

**Y CYMMRODOR: EMBODYING  
THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE  
HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF  
CYMMRODORION OF LONDON,  
ETC. VOL. IV. PART I**

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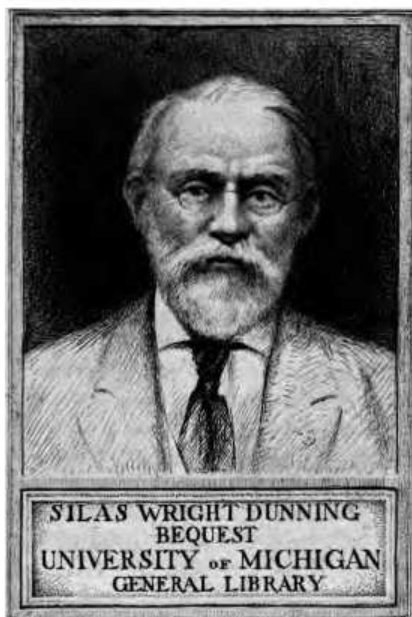
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**THOMAS POWELL**

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CYMMRODORION OF  
LONDON, ETC. VOL. IV. PART I**





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# Gymnodor

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of the Honourable

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JANUARY 1881.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE SASSARESE DIALECT OF SARDINIA,

AND ON VARIOUS POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE WHICH IT PRESENTS  
WITH THE CELTIC LANGUAGES.

By H.L.H. PRINCE LOUIS LUCIEN BONAPARTE.<sup>1</sup>

HAVING made a prolonged study of the singular pronunciation of this important dialect, I venture to assert that it involves at least thirty-seven simple sounds. In the orthography followed by Canon Spano, in his version of St. Matthew's Gospel, these are represented by thirty-five characters, whether simple, as *c*, *d*, etc., or compound,—genuine digrams—such as *ch*, *gli*, *gn*, and the like.

In entering on a discussion of these characters, I must say at the outset that they are, unfortunately, by no means in harmony with the number of the sounds; or even, in some instances, with their nature. Thus *dd*, by way of example, seems but ill-adapted to give us a clear idea either of the palatal *d*, unknown to classical Italian, or of the strong *d*, which is incorrectly spoken of as a double letter, in the same

<sup>1</sup> The following observations were printed in Italian in the year 1866, accompanying a version of St. Matthew's Gospel into Sassarese by the Rev. Canon Spano. The present translation has been made from a revised copy of the original issue, at the instance of the illustrious author, by Dr. Isambard Owen.

way as that term is improperly applied to the other digrams of the Italian language, *bb*, *ff*, *ll*, etc.

That our ears perceive no reduplication in the case of these so-called double letters when they are spoken correctly, was said, and not merely said, but proved, by that acute author, Lionardo Salviati,<sup>(1)</sup> nearly three centuries ago. Such sounds should accordingly be regarded as additional modifications, strong, but nevertheless simple, of the other sounds usually <sup>(2)</sup> represented by single consonants, and thus augment their number.

The thirty-five characters are the following:—*a*, *b*, *c*, *ch*, *ci*, *d*, *dd*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *gh*, *gi*, *gl*, *gli*, *gn*, *h*, *i*, *j*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *q*, *r*, *s*, *sc*, *sci*, *sg*, *sgi*, *t*, *u*, *v*, *z*, *zz*; and the thirty-seven sounds:—

1. <i>a</i>	14. <i>i</i>	27. <i>p</i>
2. <i>b</i>	15. <i>j</i>	28. <i>r</i>
3. <i>c</i> hard.	16. <i>l</i>	29. <i>s</i> voiceless.
4. <i>c</i> sibilant	17. <i>l</i> voiceless guttural.	30. <i>s</i> voiced.
5. <i>d</i>	18. <i>l</i> voiced guttural.	31. <i>sc</i> sibilant.
6. <i>d</i> palatal.	19. <i>l</i> voiceless dental.	32. <i>sg</i> (French <i>j</i> ).
7. <i>e</i> open.	20. <i>l</i> voiced dental.	33. <i>t</i>
8. <i>e</i> closed.	21. <i>l</i> sibilant.	34. <i>u</i>
9. <i>f</i>	22. <i>m</i>	35. <i>v</i>
10. <i>g</i> hard.	23. <i>n</i>	36. <i>z</i> voiceless.
11. <i>g</i> sibilant.	24. <i>n</i> guttural.	37. <i>z</i> voiced.
12. <i>gl</i> liquid.	25. <i>o</i> open.	
13. <i>gn</i>	26. <i>o</i> closed.	

#### EXAMINATION OF THE CHARACTERS AND OF THE SOUNDS REPRESENTED BY THEM.

1. *a*.—Is pronounced as in Italian.

2. *b*.—When, as in Italian, it should take the sound of *bb* (see Note 2), it is pronounced precisely as in that language; but when the weak modification is required, the Sassarese pronunciation of this letter seems to me of a Spanish character; that is to say, less labial than the Tuscan *b*, the lips being approximated without actually touching. Thus

when I got a native of Sassari to repeat several times over the words "bozi", *voce*, "a bozi manna", *ad alla voce*, "la bozi", *la voce*, "dabboi", *dipoi*, I invariably heard in the first, second and fourth examples, the strong *b*, incorrectly called double, of the Italian language, while in the third the sound of the Spanish *b* appeared to me most manifest.

The same may be said of initial *v*, when by the influence of the preceding word it has to be pronounced as *b*. In this case also, it is the Spanish *b* that is heard. Thus, *cun vinu*; *lu vinu*;—the former is pronounced with the Italian *v*, the latter with a weak *b*, but a *b* of Spanish sound. (See under letter *v*).

In the Logudorese dialect, as the Rev. Canon Spano observes in his Grammar, initial *b*, in circumstances which should call for its weak sound (the sound that is of *b* single) is generally absorbed. Thus, "unu boe", *un boe*, "su bentu", *il vento*, are pronounced *unu oe*, *vu entu*, while "sos boes" "soa ventos", *i buoi*, *i venti*, are sounded with the strong *b*.

In the languages of the Gaelic and Welsh families, suppression of the initial consonants by the influence of the preceding word holds a very frequent place, as will be seen further on.

3. *c*.—This letter is pronounced with the hard sound when standing before the vowels *a*, *o*, or *u*, or before any consonant, or as a terminal in proper names. "Cabà", *carare*, "cori", *cuore*, "Critu" *Cristo*, "Sadac", are pronounced, as far as regards *c*, precisely as in Italian, as long as the strong form of that letter is required in Sassarese. If, on the other hand, its sound is weakened, Sassarese follows the practice of Celtic tongues, and changes the hard *c* into an equally hard *g*. Thus the word *cori*, and its Welsh equivalent *calon*, pronounced, if isolated, with *c*, are transformed into *gori* in spoken Sassarese, and *galon*, in both spoken and written Welsh, when the preceding words possess the property of