Trusmadoor and Other Cumbrian `Pass' Words

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Nobody ever sang the praises of Trusmadoor, and it's time someone did. This lonely passage between the hills, an obvious and easy way for man and beast and beloved by wheeling buzzards and hawks, has a strange nostalgic charm. Its neat and regular proportions are remarkable—a natural `railway cutting'. What a place for an ambush and a massacre![1]

No ambushes or massacres are promised in the following pages, but it will be argued that the neglected name of Trusmadoor holds excitements of a quieter kind. I will consider its etymology and wider onomastic and historical context and significance, and point to one or possibly two further instances of its rare first element. In the course of the discussion I will suggest alternative interpretations of two lost names in Cumbria.

Trusmadoor lies among the Uldale Fells in Cumbria, some five miles east of the northern end of Bassenthwaite Lake (National Grid Reference NY2733). An ascending defile, it runs south-east, with Great Cockup to its west and Meal Fell to the north-east. The top of the pass forms a V-shaped frame for splendid views north over the Solway Firth some twenty miles away.

Trusmadoor is a significant enough landscape feature to appear on the Ordnance Survey (OS) One Inch and 1:50,000 maps of the area, yet it is unrecorded, so far as I know, until its appearance on the First Edition Six Inch OS map of 1867. In the absence of early spellings one would normally be inclined to leave the name well alone, a practice followed, intentionally or not, by the editors of the English Place-Name Society survey of Cumberland.[2] However, to speakers or readers of Welsh the name is fairly transparent.

The first element can, in the phonological and geographical circumstances, hardly be other than a Cumbric word corresponding to modern

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[1] A. Wainwright, *The Northern Fells* (Kendal, 1962), Knott p. 6; cf. Meal Fell p. 5 for illustration.

[2] A. M. Armstrong *et al*., *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, 3 vols, English Place-Name Society, 20–22 (Cambridge, 1950–52); henceforth *PN Cumb*.

Welsh *drws*, which has the senses `door-way, entrance; door; gap leading through mountains, pass'.[3] *Drws* occurs, as *drus*, in the Welsh Juvencus glosses as a gloss to *claustrum* in the sense `barrier, door, doorway';[4] and it occurs in Welsh place-names such as several instances of Drws-y-coed `the pass in the wood', including one in Llandwrog, Caernarfonshire (SH5453, *Druscoyt* 1370–71),[5] and several of Drws-y-Nant `the pass of the valley', including one in Llanfachreth, Merioneth (SH7722, *Drows Nantt* 1592). Occasionally it collocates with another `pass' word, *bwlch*,[6] presumably because it has lost some of its original force, as in *Bwlch Drws Ardudwy* `gap of the pass to Ardudwy' in Llanbedr/ Llanenddwyn, Merioneth (SH6628, *Bwlch Dr_s Ardidwy* 1795) or *bwlch Drws arian* (1561) `the gap

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[3] *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru / A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, edited by R. J. Thomas *et al*. (Cardiff, 1950–), s.v. By `Cumbric' I mean the Celtic language believed to have been spoken during the later part of the first millennium AD in what is now Cumbria, South-West Scotland, and parts of Yorkshire. It is a variety of P-Celtic or Brittonic/Brythonic, and its closest living relative is Welsh. When, and to what extent, it diverged from Old Welsh, is highly uncertain: see for instance K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 9–10. Cumbria(n), on the other hand, refers in this paper not to the ancient territories of the Cumbric speakers but to the post-1974 county which was formed, approximately, from the former Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire-North-of-the-Sands. References to Cumberland and Westmorland are to the pre-1974 counties.

[4] Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 4.42; *Juvencus Text and Commentary*, edited by H. McKee (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 491. The glosses, in several hands, are of the later ninth century and earlier tenth century (pp. 74–75). I am deeply indebted to Dr John Koch of Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd / University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth for this reference and for advice on other matters relating to early Welsh and Cumbric; I would also like to thank him for his interest in this paper from the outset.

[5] I am most grateful to Dr Hywel Wyn Owen, Director of the Place-Name Research Centre at University of Wales, Bangor, and to Ann Daniels, Research Officer for the Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales project, for their help in obtaining early forms from Archif Melville Richards (the place-name archive of the late Professor Melville Richards, deposited on permanent loan in the Place-Name Research Centre, University of Wales, Bangor), and for suggestions and answers to specific queries.

[6] Defined as `breach, gap, notch' etc. in *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, s.v.

of the silver pass' in Llysdulas, Anglesey (SH4889). The voiceless initial
consonant in *trus-* as against the voiced Welsh *drws* could point to a
dialectal difference between Cumbric and Welsh, or more probably reflect
English perceptions of the pronunciation at the time when they adopted the
name. I have not found local parallels. Drumburgh in Bowness, for instance,
whose first element is believed to be from Old Welsh *drum* `ridge', is
Drumbogh 1171–75, and never wavers from <Dr-> spellings.[7] However, as
Breeze notes, `initial Celtic [d] has occasionally been borrowed by English
as [t]',[8] and his proposed derivation of Trusham, Devon (SX8582, *Trisma*
1086 and 1291, *Trisme* 1260), from Primitive Cornish *drisma* `place of
briers, brambles, thornbushes' (cf. Old Cornish *dreis*, Welsh *drysi*, *drys*)
precisely parallels the [dr] : [tr] correspondence postulated between *drws*
and Trus(madoor).

The element *drws/trus* `door, pass' is extremely rare outside Wales, to
judge from the standard authorities,[9] though it is noted by Coates, who
suggests an antecedent, in the plural, of the Welsh *oerddrws* `wind-gap',
literally `cold-door' as the etymon for the first part of Overmoigne, Dorset
(SY7685).[10] It is, however, the key that, as well as opening Trusmadoor,

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[7] *PN Cumb.*, I, 124.

[8] A. Breeze, `Trusham, near Exeter', in R. Coates and A. Breeze, *Celtic Voices,
English Places. Studies of the Celtic Impact on Place-Names in England* (Stamford,
2000), pp. 140–41 (p. 141); originally published in *Devon and Cornwall Notes and
Queries*, 38 (1998), 74–76. Were it not for the early spellings in <i> the similarity to
Trusma(door) and the position of the village in a steep-sided river valley would
tempt one to see this as another potential *trus/drws*. An example of [d] > [t] in the
anglicisation of a Welsh place-name, kindly mentioned to me by Dr Hywel Wyn
Owen, is Tenby, Pembrokeshire (*Dinbych c.*1275, Tynebegh 1292; H. W. Owen,
The Place-Names of Wales (Cardiff, 1998), p. 33).

[9] I have not found it in E. Basden, *Index of Celtic Elements in Professor W. J.
Watson's The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland (1926)* (Edinburgh,
1997), in the index to Jackson, *Language and History*, in A. H. Smith, *English
Place-Name Elements*, 2 vols, English Place-Name Society, 25–26 (Cambridge,
1956), or in O. J. Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, English Place-Name
Society, 56/57 (Nottingham, 1985).

[10] R. Coates, `Owermoigne, Dorset', in *Celtic Voices*, pp. 100–05; originally
published in *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 100 (1995), 244–51. Coates (*Celtic
Voices*, p. 104) rejects an alternative etymology suggested by G. Kristensson in
`The place-name Owermoigne (Dorset)', *Notes and Queries*, 245 (2000), 5–6 and

explains another problematic Lakeland name, Truss Gap. The farm of this name is situated in the former Westmorland, at a notable narrowing in Swindale, three miles south of Bampton (NY5113). Truss Gap is listed, as Trussgap, in the English Place-Name Survey for Westmorland, where its appearance on the First Edition One Inch OS map of 1859 is noted, but no explanation of the name given.[11] I have not found significant pre-datings, though the name is also recorded from 1728.[12] Nevertheless, the coincidence of topography and the collocation of the *drws*-like Trus- with an element meaning `gap, pass' puts it beyond reasonable doubt that this is another Cumbric `door-way, pass'.

Alternative etymologies for the first elements of Trusmadoor and Truss Gap appear far less promising, but for a reason that will emerge presently, they cannot be dismissed altogether. One possible etymon is Old English (OE) *trus/tr_s*, Middle English (ME) *trouse* `debris fallen from trees, kindling, brushwood', a word rare in independent use,[13] and far from common in toponymic use, although it seems to occur in Trusley in Derbyshire (SK2535) and Trewsbury, Gloucestershire (ST9899), and an adjectival derivative *tr_sen* is postulated in Trussenhayes, Wiltshire (ST8346).[14]

Truss Gap stands in a part of Swindale which nowadays is pleasantly edged with broad-leaved trees, and one could imagine that the debris from their ancestors might have been a modestly valuable resource, or that low shrubby brushwood might have been gathered from the valley floor in the

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subsequently restated by him in `The place-name Owermoigne again', *Notes and Queries*, 246 (2001), 102–03. I am grateful to Dr Carole Hough for the latter reference.

[11] A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Westmorland*, 2 vols, English Place-Name Society, 42–43 (Cambridge, 1967), II, 178; henceforth *PN Westm*.

[12] *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, n.s. 1 (1900), 259.

[13] A. diP. Healey and R. L. Venezky, *A Microfiche Concordance to Old English* (Toronto, 1980), s.v., has only one citation, from a charter.

[14] On Trusley, see K. Cameron, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, 3 vols, English Place-Name Society, 27–29 (Cambridge, 1959), II, 613; on Trewsbury, see A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire*, 4 vols, English Place-Name Society, 38–41 (Cambridge, 1964–65), I, 68; on Trussenhayes, see J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Wiltshire*, English Place-Name Society, 16 (Cambridge, 1939), p. 153.

past. However, Trusmadoor and its environs are splendidly treeless, and even if the ecology had changed over the centuries, it seems in principle unlikely that the rare word *trus*/*tr_s* should collocate with a generic meaning `gap, pass' twice in the same (post-1974) county but apparently nowhere else.

A reason for contemplating this unlikely possibility is, however, to hand, in another Cumbrian name, the lost *Troscarth* 1285, *Troscart* 1292, in Little Salkeld. This the editors of the English Place-Name Survey for Cumberland explain as `brushwood cleft', from Old Norse (ON) *tros* and ON *skarð* `cleft, pass'.[15] The coincidence that here again we have a first element with the phonetic structure [tr] + [rounded back vowel] + [s] collocating with a word meaning `gap, pass' is too striking to be ignored, and therefore *Troscart(h)* and other names thought to contain ON *tros* are worth investigating, in case they throw comparative light on Trusmadoor and Truss Gap, or conversely, in case the etymologies involving ON *tros* become less certain when seen in the light of Trusmadoor and Truss Gap.

ON *tros* is cognate with OE *trus*, *tr_s*,[16] and has been suggested as a possible source of it.[17] Its meaning, `woodland debris, fallen leaves and twigs', is evident from a famous passage in Snorri Sturluson's story of the god Þórr/Thor's journey to visit the shape-shifting giant Útgarða-Loki.[18] At one point the furiously frustrated Thor sinks his hammer in the head of the giant Skrýmir (alias Útgarða-Loki), as he sleeps. This happens three times, and each time the giant rouses, and wonders aloud whether first a leaf, then an acorn, then some bit of *tros* has fallen on his head from the oak boughs above (*at tros nkkut af kvistunum felli í hfut mér*). The comedy depends on the lightness of the material, and it is perhaps unsurprising that a woodland resource of such slender economic significance but such ubiquity does not often appear in place-names. One might therefore wonder whether *Troscart(h)* was another Cumbric *drws*, to which an epexegetic or

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[15] *PN Cumb*., I, 239, following E. Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England*, Lunds Universitets Årsskrift, N. F. Avd. 1, Bd 14, Nr 27 (Lund 1918), p. 43.

[16] J. de Vries, *Altnordisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2nd edn (Leiden, 1977), s.v.

[17] *Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989), s.v. *trouse* sb[1]; henceforth *OED*.

[18] *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, edited by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1931), p. 52; *Snorri Sturluson, Edda*, translated by A. Faulkes (London, 1987), pp. 39–40.

explanatory element, this time ON *skarð*, was added. However, the <o> spelling would have to be explained as a Norse reinterpretation of the first element, and since the location of *Troscart(h)* is unknown, the etymologies cannot be tested against the topography, so that the case will have to be left open, but with probability quite strongly on the side of *tros* rather than *trus/drws*.

ON *tros* has been proposed as an element in at least three further Cumbrian names. Cross Dormont in Barton (NY4622) is *Trostermod* 1202, *Trostormot* 1256–1333, *Trostormod(e)* 1275–1383, *Trostormond(e)* 1295–1401, *Crostormount* 1634–1777.[19] Here, there seems little reason to dispute the interpretation `Thormod's brushwood' proposed by Ekwall and followed by Smith and Fellows-Jensen.[20] This assumes that the name is a generic-first or inversion compound with the Old Norse personal name *Þormóðr* as the specific second element, and ON *tros*, with a slight semantic shift from `(woodland) rubbish, twigs' to `thicket, underwood' or `twig-strewn clearing', as generic; subsequent transformation of the first element by popular etymology to modern Cross would be fairly unproblematic. Whether or not this is correct, the occurrence of *tros* in the Norwegian place-names Trosby and Trosset and the Orcadian *Trosnes* shows at least that *tros* could be a substantial enough feature to warrant toponymic marking.[21] Meanwhile, the vowel of the first syllable makes Cumbric *drws/trus* `door' unlikely, as does the situation of the place, for it stands on the slope of a tiny stream-carved valley on the east side of Ullswater, but there is no gap or pass in the vicinity—nothing remotely comparable with the landforms at Trusmadoor or Truss Gap. ON *tros* therefore remains fairly well established in Cross Dormont.

Much less certain is a further possible case of ON *tros* mentioned by the editors of the English Place-Name Survey for Cumberland following the discussion of *Troscart* in Little Salkeld. They suggest that `the element *tros* seems to appear again in this neighbourhood in *Troughscough* 1272 ..., *Troskhouch* 1285 ..., *Trowescowgh* 1393'.[22] The spellings of the second

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[19] *PN Westm.*, II, 210.

[20] Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts*, p. 43; *PN Westm.*, II, 210; G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (Copenhagen, 1985), p. 117.

[21] Parallels cited in Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts*, p. 43.

[22] *PN Cumb.*, I, 239.

element, however, seem to point to ON *skógr* `wood',[23] in which case the <s> does not, or does not need to, belong to the first element. Further, the spellings *Trough-* and *Trowe-* point not to ON *tros* but to ON *trog* `trough, hollow'.[24] The earliest Cumbrian spelling of this (or of its Old English cognate *trog*) known to me is *le Trough heued* 1331 (cf. modern Troughfoot, the lower end of the valley of the Blackrack Beck).[25] As with *Troscart(h)*, the lack of a location for *Troughscough* means that the proposed etymons cannot be checked by reference to the site.

A final putative example of *tros* in Cumbria is in Poltross (*Poltros* 1169, *Poltrosse* 1184).[26] Poltross Burn joins the Irthing at Gilsland (NY6366). Its upper reaches pass through a narrow defile at Temon, where it forms the present Cumbria/Northumberland boundary. The first element is presumably a Cumbric cognate of Welsh *pwll* `pool', which is well attested in the sense `stream' in North Cumbria, but the second element is more elusive. Ekwall's confidence that the second element is ON *tros* is not shared, in light of a larger range of spellings, by the editors of *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, [27] and indeed, the assumption of a

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[23] *Ibid*., I, 239. Cf. the spellings of presumed ON *skógr* in Scalescough `shieling wood': *Scalescogh* 1272, *Skalescoch* 1285 (*PN Cumb*., I, 149) or Fluskew `flat wood': *Flasco* 1294, *Flascowe* 1361, *Flatscogh*, *Flascogh* 1363, *Flaschowe* 1363 (*PN Cumb*., I, 187).

[24] OE *trog* or *tr_g* `trough, valley' is recognised in the lists of elements in *PN Cumb*., III, 495, *PN Westm*., II, 294 and Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 187–88 (*tr_g*, amended to *trog* by K. Cameron in `Addenda and Corrigenda', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 1 (1968–69), 9–42 (p. 38)). The Old Norse cognate is not listed, but it seems to occur in the Norwegian Spiketrog and other farm-names, apparently referring to hollows in the ground: the topography at Spiketrog is said to be trough-shaped (O. Rygh, *Norske Gaardnavne*, 20 vols (Christiania/Oslo, 1897–1924), V, 450). Among less certain examples are Trogstad (*ibid*., VI, 35–36) and Trostad (*ibid*., IV, 52). I am grateful to Dr Paul Cullen for pointing out the Norwegian parallels, and in the process for drawing my attention to the invaluable electronic version of *Norske Gaardnavne* at <http://www.dokpro.uio.no/> (Dokumentasjonsprosjektet, Universities of Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø and Trondheim). I would also like to thank him for his comments on a draft of this paper.

[25] *PN Cumb*., I, 235.

[26] *PN Cumb*., I, 23.

[27] *PN Cumb*., I, 23; Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts*, p. 30.

Cumbric-Norse hybrid in which the Norse element is exceedingly rare is problematic. Could this instead be another Cumbric *trus*?

Returning to Trusmadoor and Truss Gap, two further possibilities for their common first element should at least be considered. Firstly, it could conceivably originate in a Brittonic preposition meaning `across, beyond': Old Welsh *tros*, Welsh *dros*, *traws*, Cornish *dres*.[28] This is easily confused with *trus* `brushwood', as demonstrated when Padel suggests *dres cos* `beyond the wood' for Truscott, Cornwall in preference to English `brushwood cottage' as suggested by Smith.[29] Nevertheless, since Trusmadoor and Truss Gap do not provide the Cumbric noun which would complete the phrasal structure started by *tros* this possibility can be discounted.

For a final possible interpretation of Trus-, we return to the story of Þórr/Thor and Útgarða-Loki. In the denouement, the latter explains that he had deflected Thor's hammer-blows by magicking a mountain between himself and the hammer; three great valleys in the mountain are the dents from the hammer-blows. It is therefore a quaint (but doubtless non-significant) coincidence that a further suggestion concerning Truss Gap is Sedgefield's that it is `Thor's gap', with Truss as `the gen[itive] case of the pers[onal] n[ame] *Thor*, by metathesis of *r*'.[30] Sedgefield does not specify whether he has a man or god in mind—perhaps a man, given his general predilection for anthroponymic solutions—but either way this is fairly implausible, especially given the rarity of Þórr as a personal name (as opposed to Þormóðr and the legion other Þór- compounds), and the lack of evidence for place-names containing the names of pagan gods in Cumbria.

We can, I think, safely conclude that Trusmadoor and Truss Gap contain a valuable relic of Cumbric topographical vocabulary cognate with Welsh *drws* `door, pass', and that they do not contain an English or Norse word for brushwood, a Brittonic preposition, or a Norse personal or god's name, though these rejected possibilities give a glimpse both of the richness of onomastic possibility in the area, and of the difficulty in arbitrating between

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[28] Watson, *Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, p. 350; Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, p. 89.

[29] Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, p. 89; Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 188.

[30] W. J. Sedgefield, *The Place-Names of Cumberland and Westmorland* (Manchester, 1915), p. 180.

possible etymologies which its documentary poverty causes.

The second syllable of Trusmadoor, like the first, is fairly certainly Cumbric: the reflex of Old Celtic *magos*.[31] It appears as Gaelic *magh* and Irish *mag(h)*, *má*, with the sense `plain', as it does in some Welsh place-names such as Machen and Machynllech. However, `in all three Brittonic languages [Welsh, Cornish and Breton] the word occurs primarily as a suffix, *-va*, in compounds, where it means "place" simply'.[32] Old Welsh examples of its use as a nominal suffix include *guaroimaou* (with *guaroi* `playing, game' and *ou*, plural inflexion), glossing *theatris* in the ninth-century Oxford glosses to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*,[33] while early examples of its use in place-names include some in the Old Welsh charters in the *Liber Landavensis / Book of Llandaff*: *Hen Riu Gunma* `Old Hill of the White/Blessed Place' or *Pouisma Deui* `[St] David's Resting Place'.[34] The suffix continues to be prolific in Modern Welsh, in words such as *camfa* `stile', *morfa* `place by the sea, salt-marsh', and *porfa* `pasture'.

Trusmadoor, so far as I am aware, provides the only example in Cumbria, or indeed in northern England, of the suffix *-ma*, and is precious as such.[35] (Curiously, it also seems to occur in Trusham as interpreted by Breeze, mentioned above). Can it additionally tell us anything about the Cumbric language or about the history of Trusmadoor and its naming? Unsurprisingly, the *-ma-* in Trusmadoor aligns semantically with the dominant Brittonic usage: it can only mean `place', not `plain' since there is no flat land in the locality. More difficult and tantalising, but potentially

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[31] This appears in eight Romano-British names: see A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (London, 1979), pp. 287–88.

[32] Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, pp. 155–56, s.v. **ma*; he also notes the occurrence of *-ma* forms, especially in Wales, in the sense `plain, open country'.

[33] Facsimile in *Saint Dunstan's Classbook for Glastonbury. Codex Biblioth. Bodleianae Oxon. Auct. F.4./32*, introduction by R. W. Hunt (Amsterdam, 1961), fol. 38r.

[34] *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv: Reproduced from the Gwysaney Manuscript*, edited by J. G. Evans (Oxford, 1893, repr. Aberystwyth, 1979), pp. 32 and 260 respectively. The Book is usually dated to the twelfth century, but much of the charter material is believed to derive from much earlier exemplars (see J. Coe, `River and valley terms in the Book of Llandaf', *Nomina*, 23 (2000), 5–21, and references there).

[35] The *-ma* in Setmabanning, near Threlkeld, Cumbria (*Set-/Satmabannyngg'* 1292), is of different origin (*PN Cumb.*, II, 313–14).

more revealing, however, is its phonology. As the Welsh examples above show, and other Brittonic material would show, the element was subject to lenition—the gradual process of fricativisation and de-nasalisation which Jackson envisages as a stately progress of [m] > [u] > [] > [v] lasting, possibly, from the second half of the fifth century to the eleventh.[36] Brittonic place- and river-names in England show either <m> spellings (Frome, Wiltshire-Somerset, Lympne, Sussex-Kent) or <v> spellings (the name Devon, and Leven, Lancashire, now Cumbria); and Jackson sees both outcomes as sound-substitutions, depending on whether the nasal quality or the fricative quality of the consonant was most perceptible to the speakers who adopted the names.[37] Such perceptions would depend on the stage reached by the consonant in the Brittonic donor language, but also on the phonetic/phonemic system of the receiving variety of Old English. This makes the dating of adopted names containing such consonants extremely difficult. Jackson sees the seventh century as a crucial watershed between *m-* substitution and *v-* substitution,[38] but adds that `the Welsh and Cornish sound could still be perceived by the English as an *m* as late as the eight, ninth and tenth centuries, in spite of the fact that it could be heard as *v* so early as the seventh century, even the end of the sixth';[39] and the appearance of <ma> spellings in Welsh texts as late as the eleventh century (or twelfth in the *Book of Llandaff*) may suggest not just scribal habit but also the perception of speakers that the sound `belong[ed] to the range of *m-*sounds'.[40] A further factor which makes the non-lenited [m] of Trusmadoor unreliable as an indicator of early date is its position at an obvious boundary between two elements, which might also have encouraged its transmission in the non-lenited form. In short, therefore, the <ma> (as opposed to <va>) in Trusmadoor could point to adoption of the name by Anglian speakers as early as the seventh century, but much later transfer is by no means ruled out.

   Moving to the wider context, Trusmadoor and Truss Gap take their place among the dots on the map which contribute to the (albeit extremely hazy) picture of Cumbric activity in northern Cumbria. Trusmadoor is situated in

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[36] Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 489.

[37] *Ibid*., pp. 486–89. Jackson refers to spirant rather than fricative quality.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 491.

[39] *Ibid*., p. 492.

[40] *Ibid*., p. 493.

an area whose major names are predominantly Scandinavian (Bassenthwaite, Uldale, Ireby, Caldbeck, etc.), while the main concentrations of names in Cumbric Blen- `summit', Pen- `head', Car- (Welsh *caer*) `fortified place', and Cum- `valley' lie farther north and east. Definitely Cumbric toponyms are not far away, however. West of Trusmadoor at a distance of some nine miles lies a cluster between the Ellen and Derwent rivers, including Redmain (NY1333) and Blindcrake (NY1434); while four miles due east across the fells is Carrock Fell (NY3433), site of an iron-age hill fort and north-western point of another Cumbric cluster, which includes Penrith (NY5130).[41] Further, Meal Fell, which flanks Trusmadoor immediately to the east (NY2833), may well have Cumbric roots. Recorded only from the First Edition OS map of 1867, it is probably of the same origin as Great Mell Fell in Hutton (NY3925) which is *Melfel* 1279 (p),[42] where *mell* represents a cognate of Welsh *moel* `bald', hence `bare hill'.[43] This assumption is supported by the spelling *Mealfell* c.1690 for Mell Fell in Murton, former Westmorland,[44] and by the character of the Meal Fell under discussion, whose stony top contrasts with its own grassy sides and with the neighbouring fells. Other possible Cumbrian examples of this `hill' word are Mellbreak/Melbreak, west of Crummock Water (NY1419), recorded from 1784,[45] and possibly Gaelic *Meall breac* `speckled hill',[46] though the reason for such a description is not obvious nowadays; and Lingmell on the Eskdale/Nether Wasdale boundary

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[41] On Redmain, see *PN Cumb.*, II, 267, Coates and Breeze, *Celtic Voices*, p. 284; on Blindcrake, *PN Cumb.*, II, 266–67; on Carrock Fell, *PN Cumb.*, II, 305; and on Penrith, *PN Cumb.*, I, 229–30.

[42] *PN Cumb.*, I, 212.

[43] See Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 326, Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, II, 37, s.v. **m_l²* Pr Welsh, *moel* Welsh, **moil*, **muil* PrCorn, amended by K. Jackson to *ml*, *moil* Pr Welsh, Pr Corn, Pr Cumb, *moel* Welsh (Brit. **mailo-*) (`Addenda and Corrigenda', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 1 (1968–69), 43–52 (p. 49)).

[44] PN Cumb., I, 212. Smith, on the other hand, apparently unaware of the 1690 spelling, conjectures it to be `middle fell', from ON *meðal*, *fjall* (*PN Westm.*, II, 105).

[45] *PN Cumb.*, II, 412.

[46] So D. Brearley, *Lake District Place-Names Explained for the General Reader* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1974), p. 42.

(NY2008, *Lingmale* 1578, *Ling mel* 1802),[47] probably `heathery hill, bare of trees', with *ling* ultimately from ON *lyng* `heather'.

The `Cumbric' map for the former Westmorland is fairly empty,[48] but the north-west corner, location of Truss Gap, is slightly less so, and the place is less than four miles from a celebrated Cumbric-Anglian hybrid, Carhullan in Bampton (NY4918, *Carholand* 1420, *Carehullend* 1540, *Carhullan* 1617).[49]

A full discussion of Trusmadoor and Truss Gap in relation to Cumbric toponymy and Cumbrian history is beyond the scope of this paper and the competence of its author. However, it is appropriate at least to sketch the context and the problems. The rich scatters of Cumbric place-names in Cumberland north of the Derwent,[50] and to a lesser extent, adjacent parts of Westmorland, are wholly consonant with the late survival of Celtic power commemorated in the very names of Cumberland and Cumbria. The question of the age and significance of the names, on the other hand, is extremely problematic, given how little is known about Cumbria in the first millennium. It is generally accepted that the post-Roman power vacuum in northern Cumberland was filled by Cumbric kingdoms including that of Rheged, centred probably on the Solway and the Eden valley,[51] from the fifth century until the seventh, when the expansionism of the Anglian kingdom of Bernicia (north Northumbria) reached west of the Pennines.

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[47] *PN Cumb.*, II, 392; *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, I, *1794–1804*, edited by K. Coburn (London, 1957), Note 1213 (1802).

[48] Coates and Breeze, *Celtic Voices*, p. 390.

[49] *PN Westm.*, II, 189–90.

[50] K. Jackson estimated that 29% of villages in Cumberland had British (i.e. Cumbric) names (`Angles and Britons in Northumbria and Cumbria', in *Angles and Britons. O'Donnell Lectures*, edited by H. Lewis (Cardiff, 1963), pp. 60–84 (pp. 74–75)). For reviews of Brittonic/Cumbric toponyms and toponymic elements in Cumbria, see Ekwall, *Scandinavians and Celts*, *PN Cumb.*, III, xix–xx, *PN Westm.*, I, xxxiii–xxxvi, and Coates and Breeze, *Celtic Voices*, pp. 281–88 and 370–74 (Cumberland gazetteer and maps) and pp. 338–39 and 390 (Westmorland gazetteer and map).

[51] The extent of the kingdom is highly uncertain, and indications of influence at points as far-flung as Galloway, the Mersey and Catterick may be misleading. See, for instance, N. Higham, *The Northern Counties to AD 1000* (London and New York, 1986), p. 253; C. Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 48–49.

The extent and nature of Anglian rule are unknown, but Anglian place-names (and Anglian sculptural monuments) are numerous along the Cumbrian coastal plain, the Carlisle plain and the Eden valley, while they are extremely sparse in the fells and valleys of the Cumbrian dome. The duration of the Anglian phase is also unknown, but by the early tenth century it is with kings of the now supreme house of Wessex that Cumbrian kings are having to deal. Soon after that, according to a famous view articulated by Kenneth Jackson, a Cumbric resurgence from the kingdom of Strathclyde penetrated as far south as the Derwent in the west and Stainmoor in the east, and lasted for about a century.[52] It is in this context that Jackson sees several place-names from north Cumbria, including those consisting of a Cumbric toponymic element plus dithematic Anglian place-name: Cumwhitton, Carhullan (near Truss Gap), and the probably post-Conquest Cumwhinton, which is believed to be an inversion compound with the Anglo-Norman personal name *Quintin* as specific. Celtic-type pronunciation (with stressed second syllable) both in these names and in Carlatton may also be suggestive of late dating.[53] However, the editors of *The Place-Names of Cumberland* do not seem to envisage such a late and distinct phase of re-Cumbrianisation from Strathclyde when they remark that Carlatton and Cumwhitton `strongly suggest that territories once occupied by the Anglian invader may have been recovered, after an interval, by their earlier owners'.[54] The most recent and comprehensive study of the history of the Cumbrians regards the Strathclyde resurgence in the tenth century as `wholly hypothetical' and sees the Cumbrian Car- and Cum- hybrids as the product of survival rather than revival, `secondary developments from existing British settlement cores' on the peripheries of territorial units.[55]

The linguistic form of Trusma(door) and Truss (Gap) gives few clues as to the date of their genesis or their adoption by English speakers, and hence

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[52] `Angles and Britons', p. 72.

[53] Jackson, `Angles and Britons', pp. 81–83, Higham, *The Northern Counties*, p. 318. See also *PN Cumb.*, I, 78 on Cumwhitton, *PN Westm.*, II, 189–90 on Carhullan, *PN Cumb.*, I, 161–62 on Cumwhinton and *PN Cumb.*, I, 73–74 on Carlatton (where the derivation from Anglo-Scandinavian *karlatún* preferred by Jackson is mentioned but not entirely accepted).

[54] *PN Cumb.*, III, xxi.

[55] Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians*, pp. 87 and 86.

as to their likely place in the above scenarios. The correspondence of Cumbric [tr] with Welsh [dr] does not appear to restrict the possible date-range; the unlenited [ma] in Trusmadoor may, as noted above, suggest early adoption by Anglian speakers, but is disappointingly inconclusive; and there are no morphological clues, as there would be in the case of an `inversion compound', a pattern not found among Romano-British names. The Trus- names could therefore, on linguistic grounds, have been given at any stage between the Iron Age and the demise of Cumbric, possibly as late as the early twelfth century.[56]

   In turning to the final elements of Trusmadoor and Truss Gap we move, probably, on to the post-Cumbric phrase. In Trusmadoor, a topographic use of the English word `door' is so strikingly appropriate to the landscape that, as with the first syllable Trus-, it seems almost pedantic to consider other options. OE *duru*, OE *dor* and their reflexes are recorded in English place-names referring primarily to (settlements near) passes through hills or narrowings in valleys.[57] Examples include Dore, Derbyshire, now South Yorkshire (SK3181, *Dor* 827[*c*.900], *Dore* 1086), Dorton, Buckinghamshire (SP6814, *Dortone* 1086 etc.), and Heydour/Haydor, Lincolnshire (TF0039, *Haidure*, *Heidure* 1086).[58] In the Lake District the word is applied to passes, cols or gorges, including some of the most spectacular. The earliest documented is *Laghedure* `the low door' (Lodore above Derwentwater, NY2618), which is recorded, together with *Heghedure*, from 1209–10.[59] The `door' concerned seems to be the great gorge between Gowder Crag and Shepherd's Crag down which Watendlath Beck cascades, forming the famous Lodore Falls. Mickledore, `the great door or col', meanwhile, is the giant bite-shaped gap in the crags between Scafell and Scafell Pike (NY2106). There are no forms, to my knowledge,

[56] Jackson, `Angles and Britons', p. 73.

[57] See Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I, 140, s.v. *duru* OE `a door, a gate, a gap, a pass', and I, 134, s.v. *dor* `a large door, a gate'; the two are indistinguishable in many or most place-names.

[58] For Dore see Cameron, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, II, 240, for Dorton see A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*, English Place-Name Society, 2 (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 123–24, and for Haydor, see E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1960), p. 228.

[59] *PN Cumb.*, II, 350.

earlier than Otley's reference to `the yawning chasm of Mickle Door',[60] but the name may well be medieval, to judge from the occurrence of *le Mikeldor de Yowberg*, now Dore Head on Yewbarrow (NY1709), in 1332.[61]

The other possible explanation of the syllable `-door' is that it too is Cumbric, for while early Welsh *drws* is the doorway, *dôr* is the door that fills it.[62] This could make topographical sense in the case of Trusmadoor, for when ascending the pass from the north-west, the V-shaped nick is backed not by open sky but by the slopes of Burn Tod and Frozen Fell. Hence a wholly Cumbric `doorway-like place with door' is not impossible for Trus-ma-door. Nor can a Cumbric etymon equivalent to Welsh *d_r* `water' be ruled out absolutely. However, *dôr* is rare or unknown in Welsh toponymy,[63] while *d_r* seems topographically unlikely since although there are small streams below Trusmadoor both to north-west and south-east, it is not itself a water-course, unless seasonally. Moreover, *Trusma would have been complete in itself, and given the examples of `door' for gaps and gorges noted above, it seems more likely that `door' has been added epexegetically by English speakers to a pre-existing *Trusma.

As for the second element of Truss Gap, it seems likely that the explanatory *gap* was added to *Trus(s) late in the medieval period, or still later, and hence presumably after *trus* was no longer understood. The word *gap* is an adoption from Old Norse into Middle English, and first recorded by *OED* in reference to gaps in mountains in 1555.[64] This matches the fact that the first documented Lakeland examples are from the sixteenth century: for instance, Clay Gap, Caldbeck (NY2938, *Claye Gappe* 1594), or The

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[60] J. Otley, *Concise Description of the English Lakes* (Keswick, 1823), p. 89.

[61] *PN Cumb.*, II, 441. There is also a Mickle Door on Crinkle Crags (NY 2504); its appearance on the 1867 OS map is the earliest known to me.

[62] See *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, s.v.

[63] To judge from a scan of the Melville Richards material kindly undertaken by Ann Daniels. A spectacular application of the Old Irish cognate *dorus* is Dorsy in Armagh (Irish *Na Doirse, (ar) doirsibh Emhna* `gateways of Navan' 1224), a name referring to Iron Age earthworks and hence to four nearby townlands. See P. McKay, *A Dictionary of Ulster Place-Names* (Belfast, 1999), p. 59. I am grateful to Dr Kay Muhr of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project, Queen's University, Belfast for drawing this to my attention.

[64] *OED*, s.v. *gap* sb.[1], sense 5a.

Gap in Nether Wasdale (NY1204, *del Gap* 1539).[65] Local use of the word is illustrated when Coleridge in 1800 asks the already hackneyed tourist question, 'Which way to Watendlath?', of an old woman in Borrowdale, and elicits the response, `Up the gap—a gay canny road ... Tis a gay canny clim— / You may get there in an hour'. The poet and prodigious walker also produced a sketch of a `gap'.[66]

Gap has often supplemented or supplanted pre-existing toponymic elements, such as ON *skarð* `notch, col, pass', already encountered above, or OE *geat* `gate': Ore Gap on the Eskdale/Borrowdale boundary (NY2307) was probably *Orscarth* in 1242,[67] and Wind Gap on the Ennerdale/Wasdale boundary was *le Windzate* 1322, cf. *le Wyndeyaterigg* 1338.[68] Scarth Gap Pass (NY1813, *Scarf Gapp* 1821),[69] which carries the old pony track between Buttermere and Ennerdale, is evidently a product of two phases of updating. ON *skarð* `notch or col' may have begun as a simplex name, to which was added the Norse-derived ME or ModE *gap*, then *pass*, an adoption into Middle English from French, which originally referred to gaps, but came to refer to tracks running through them.[70] `Pass' is usually a late addition to the names of Lakeland passes. The earliest Lakeland examples known to me are *pass called Kirkstone* 1671 (NY4009) and *Garburne Pass* 1719 (NY4304),[71] while Stake Pass (NY2608) and Sticks Pass (NY3418) were still *the Stake* and *Sticks* (or *Styx*) in the early nineteenth century.[72] Black Sail Pass (NY1811) was *Le Blacksayl*, *le Blackzol* in 1322,[73] and was still simply *Black Sail* on the Six Inch maps of 1867 and 1900.

The addition of epexegetic elements that we can assume in Trusmadoor and Truss Gap is thus part of a larger onomastic process. The passes that ran between the enclosed valleys of the Cumbrian dome were vital to pastoral

[65] *PN Cumb*., II, 278 and 441.

[66] *Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Notes 762 (1800) and 1211 (1802).

[67] *PN Cumb*., II, 344.

[68] *PN Cumb*., II, 388.

[69] *PN Cumb*., II, 387.

[70] *OED*, s.v. *pass*, sb.[1].

[71] *PN Westm*., II, 223 and I, 196, respectively.

[72] For instance *the Stake* (Sir Edward Baines, *A Companion to the Lakes of Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*, 2nd edn (London 1829), p. 256); *Styx Top* (*Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Note 798, 1800).

[73] *PN Cumb*., II, 391 and I, 26.

farming, trade and industry and to social, cultural and religious life, and it is not surprising that the vocabulary relating to them was periodically replenished.

To summarise, the chief findings of this paper are:

1. Trusmadoor and Truss Gap contain the reflex, very rare in English place-names, of a Cumbric word *trus*, cf. Welsh *drws* `door'.

2. The lost *Troscart(h)*, and Poltross, contain either ON *tros* `tree debris, brushwood', or, conceivably, the Cumbric *trus*.

3. ON *tros* is fairly safely attested in Cross Dormont, but the lost *Troughscough* probably contains ON *trog* rather than ON *tros*.

4. Trusmadoor also preserves the toponymic suffix *-ma* which is extremely rare, if not unexampled, in English place-names outside the South-West.

5. The dating of Trusmadoor and Truss Gap, and the chronology of Cumbric names in general, remain tantalisingly uncertain.

6. The epexegetic *door* and *gap* in Trusmadoor and Truss Gap are part of a larger and ongoing process of remodelling the names of the passes which have been major arteries in Lakeland throughout the ages.

The recognition of *trus* in Trusmadoor, Truss Gap and conceivably the lost *Troscart(h)* as belonging to the earliest accessible stratum of Cumbrian place-names[74] fills what was, at least for me, an important lexical gap, both in the Cumbric topographical vocabulary, and in the sequence of words for passes used by the successive generations of Cumbrians. More broadly, in light of the often-lamented fact that only three written words of Cumbric survive, in the *Leges inter Brettos et Scottos*,[75] any nugget added to the store of toponymic terms is of value. The onomastic evidence is crucial to linguistic debates about the nature of Cumbric, as it is to historical ones about population and politics in early medieval Cumbria.

The significance of Trusmadoor is also symbolic and exemplary. We have here a name of great antiquity (Wainwright's sense of `strange nostalgic charm' applies to the name as well as the place) which is seemingly only recorded within the last two centuries—surely a reminder

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[74] I use `place-names' here in the narrow sense excluding river-names, some of which may be pre-Celtic: see P. R. Kitson, `British and European river-names', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 94 (1996), 73–118 (pp. 77–79).

[75] For instance, Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 9–10.

that, at least in upland areas such as the Cumbrian dome, to focus attention only on names dated before the traditional sixteenth-century watershed may overlook material which is onomastically, linguistically and historically precious.[76]