distinct scripts. Within the group of eighteen inscriptions treated here, eleven are in runes, six are in roman script, and one — Falstone — has parallel texts in both scripts. This is a pattern found more widely in Northumbrian inscriptions. The simple name-stones of the north-eastern monasteries sometimes use roman, sometimes runic, and sometimes combine the two, rendering one personal name in each script (Parsons 1994, 208). On the Ruthwell cross runes and roman are found side by side, as they are on notable objects like St Cuthbert’s coffin and the Franks casket (Page 1989). Clearly both scripts were acceptable in the carving of monuments (as they were not in the writing of manuscripts, unless there is a huge lacuna in our evidence, since no Anglo-Saxon manuscript preserves extensive text written in runes). On stone monuments, in general, roman script is used for Latin-language texts: there are no extended Latin inscriptions in runes, though a few Latin words appear in runes here and there. For vernacular texts both scripts are widely used, though runes are rather more common. The West Riding group of memorial inscriptions again reflects the wider pattern rather well: here four or five use runes, and two roman script. To judge by the particularly closely-knit Thornhill–Dewsbury group (three runic and two roman), the choice between scripts may have been a matter of personal preference, or of changing fashion, rather than of ingrained local practice.
The intimate relationship in Christian Northumbria between runes and roman script is clear, and I have argued elsewhere that literacy in both may have spread around the country from a common base in the early Northumbrian monasteries (Parsons 1999). One result of the close association is that runic usage is always liable to influence from roman-script practices. On the Thornhill 2 stone (p. 259), the use of ‘u’ instead of ‘w’ in two instances of the name element swip may be an instance of this. On the other hand, there is no doubt that runic orthography flourished in the Christian period and developed its own practices tailored to represent vernacular Old English (Page 1999, 44–7; Parsons 1999, 84–5, 113–14). The runic alphabet was invented to represent Germanic language, and symbols such as ‘þ’ and ‘w’ had no roman-script equivalents. (These two proved so useful that they were adopted into that variety of roman script which was used for the vernacular in later Anglo-Saxon England.) Innovations continued to be made in later Anglo-Saxon England: the velar ‘k’-rune found in bekun on Thornhill 2 is one; another may be the use, in the same inscription, of the rune transliterated ‘j’ for a palatalised ‘g’.

Most of the monuments discussed here have generally been placed in the eighth and ninth centuries by art historians, epigraphers and linguists (though not always without some circular argument, as observed by Page 1990, 358–9 [1995, 328]). They are a heterogeneous group of stones, and the verbal similarities between their inscriptions need not bind them together too closely in time. Memorial texts may have been a particularly conservative genre in the Anglo-Saxon period, just as they tend to be now. Moreover there is a variety of texts represented here: it seems fair on the basis of their shared elements to define a tradition of Northumbrian vernacular memorial-inscriptions, but as shown above, this tradition encompasses a range of types from the very brief to the extended formula, and takes in also the long and clearly anomalous Bewcastle inscription. It has been useful in the preceding discussion to relate the inscriptions to the full memorial text preserved on three examples, but such a classification is typological and limited in its chronological implications. For example, Thornhill 4, ‘Eadred set up in memory of Eadþegn’ (p. 260), could indeed have been perceived as an abbreviation of the longer formula found on Thornhill 2. Equally, however, it might mark a stage in the development of the longer text, midway between the full formula and the apparently earlier name-stones of the monasteries.

The form of these monuments and of their decoration might usefully be re-examined as a group elsewhere. One extra-linguistic indication of date is suggested by the Crowle, Lincolnshire, stone, which shows Scandinavian artistic influence, and presumably therefore belongs to the second half of the ninth century or later (tenth according to Everson and Stocker 1999, 151). A personal name Anlaf on Leeds 9 would have similar implications, but the reading is not certain (below, p. 207). Epigraphically, it is notable that many, though not all, of the memorial texts are set in rectangular panels, often divided by horizontal framing lines. On the other hand, the size of the lettering and the care taken in layout vary greatly, and quite different versions of roman script appear in different inscriptions. In the West Riding Thornhill 1 is in capitals (Ill. 727), and Dewsbury 10 in half-uncials (Ill. 230), though the particular script-types are believed to be broadly contemporary, dating to the ‘second half’ of the eighth or first half of the ninth century and to the ‘eighth or first half of the ninth century’ respectively (below, pp. 257, 144). Comparable variations in types of runic script are not evident, or have not been detected, and it is not yet possible to suggest palaeographically-based dating features in Christian-period runic inscriptions.

It might be hoped that linguistic features would help date the inscriptions, but for various reasons it is difficult to reach precise conclusions. Potentially, the clearest chronological marker in the texts is their treatment of unstressed vowels (Dahl 1938, 187–8, 191–4; Campbell 1959, §§369–70; Page 1959b). Early Old English i and æ developed as later Old English e, and the study of datable manuscript-texts gives us some framework for this change. The earliest Northumbrian literary texts, of the first half of the eighth century, very largely preserve unstressed i and æ, while tenth-century texts have nearly always e.15 Most of the inscriptions in this group show some sign of the early type of unstressed vowels, but none (of any length) has only early forms: thus it is natural to put the group as a whole into the eighth and/or ninth centuries on linguistic grounds. There are then distinctions to be made: some of the texts, such as those at Falstone (Hoethberhta, eoman, but also saule) and Great Urswick (seta, saule), have more early features than, for instance, Thornhill 4 (sete, Eateinne) and Thornhill 2 (araned, Berhtsulpe, saule). Whether or not this has absolute chronological significance is hard to say, however. We know little about differences within early Northumbrian dialect, and the south may well have been more innovative than the north. Indeed, we do not know whether the inscriptions closely reflect local dialect, or were the work

15. The reduction of i > e seems generally to have been later than æ > e, a point which may be of some significance in dating the Ripon 1 inscription (below, p. 232).
of travelling masons with outsiders’ speech-habits. Nor do we know whether the texts accurately record the speech of their day, or are deliberately formal and old-fashioned (in which case an archaizing tradition continuing later than the ninth century would be possible.) It is certainly noteworthy that Dewsbury 10 has some earlier linguistic forms (with preservation of æ in rhtae and beornæ, but also e in saule) than the Thornhill group, but it need not follow that it was an earlier production.

OTHER INSCRIPTIONS IN WESTERN YORKSHIRE

Four inscriptions from the West Riding remain to be noticed, and it is striking that three of them fall within the same geographical area as the vernacular memorials. Kirkheaton 1 (p. 189, Ill. 456), indeed, may once have belonged to that group. Its text is a vernacular carver’s signature in runes, Eoh worohtæ. The stone is a fragment, and possibly the rest of the monument held a memorial inscription — it is worth noting that a comparable signature follows the main text on the Great Urswick stone. It is also interesting that Kirkheaton is adjacent to Thornhill, and shared with it, at least at a later date, an ecclesiastical association with Dewsbury, as discussed above.

On the other hand, two further inscribed stones from Dewsbury itself — perhaps fragments of the same monument — indicate that the vernacular memorial text was not the only type of literacy on display at that site. Dewsbury 1 and 5 may well belong to a similar pre-Viking date as the other inscribed stones, but they represent different traditions. The texts are in Latin and roman script, and they comprise identifying ‘labels’ for figure sculptures: Dewsbury 1 names Jesus Christ (p. 129, Ill. 190), and Dewsbury 5 identifies scenes depicting two of his miracles (p. 136, Ill. 207). The closest Anglo-Saxon parallels for these types of inscription are found on the crosses at Bewcastle and, especially, Ruthwell, an observation which serves as a further reminder of the invisible threads which connect literate stone-carvers across the length and breadth of pre-Viking Northumbria.

Finally there is the geographical outlier, the roman-script inscription probably to be reconstructed as Adhyse pr(es)b(yter) on a cross-shaft at Ripon (no. 1 below, p. 231, Ill. 632). Presumably it is a funerary monument, like the main group discussed here, but, if pr(es)b(yter) is correctly identified, it is Latin, and there is no accompanying vernacular text. This stone too is probably of pre-Viking date: it is striking that the West Riding has none of the eleventh-century Anglo-Scandinavian inscriptions, particularly accompanying sundials, that are relatively common elsewhere in Yorkshire (cf. Lang 2001, 53).

16. Besides the unstressed vowels, other points of linguistic comparison within the group include bæcun (Crowle) as against ‘later’ becon elsewhere; for discussion of this, see Everson and Stocker 1999, 149.

17. Another vernacular runic signature, on a stone from Alnmouth, Northumberland (Cramp 1984, 161–2, pl. 157.810), also accompanies a longer text. That text is much damaged, and I have not included it amongst the related vernacular memorials, but it is possible that it should belong there.
Inscriptions are the little perks that you see at the bottom of the item’s description. They are not so random. All gear pieces, weapons and components can have inscriptions. Weapons and gear can have up to four, while Components can only have up to two. In front of the inscription’s text you will find a small icon: a javelin silhouette and a cog wheel. The Canaanite and Aramaic inscriptions, also known as Northwest Semitic inscriptions, are the primary extra-Biblical source for understanding of the society and history of the Ancient Hebrews, Phoenicians and Aramean people. Semitic inscriptions may occur on stone slabs, pottery ostraca, ornaments, and range from simple names to full texts. The older inscriptions form a Canaanite-Aramaic dialect continuum, exemplified by writings which scholars have struggled to fit into either category, such as the However, the presence of an inscription about which the speaker talks establishes constraints. Libations, funeral anniversaries, pictures, tombs, houses and inscriptions on the wall: all contribute to the remembrance and help to maintain the concept of ancestor. From the Cambridge English Corpus. When she is in graphic space, her gestures are clearly oriented to the inscription, here the aerial map. From the Cambridge English Corpus.