

ART. XXVII. *The Brough Idol*. By F. HAVERFIELD, M.A.

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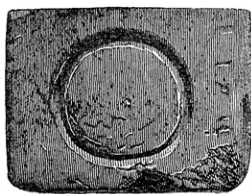
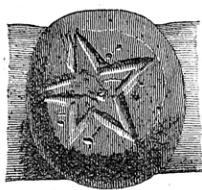
IN the summer of 1886 a curious stone figure with a Roman inscription was brought to the Rev. W. Lyde, rector of Brough-under-Stainmore, by a working man who was said to have found it in getting water out of a "water-hole" at Blackmoorgate, about two miles N.E. of Brough, near the road to Middleton-in-Teesdale. The stone bore the inscription DEO: ARVALO SATURNO SEX COMMODUS VALER VSLM. It was communicated by Mr. Lyde to Chancellor Ferguson, and has since been published in several places, last by myself in the *Ephemeris Epigraphica* (vii 1187). By the kindness of Mr. Lyde, I was able to get a loan of the stone. It is an undeniable forgery, but as some people seem still to believe in it, and as the hitherto undetected forger may possibly follow it up, it may be as well briefly to detail the exact reasons for denying its genuineness. The accompanying woodcuts are full size.

(1). The style of carving as shown by the figure is obviously not Roman or antique of any sort. Mr. A. W. Franks, at the British Museum, to whom I showed the object, judged it to be a forgery twice removed from the truth, *i.e.* copied from a previous forgery. Small Roman figures of similar character, but genuine, are not uncommon, and are, I believe, often imitated by forgers.

(2). The freshness of the lettering and the preservation of the surface generally, are such as no genuine antique could show.

(3). The character of the lettering is most damning. An uncial U for a V might conceivably pass muster, for it does occur occasionally on third century and later inscriptions of inferior workmanship, (CIL vi 17667 Rome:

AUXILIARIS,



AUXILIARIS, &c.) though I do not remember to have ever noticed it on any Roman inscription in Britain. But the whole style of lettering is hopeless.

(4). The inscription itself is copied from one found at Brescia (*Brixia*) in N. Italy, and published by Rossi (in 1693), Marini, Orelli (n. 1510) and others, lastly by Mommsen (CIL v. 4198). And it stands convicted. There are in the books two versions of the first line, the one giving *deo Alo*, the other *deo Arvalo*, and as Henzen (*Collectionis Orellianæ supplementa* p. 145) and Mommsen point out, *Alo* is most undoubtedly the true reading, and *Arvalo* a mistake. The latter was, however, the ordinarily received text at one time: it is, indeed, given by Orelli, and it is not unnatural that the forger copied it instead of the less known but correct reading. But by doing so he stands self-condemned.

It has been objected to me that the inscription could hardly have been known to anyone in Brough. But the inscription is not so obscure as has been thought. It is given by Orelli, and Orelli's book is well-known in England, it is also given in an even better known work, Facciolati's *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis* (s.v. Arvalus. It has been objected also that the stone is not local stone. I do not think this proves much, for no one supposes the forgery was necessarily made in Brough itself. I have however taken the opinion of Mr. F. W. Rudler on the point. He writes:—

It seems to be a kind of mudstone such as is not uncommon among Silurian rocks. It is a very close grained rock, not unlike certain slates, but without any trace of cleavage, extremely soft so that it could be easily worked into shape. I do not see any reason why such a rock should not be found in Westmorland or Cumberland. But you will understand how difficult it is to attribute a given piece of rock to its precise geological horizon. Your specimen is not sufficiently characteristic to enable me to speak with certainty.*

* Mr. J. G. Goodchild, F.G.S., F.Z.S., who was long on the Geological Survey in the vicinity of Brough, says, that any amount of the stone can be found near Brough. NOTE BY EDITOR.

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It would be more satisfactory if we could point out the quarter where the forgery arose, but neither the material nor the workmanship afford any real clue. Forgeries are so uncommon in England that when one occurs it ought to receive every attention.
