

ART. XX.—*Roman Inscriptions recently discovered at Cliburn and Birdoswald.* By W. THOMPSON WATKIN.

IN July last two Roman inscriptions, both fragmentary, were found in pulling down the walls of the church at Cliburn, Westmoreland. The first one which occurred, is



the left hand portion of a tablet, measuring in its present state 15 inches in width by 16 inches in height on the right, and only 8 inches on the left.

The inscription which has been placed within a moulding is very singular and perplexing, more so because the ter-

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|-----------------|
| BALNEVM         |
| . . VETERIO     |
| NDLABVM         |
| PILISPCRCLA     |
| . . . . SEBVSII |

mination of its lines are missing, and the letters though in most instances appearing to be finely cut, contain several ligatures. Divested of the latter, the inscription seems

seems to my eyes (it is considerably worn in places) to read thus :

The first line is plain and without ligatures. In the second, the letters at the commencement seem to have been purposely erased, the I is a prolongation of the upright stroke of the R, of the P at the end only the loop remains, and it is reversed as if ligulate with some letter, but it stands out plainly, though it may possibly have been R. The third line is plain, and without ligatures. In the fourth I have given B as the first letter, though the lower portion is broken off, for the reason that the next letter L has the first I in the line ligulate with it, as a prolongation of the perpendicular stroke upwards, and this is followed by IS without any ligatures. We thus get BILIS which is possible, but PILIS in such a position would, to me at least, be most unlikely, if not unintelligible. The two next letters PE are plainly formed by the P being reversed and the E being made on the right-hand side of its upright stroke. In turn these are followed by R with the horizontal portion of the letter T formed on its summit, one perpendicular stroke doing duty for both letters. The remaining letters in this line come out fairly well though it is possible the R may be P. In the fifth line only the upper part of what I have given as S remains, the commencement of the line being broken off. Some antiquaries have thought that instead of S this letter was A, and the engraving supports this view: strict examination of a photograph clearly shews the loop of the S though much worn, but there is a stroke proceeding from it diagonally downwards to the left, whether part of a ligulate letter, or accidental I cannot say. It is this that gives at first sight, the appearance of the top of the letter A. The last stroke in the line may be (and probably is) the first half of the letter A, but it is indistinct. There are traces of another line below, but the fracture of the stone prevents us from ascertaining its nature.

To

To give an exact reading of this peculiar inscription is I fear impossible, but we can gather sense. Let us take portions of some other Roman inscriptions found in Britain.

(1).

BALNEVM CVM  
BASILICA.A.SOLO.INSTRVXIT

(2).

PRINCIPIA ET. ARMAMEM  
TARIA CONLAPSA RESTITV  
IT.

(3).

HORREVM. VETV  
STATE CONLABSYM. M  
COH. II. ASTVRVM. S.A  
A. SOLO. RESTITVERVNT.

(4).

AQVAEDVCTIVM VETVS(TATE)  
(CONLA)BS. COH. I. SVNC. RES(T)IT.

The first, found at Lanchester, tells us that a bath with a basilica had been built, from the ground (*a solo*). The contraction *balneum* for *balineum* will be noticed in it, as in the Cliburn inscription. In the second, found at the same place, we have the officers' quarters, and armory, which had collapsed (*conlapsa*) restored. These inscriptions (which are entire, but I only quote from them the portion necessary for my purpose) are of the reign of Gordian, and were erected by the 1st cohort of the Lingones. In No. 3, which is of the reign of Severus Alexander, we have a record of a granary which had fallen down or collapsed through age (*vetustate*) restored from the ground by the soldiers of the second cohort of the Astures, styled *Severiana Alexandriana* (S.A). This was found at the station of *Æsica* on the Roman Wall. The difference in the orthography of *conlapsa* and *conlabsum* as regards the *b* and *p* will be noticed. No. 4 was found at Carnarvon, and records that some portion of either the aqueducts or drains (*aqueductium* will do for either) which had collapsed from age (*vestutate conlabs*, is the abbreviation here) had been restored by the 1st cohort of the *Sumuci*.

From

From these (and many other examples might be cited) we may gather with certainty the general tenor of the inscription. In the first line BALNEVM is plain. In the second as there is no sign of a stop after the ligulate RI, I think we have an instance of the comparative of *Velus*, i.e., VETERIOR but in what case from the loss of the ends of the lines it is difficult to say. This would inform us that the bath was erected upon the site of a much older one, which had fallen down, and this seems confirmed by the beginning of the next line. The latter I think is part of the word (CO)NDLABSVM, the N being an instance of incorrect orthography, of which precisely similar examples occur in continental inscriptions. If the word at the end of the second line be not VETERIOR, it is difficult (unless it be VETERI, followed by some case of OPVS) to say what it is. OPERI suggests itself, but seems doubtful. The puzzle is the abruptness of the commencement of the inscription, and what the erasure could be. It does not seem that any title derived from an Emperor could be inserted in such a position, and yet there is hardly anything else that would be purposely erased.\*

The two remaining lines refer to the military bodies which restored the bath &c., and these seem to be the *Ala Petriana*, and the *Ala Sebusiana*. But there is another peculiarity. Though PETR (as at Hexham) and PET occur as abbreviations of the first named *Ala*, we here have BILIS (part of a word) *before* PETR, and *after* AL or ALAE, which would be on the lost part of the stone. What is this? Only four inscriptions have previously occurred in Britain naming this *ala* (which the *Notitia* places at a station styled after it, *Petrianae*). One of these was found at Hexham, another in a quarry at Lanercost, another at Old Penrith, and the fourth at Carlisle.

\* In spite of the defacement, I believe that I can plainly detect the letters ANA in a ligulate form, as if the termination of *Antoniniana* or some title derived from an Emperor.

In

In this latter the *Ala* has the prefix of *Augusta*, and the suffix of *Torquata*. We also gather from it, that the *corps* was a thousand strong (*milliaria*) and that it was composed of Roman citizens, the letters CR standing for *Civium Romanorum*. But from an inscription found at Attidium, in Italy; we find that the *ala* was *twice* decorated with the torques\* (*bis torquata*) as early as the reign of Trajan, and that it must have been a most distinguished regiment, for it is doubtful whether the title *bis torquata* has been applied to any other body of troops in the Roman service. In fact to be *once* so distinguished is rare. There are certainly not half a dozen *alae* and cohorts altogether, known to have been so decorated, and none of these were in Britain, with the exception of this *Ala Petriana*. This fact would make the *corps* stand out in illustrious contrast to the other cavalry regiments in our island, and I think that in the Cliburn inscription we have the prefix *Nobilissima* instead of *Augusta* applied to the *ala*, in the sense of the "most renowned." Probably it had not then received the title *Augusta*. The letters which follow PETR may be CR for *Civium Romanorum*, but I am inclined to think they are CP for *Cui Praeest* "commanded by," and that the L.A at the end of the line is the commencement of the name of the commander. The inscription no doubt came from the station at Kirkby Thore, some two miles to the east of Cliburn, and an officer of rank who was stationed there, and who dedicated an altar to Jupiter Serapis (C.I.L. vii., 298), was named L. ALFENIVS PATERNVS. This would agree with the two letters named. In the next line we have the word SEBVSIA which can apply only to the second *ala* of the Gauls which was for a long period stationed at Lancaster. In the Malpas *tabula* of Trajan dated A.D. 103 it is styled II. GALLORVM SEBOSIANA, on an altar found at Stanhope in Weardale ALA SEBOSIANA simply, on tiles found near Lancaster (at

\* Orelli, No. 516.

Quernmoor)

Quernmoor) we have the abbreviated form AL(A)E SEBVSI(A) (NAE), whilst on a large inscription found at Lancaster and now preserved at Cambridge, of a nature much resembling the one under discussion, the title of the corps is again differently spelt. An extract from this inscription I insert here, free from ligatures.

BALINEVM REFECT.

ET BASILICAM VETVSTATE CONLABSAM

A SOLO RESTITVTAM EQQ ALAE SEBVSSIA.

from which it appears that the *Ala* (here evidently styled *Sebussiana*) rebuilt a bath and restored from the ground a basilica, fallen down through age.

My reading of the latter part of the Cliburn inscription, it will thus be seen is *Ala Nobilis (sima) Petr(iana) C(ui) P(raeest) L. A(lfenius Paternus?) (et) Ala Sebusia(na) (Cui) Praeest . . .* ) followed by *A. Solo restituerunt* or some similar phrase.

This inscription revives in all its intensity, the controversy as to the site of the station *Petrianæ*. There can be no reasonable doubt that the first twelve stations named in the *Notitia* under the head *per lineam valli*, have been identified as those between Wallsend and Birdoswald both inclusive, the thirteenth is *Petrianæ*, and the first station visible next to Birdoswald is Walton House, one of the smallest on the Wall; only  $2\frac{3}{4}$  acres and certainly not capable of accommodating the largest and most important regiment garrisoned in the neighbourhood, whilst its inscriptions prove it to have been occupied by a cohort, (the second of the Tungri) and the inscriptions found in the stations along the remaining length of the Wall, shew totally different forces to those named in the *Notitia* list. It is therefore evident that the latter does not proceed straightforwardly, but as I first pointed out in 1870\* we find the garrisons of the fourteenth, fifteenth,

\* *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxviii pp. 128-132, and xl p. 235.

and

and sixteenth in that list, at three adjoining stations, Papcastle, Moresby, and Ellenborough, on the Cumberland coast. Now is this thirteenth station *Petrianæ* near them, or is it elsewhere? From the fine tombstone of a soldier of the *Ala Petriana* found at Hexham, and from two other inscriptions naming cavalry corps, (one an *Ala Augusta*) discovered there, I have thought that station to have had the best claim to be the lost site.\* Does Kirkby Thore enter the field as another rival? I think not, for unless its name had been changed after the date of the Antonine Itinerary, it certainly was *Galava*. But it was an important cavalry station, and as we find the *Ala Sebusiana* moved to it on some urgent or special occasion from Lancaster, so the *Ala Petriana* was no doubt moved from its head quarters at *Petrianæ* to the same spot. The pre-eminence of the latter force above its compeers may be probably shewn in two inscriptions found at Kirkby Thore which I published from Mr. Machell's MSS. in my annual list for 1881.† In each of these a *Decurio Alae* (DEC ALAE) is named, but as neither the title nor the nationality of the *Ala* is given, it seems as if "*The Ala*" was quite sufficient to be stated, and that every one who read the inscription would know which *ala* was meant. The sculptured tombstones, with figures of horsemen, found at the station, and engraved in the *Lapidarium Septentrionale* are most interesting, but they do not agree in uniform and accoutrements with the one found at Hexham, so that the soldiers commemorated probably belonged to some other corps than the *Ala Petriana*.

Dr. McCaul thinks that the prominence and distinction given to the cavalry regiment which garrisoned Old Carlisle, *Ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata*, make it likely that the latter was the *Ala Augusta Petriana*,‡ and there is much force

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\* *Archæological Journal*, vol. xl pp. 235-7.

† *Ibid.*, vol. xxxix p. 363.

‡ *Canadian Journal*, vol. xii p. 121.

in his reasoning. If so, Old Carlisle would be *Petrianæ*, and the presence of the *Ala* at Hexham, would perhaps have occurred under similar circumstances to its appearance at Kirkby Thore. It would also make *Petrianæ* contiguous to the succeeding stations in the *Notitia* list. Between his view, and the one I tentatively proposed, the truth will I think be found.

The second inscription found at Cliburn is on the right-hand portion of a noble altar 4 feet 3½ inches high which has been split perpendicularly through its face, the left-hand portion being lost, and the inscription on the remainder (as far as any reading is concerned) hopelessly effaced. It has consisted of at least nine lines and the only letters visible as far as I can judge from a photograph, and from information received, are :

. . . . .  
 . . . D (?)  
 S . . .  
 NO . .  
 S . . .  
 NS  
 INS  
 DEDIT  
 . . . . .

It is doubtful whether there has been a line of the inscription beneath DEDIT, but the altar has the appearance of having been purposely defaced at this point, though the base remains.

On 25th June last, there was found on the farm of Underheugh, adjoining the Roman station at Birdoswald (*Amboglanna*) a fine Roman altar about 4 feet in height and 18 inches broad on the inscribed portion of the face. The inscription from the copies which I have received seems to be :

I.O.M.



I.O.M.

C<sup>O</sup>HIAELDAC<sup>O</sup>RCCAIVL

MARCELLI

NVS. LEG. II

AVG.

The only difficulty is as to the letters which follow COR, in the third line. If they read as given above, and I am assured they do, I would expand the inscription as *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo), Coh(ors) I Ael(ia) Dacor(um) C(ujus) C(uram) A(git) Ful(ius) Marcellinus Leg(onis) II Aug(ustae)*, or Anglicised "To Jupiter the best, the greatest, the first cohort of Dacians (surnamed) the Aelian, of which Julius Marcellinus has the governing care."

The last four words are a free translation of *cujus curam agit*, of which I do not at the moment remember another example, but we have Q.C.A. on two altars at Risingham, which Dr. Hübner (as they relate in his opinion to *vexillarii*) expands *Q(uorum) c(uram) a(gebat)*, whilst at Jedburgh on an altar which names a *vexillatio* the same letters Q.C.A. occur, which Dr. Bruce expands *quorum curam agit*. In each of these inscriptions the troops are named as being under the command of an officer of another corps, and this leads me to consider that as *Cohors* is mentioned in the Birdoswald inscription, we should simply substitute *Cujus* for the *Quorum* in the others, and all will be plain.

But there is another view which has been advanced. In the *Bulletin Epigraphique* for October 1886, p. 255. M. Robert Mowat the celebrated French archæologist suggests that the latter part of the third line is CCAM, and accordingly expands it as *C(aius) Cam(inius) Marcellinus &c.* But if this were the case, I fail to see what connection there would be between the cohort and the officer of the second Legion. This difficulty is entirely removed by  
reading

reading C.C.A.IVL. It is perfectly true however, that the last three letters are so crowded together that they most resemble an M. I need hardly say that there are numerous instances of a legionary officer being in command of an auxiliary force. Marcellinus was probably a centurion of the second Legion, though the centurial mark (as is frequently the case) is omitted before LEG. II.AVG.

