

ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS AT BITTERNE AND MINSTER ACRES.

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I. BITTERNE.

The Romano-British site Clausentum, now Bitterne Manor, on the east bank of the Itchen near Southampton, has yielded an interesting group of Roman inscriptions. Most of them were found near the beginning of the nineteenth century, in 1799 and 1804-1805, and were at once edited by Sir Henry C. Englefield, chiefly in an appendix to the second edition of his *Walk through Southampton* (Southampton, 1805), 107-128. Other early references to them in print are to be found in Britton's *Beauties of England and Wales* (1805), vi, 125; Mr C. Roach Smith's paper in the *Transactions of the British Archaeol. Association at its . . . Congress held at Winchester*, 1845 (London, 1846), 161-170, and his note in *Archaeologia*, xxix, 257. These are the sources for more recent publications in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vii, n. 4, 1148-1152; in J. Silvester Davies' *History of Southampton* (1883), 7; and (by myself) in the *Victoria County History of Hampshire* (London, 1900), i, 336. The inscriptions themselves have not been well cared for. Only three survive: these were till lately preserved at Bitterne and are now in the museum of the Hartley University College, Southampton. It did not appear to me, when I recently examined them there, that the museum authorities attached any great value to them or desired to encourage anyone to study the remains of what is, after all, the oldest part of Southampton. In the hope, therefore, of calling attention anew to Clausentum and its antiquities, I venture to republish a list of the inscriptions, with some additions

which I am now able to make to my account in the *Victoria History*, printed some ten years ago. I am indebted to Mr. J. C. Moberly of Southampton for squeezes of nos. 5 and 6.

(1) Altar of Binstead or similar limestone, 36 inches high, found in 1804-1805. Apparently it was extracted from a semicircular tower forming a bastion of the eastern Roman wall of Clausentum: this bastion contained a number of worked stones taken from some older building and, also, as it seems, though the language of our authority, Sir Henry Englefield, is not precise, several inscriptions; namely this and nos. 2, 3, 4, 8, below. If this be so, the Roman wall must belong to a date later than the latest of these stones, that is, later than A.D. 267-273. This is, in itself, likely enough.

Deae Ancastae Geminus MAN v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) merito. "Dedicated to the goddess Ancasta by Geminus... in performance of a vow." Ancasta, who seems to be mentioned nowhere else, must be a local Celtic divinity. The letters MAN, forming the end of line 5, have been read MANI and MANI, which might give the parentage of Geminus (son of Mantus or of Manius). Only MAN, however, is certain and the sense must be left vague.

(Englefield, 123; C. Roach Smith, *Congress*, plate 5, repeated in the *Journal of the Brit. Archaeol. Ass.* xiii, 210, plate 32; *Corpus*, n. 4. The altar is now in the Hartley College museum. Copied by myself.)

(2) Rudely cut square pillar, 28 inches high, found in 1804-1805 with no. 1, probably a rude milestone (see no. 4).

Imp(erator) C(aesare) M(arco) Ant(onio) Gordiano p(io) f(elice) Aug(usto) ꝓ BI. "In the reign of M. Antonius Gordianus, Pious, Fortunate (A.D. 324-244) . . ." The meaning of the letters at the end is not clear: *respublica Belgarum* is a possible expansion, in the sense that the stone was erected by the Cantonal Council of the Belgae. But this cannot be called very probable and the reading may be wrong.

(Englefield, 125; Smith, *Congress*, plate 5; *Corpus*, n. 1149. The stone is now lost. Whether Smith saw it in 1845 or copied it from Englefield is not clear).

(3) Rudely cut, squarish pillar, 33 inches high, found

in 1804-5 with no. 1, probably a rude milestone (see no. 4).

Imp(eratoribus) C(aesaribus) Gallo et Volusiano Aug(ustis)
 "In the reign of Gallus and Volusian" (A.D. 251-253).

(Englefield, 126; Smith, *Congress*, plate 6, perhaps from Englefield; *Corpus*, n. 1148. Now lost.)

(4) Square stone, about 15 inches high, of "neat workmanship" found in 1804-1805 with no. 1, probably a monument in honour of the emperor set up by the roadside and serving as a milestone, though not a milestone in shape: such stones are common in the third century, and it is often difficult to class them precisely.

Imp(eratore) Ca[es(are)] C. Aesuvio Tetrico p(io) f(elice) Aug(usto). "In the reign of C. Esuvius Tetricus" (A.D. 267-273). Whether ÆSVIO, given by Englefield, is a variant spelling for *Esvvio* or a misreading for some abbreviation of the not uncommon *Pio Esuvio*, cannot be decided.

(Englefield, 127; Smith, *Congress*, plate 6, perhaps from Englefield; *Corpus*, n. 1150; compare Smith, *Archaeologia*, xxix, 258. The stone appears to be lost, unless it be the same as no. 5 or 6: see below).

(5) Rough block of stone, 30 inches high, somewhat rudely shaped below into the form of a column; doubtless used as a milestone. The lettering is peculiar in that the letters C, O, G have been made by the use of compasses or some similar machinery, and the centres from which they were measured are still visible in the middle of each letter, thus: ©; though they have often been mistaken for stops.

Imp(eratore) C(aesare) C(aio) Pio Esuvio Tetrico p(io) f(elice) Ag(usto). "In the reign of the emperor Caius Pius Esuvius Tetricus, Pious and Fortunate, Augustus." *Agustus* is not uncommon in later Latin: it represents a stage in the process by which *Augusta*, for example, became Aosta and Augustodunum Autun. We may compare a tile found in London on which Augustalis is spelt "Austalis," noticed in this *Journal* in 1890 (xlvii, 236).

(It is not known when this stone was found. Mr. C. Roach Smith detected it on the lawn at Bitterne in 1841, and published it in *Archaeologia*, xxix, 257 and

Congress, plate 5, and his illustration is repeated in the *Journal of the Brit. Arch. Ass.* xiii, 210; *Corpus*, n. 1151. Now in Hartley College. Copied by myself.)

(6) Rounded column of milestone shape, 40 inches high, bearing an inscription of Esuvius Tetricus. The reading is not quite certain. To my eyes it is now

I P M C E X
S V V I O
T E T R I C
V S P F A V C

but Smith, sixty-five years ago, read in lines 1 and 2, MPMCFX and ESVVIO. Perhaps the original lettering cannot now be recovered. It is, of course, possible to read CEX | SVVIO into C(aes.) *Exsuvio*; but this is neither in itself probable nor is it likely that IMP would be miscut IPM as we should then have to suppose. Or we might suppose the x accidental and read *Esuvio*, but again the PMC confronts us. The reading must, therefore, be left doubtful. I may add that I could not detect on the stone any traces of an older inscription which might have been deleted when this was cut, and have left one or two intruding letters. That hypothesis explains many errors in milestones, but it does not seem possible here. In lines 3, 4, TETRICVS is a mere blunder for TETRICO.

(First mentioned by C. R. Smith, *Congress*, 163, plate 5, who calls it "the last discovered and hitherto unpublished." When he visited the site in 1841 (*Archaeologia*, xxix, 257) he did not see this stone; so that it was probably found between 1841 and 1845. Smith's illustration is repeated in the *Journal Brit. Arch. Ass.* xiii, 210: *Corpus*, n. 1150. Now in Hartley College.)

NOTE.—Apparently there were *three* stones set up to Tetricus at Bitterne. It would, indeed, be possible to think that Englefield, who was not a very accurate antiquary, miscopied no. 5 or 6 so badly that his version (given above, no. 4) has taken its place as a separate stone. But he calls no. 4 "a square stone of very neat workmanship," and that description is inapplicable to either 5 or 6. It is more probable that, for some reason not

now discoverable, Tetricus was more fully honoured at Bitterne than any other emperor of whom we have traces.

(7) Small square stone, possibly a substitute for a milestone, found at Bitterne before 1800, but whether in the Roman wall or elsewhere is not recorded.

Imp(eratore) Lucio Domitio A[ure]liano. "In the reign of L. Domitius Aurelian" (A.D. 270-275). The name of the emperor seems quite certain, but some letters of it were in ligatures which are not shown clearly in all copies: apparently AVR, EL and AN were tied in 3 groups.

(Englefield, *Hampshire Repository*, ii (1801), 295, and *Walk through Southampton* (ed. 2), 109; hence Brayley and Britton, *Beauties of England and Wales* (1805), vi, 125); Smith, *Congress*, plate 6, perhaps from Englefield; *Corpus*, n. 1152. Now lost.)

(8) Lower part of a large column, of milestone shape 36 inches high, found with no. 1 in 1804-1805; apparently very illegible. Englefield's copy, the only one published, contains four all but meaningless lines; another copy, in a small collection of drawings of Bitterne antiquities preserved in a volume *Southampton Illustrated* in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, gives only lines 2-4 and is even more unintelligible. A conjecture may, however, be ventured. I start from the idea that, as Englefield's drawing suggests, the beginning of the inscription has been lost. The beginning would contain the name and titles of the emperor, and Englefield's first line, APT XVIII (as it seems to be), may represent the *tribunicia potestas* usually included among the emperor's titles, *trib. pot. XVIII* in this case. The next two lines defy restoration. But the fourth seems to give an abridgment of the formula *devotus numini maiestatique eius*, which high officers in the third and fourth century often appended to their own name in inscriptions mentioning the emperor. The abridgment in this case was perhaps *d. n. maiest(atique)* . . . If this be so, the two obscure preceding lines must have contained, as indeed we might expect them to contain, the name of the governor or other officer who set up this milestone. We may also, though less confidently, make a guess at the date of the milestone. The formula D.N.M.Q. shews that it cannot be earlier than about A.D. 200. The emperors who after

that date reached an 18th year of *tribunicia potestas* (i.e. of reign) are naturally few : Caracalla, in A.D. 215, Diocletian, in 301, his colleague Maximian, in 302 and Constantine the Great, in 322. The choice between them is not easy. On the one hand the formula D.N.M.Q. is more characteristic of the fourth than of the third century. On the other hand, the *tribunicia potestas* is given on no British inscription later than the third century. We have British inscriptions of Diocletian and of Constantine, though they are few. But they omit this detail. On a balance of probabilities, one may choose Caracalla and A.D. 215. But certainty is unattainable without further evidence. Here, more than in any of the other items above cited, we need to make a search in case the missing stone may be somewhere hidden at Bitterne.

(Englefield, 124; hence Smith, *Congress*, plate 5, avowedly from Englefield; MS. sketch in Ashmolean Museum, cited above; from Englefield, Watkin, *Archaeological Journal*, xxxiii (1876), 224; from Watkin, Hubner, *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, iv, 204 (with wrong reference and lettering). The stone was lost before 1845.)

We have, therefore, in all one altar and seven inscriptions of the milestone character. These latter belong to the third century and (if my guess about no. 8 be right) date between A.D. 215 and 275. Such milestone inscriptions were presumably set up in the centre of Clausentum, or maybe, just outside its gate, and served the double purpose, as we may think, of honouring the emperor and marking the road. The emperors of the third century were transitory, while the road was permanent. As, therefore, each brief reign ended, there was a temptation to erect a new stone to the new ruler. Whether the temptation was always obeyed, we cannot say: that it was frequently powerful, our list is witness.

II. MINSTER ACRES.

Minster Acres is a Northumberland country-house, situated about eight miles (as the crow flies) south-east of Hexham, on the hills between the Tyne and the Derwent. In its grounds, on the lawn in front of the greenhouses

stand four Roman lapidary monuments. One is a sculpture of the Deae Matres, much worn but fairly perfect save for the heads, which (as the dowel-holes visible in the necks sufficiently show) were carved on separate stones and therefore became easily detached from the main block. This piece is known to have come from Housesteads. It was seen there about 1700–1730 by Gordon and Horsley, and their illustrations suffice to prove the identity of what they saw with the Minster Acres sculpture, though its intermediate fortunes are unrecorded.¹ It is duly figured by Dr. Bruce in the *Lapidarium* (no. 230).

The three other stones are Roman altars about which much less is known. No distinct record of their origin survives, and only two of them have been mentioned in print, and those unsatisfactorily. (1) Dr. Bruce in the *Lapidarium* (no. 667) figures two, which he calls uninscribed: he assigns them to the Roman fort at Ebchester on Watling Street, five miles from Minster Acres, on the strength of a family tradition and a reference to one of them, with engraving, in an account of Ebchester by Hunter in the *Philosophical Transactions* (1702, no. 278). This latter bit of evidence is, I fear, an error. Hunter does not mention the altar in his note on Ebchester, and he figures it in a quite different context. (2) Besides Dr. Bruce, the late Dr. Hooppell has noticed the altars. He gives readings of portions of two of them, the one NVMINIBVS—AVGVSTORVM, the other I.O.M. | ET GENIO | EQVITVM.² In addition to this printed matter, all that I have been able to find out is a family tradition, discrepant from that cited by Dr. Bruce, communicated to me by the Rev. Geo. Silvertop, that the altars were brought from the Wall somewhere about 150 years ago. I have, however, been able to re-examine the altars themselves, by the kindness of Mr. Joseph Pumphrey, till recently tenant of Minster Acres, and with the aid of Mr. G. L. Cheesman and others. They are certainly inscribed, and the inscriptions are not without interest, though they are not what Dr. Hooppell thought.

(1) Altar with jug and *patera* on the sides; (the left

¹ Gordon, *Itin. Septentrionale*, 77, plate xxxvi (i); Horsley, *Brit. Romana*, Northumberland, xlviii, p. 222.

² Quoted by Watkin, *Archaeological Journal*, xli, 177.

hand of the two altars figured by Bruce, *Lapid.* 667)
much worn—

	NV MINIBVS	
	AVG · COH · T	
patera	TVNG ≡ OR	jug
	CVI PRAEST	
	O ≡ VI MAXI	
	MVSPRAE ≡	

This is obviously the altar which Hunter, Horsley and Gordon¹ saw early in the eighteenth century at Chapel Hill, just below the fort at Housesteads. The jug and *patera* on the sides would be sufficient to identify it, even if the inscription were illegible. As it is, inscription as well as ornament agrees absolutely. The only doubt which arises is whether the text began *Numinibus* (as it does to-day) or *I.O.M. et numinibus* as Hunter, Horsley and Gordon say. The *I.O.M.* seems to have been all but illegible even in 1700, and possibly it never was really on the stone. This stone, in any case, came from Housesteads, and is that which is given as lost in the *Lapidarium*, no. 173, and in the *Corpus*, vii, 638; see *Eph. Epigr.* ix, p. 588.

(2) Altar, with a figure on one side of a soldier with spear and shield, the right hand of the two in *Lapidarium*, no. 667: very much worn and in the middle wholly illegible: lines 6 and 7 are not certain, except ERIVS in 6 and VP in 7.

I	O	M
ENV MINIBVS		
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
OVALERIVS		
≡VP: . . .		
≡RAEFFECTV≡		

¹ Hunter, *Philos. Trans.* 278, p. 1131, plate i, 5, showing front and side ornaments; Gordon, plate xxxiii, 3; Horsley, xxxvii, p. 219.

This may possibly be a worn double of an altar seen on Chapel Hill along with no. 1, erected by Q. Verius Superstes, praefectus.¹ That is now in the Black Gate (*Lapidarium*, 172). There were, however, at Housesteads two altars set up by Q. Iulius Maximus to the *Numina Aug.* and there may equally have been two set up by Q. Verius Superstes. The faint traces discernible on the stone would fit in with such a conjecture. Apart from this conjecture, the origin of the stone is doubtful. It may possibly be that given by Horsley under no. xliii (*Lapidarium*, 175, *Corpus*, 641), though that has been also identified with an almost illegible altar in the Blackgate (Catalogue, no. 48). See *Eph. Epigr.* ix, n. 1178.

(3) Altar, 48 inches high (above ground) by 20 inches wide, badly formed letters, much worn, and on the left side much broken and damaged. Originally there were 13 lines: all that I could read was

DEO
 . . ARTIET
 . . . CTORIAE
 . . NVMINIB · NGG
 . . VBCORAI · . .

and the ends of lines 10–12 which seem to be *vivs—vici—sarm.* The beginning is plain *Deo [M]arti et [Vi]ctoriae [et] numinibus Aug(ustorum)* . . . I cannot connect this altar with any recorded monument from Housesteads or from elsewhere. See *Eph. Epigr.* ix, n. 1180.

Two of our stones, then, belong to Housesteads, a third may do so, and the origin of the fourth is wholly unknown. It is a reasonable guess that all four came from Housesteads. When and how and why they came is now perhaps not to be discovered. But a conjecture may be ventured. Early in the nineteenth century Housesteads belonged to Mr. George Gibson of Stagshaw Close House, a member of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries. He about 1813 removed to Stagshaw many

¹ This occurred to me after and not I have not been able to test it by comparing
 during the examination of the stone, so it with the faint vestiges on the altar.

Housesteads altars and sculptures, including pieces seen there by Horsley, Hunter and Gordon a hundred years earlier. Apparently he had a small "museum" which contained (as we happen to know) a few things from Corbridge, amidst a majority of Housesteads finds. In 1821-1822 he sold Stagshaw Close and gave these altars, etc. to the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries.¹ It is quite possible that he may also have given away a few to a neighbour. Minster Acres is not far from Stagshaw, and Mr. Gibson may have enriched it with four specimens from his collection. This seems all the more likely since the Gibsons and the Silvertops were related by marriage. In or about 1741 the grandfather of the George Gibson just mentioned, James Gibson, married Dorothy, daughter of Albert Silvertop of Minster Acres.²

¹ Hodgson, *History*, part 2, iii, 188; *Arch. Aeliana*, 1st ser. vol. i, appendix, p. 7, and 2nd ser. xi, 167.

² See the Gibson pedigree in Hodgson's *History*, part 2, iii, 394. For the date I am indebted to Mr. H. H. E. Craster.