



ROMAN TOMBSTONE FROM CARLISLE

ART. XV.—*A Fourth Century Tombstone from Carlisle.* By
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THE remarkable tombstone which forms the subject of the following paper, was dug up in 1892, on Gallows or Harraby Hill, near the London Road, leading southwards out of Carlisle, at a point where previous discoveries, made principally in 1829 and 1847, had demonstrated the existence of a Roman Cemetery.* When found, it was lying face downwards over a rough wooden coffin which contained fatty earth and a skull. It is a slab of red local sandstone, measuring 20 by 31 inches and bearing six and a half lines of lettering separated by lines ruled across the stone. The inscription is perfect at the top and sides, but is broken across the seventh line, an attempt having seemingly been made to “chad” the stone into two pieces. This fact and the position in which it was found, shew that it was not *in situ* when dug up, though it obviously belongs to the circumjacent cemetery. It has been given by the finder, Mr. Dudson, to the Tullie House Museum. The reading, † as I copied it, is as follows :—

D	M
<u>FLAS ANTIGONS PAPIAS</u>	
<u>CIVIS GRECVS VIXIT ANNos</u>	
<u>PLVS MINVS LX QVEMAD</u>	
<u>MODVM ACCOMODATAM</u>	
<u>FATIS ANIMAM REVOCAVIT</u>	
<u>SEPIIMIADON[†]</u>	

* R. S. Ferguson, *Proc. Soc. Ant.* xiv (1893) 261. These Transactions, vol. xii, p. 365.

† Published by Mr. Ferguson and myself *loc. cit.*; by myself, *Academy*, Dec. 24, 1893; *Proceedings of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries*, v. 231. The present article is somewhat modified from one which I contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Archaeological Institute*.

D(is) M(anibus) Fla(viu)s Antigon(u)s Papias, civis Gr(a)ecus, vixit annos plus minus lx, quem-ad-modum accom(m)odatam fatis animam revocavit Septimiadon ?

The reading is absolutely certain with the exception of the seventh line. This I read SEPTIMIADONI, but the I after the M is not quite vertical, and the D might possibly be a R or similar letter. The interpretation is quite clear down to LX: the rest is disputed. Fortunately we can, in spite of this uncertainty, predicate some facts about the inscription as a whole.

It is the tombstone of one Flavius Antigonus Papias, a Greek, who died about the age of sixty and was buried in Carlisle. He lived in the fourth century of our era and it is possible, though it is not capable of actual proof, that he was a Christian. These certainties or uncertainties lend the tombstone an unusual interest. We have extraordinarily few inscriptions, excluding milestones, in Britain, which we can assign with confidence to the fourth century. Perhaps the only clear instances are (1) a "basis" lately found at Cirencester, the pedestal (as it seems) of a monument to Juppiter which a governor of Britannia Prima restored at some moment, such as the reign of Julian, when Paganism reasserted itself against Christianity, and (2) a stone recording the erection of a fort near Peak, between Whitby and Scarborough, about the beginning of the fifth century. The Carlisle tombstone, may, therefore, claim to be an object of more than ordinary interest to Antiquaries and especially to Antiquaries in Cumberland.

First, as to the date. We may with confidence attribute the inscription to the fourth century. The proofs are the following:—

1. The name Flavius, popularized by the Flavian dynasty of the Constantines, becomes very common in the fourth and fifth centuries. The late military cemetery at Concordia (N. Italy), for instance, contains a large proportion

portion of Flavii, while of the 180 Flavii mentioned in the fifth volume of the *Corpus* (which includes Concordia), certainly 60 and probably nearly 90 lived after the year A.D. 300. The name was taken even by barbarian kings and nobles, and always suggests a late date for any inscription which does not belong to the era of the first Flavii, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian.* As Constantius Chlorus conquered Britain in A.D. 297, we cannot put our inscription much, if at all, before that date.

2. The abbreviations *Flas Antigons* for *Flavius Antigonus* are characteristic of a late period. In the first three centuries, the Romans abbreviated by the first letter or syllable of the abbreviated word; in the fourth century they began to take the first and last letters or syllables, thus commencing the system which went on in the middle ages and produced *epus* for *episcopus* and *seti* for *sancti*. I do not know whether the actual forms *Flas* and *Antigons* recur elsewhere, but we have abundant parallels from the fourth and fifth centuries, *Julians* for *Julianus*, *Jans* for *Januarius*, *Debres* for *Decembres*, *cus* for *coniux*, *Maxianus* and *Consius* for *Maximianus* and *Constantius*, the two latter on a boundary stone at Cherchell in Africa.†

3. The employment of *civis* to denote nationality is also a mark of late date. In the first and second centuries, the word is used of members of an actual community or of a tribe which could be regarded as a *civitas*: later, it denotes only birth, and *civis Gallus* means exactly the same as *natione Gallus*. The meaning crept even into literature and Sidonius Apollinaris (p. vii. 6, 2.) speaks of

* C.I.L. v. p. 178, Cagnat *année épigr.* 1890, n. 143 foll., 1891, n. 101 foll. See also de Rossi, pp. cxii and 390, du Cange, s.v. "Flavius," and especially Th. Mommsen's *Ostgothische Studien* in the *Neues Archiv für altere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, xiv, p. 536.

† See C. xii. 5351, xiv. 399; le Blant i. 472, 614: *Bulletin épigr.* iv. 234; *Bulletino di Arch. Christ.* i, 65 (DEPS=depositus) ii. 108, (FRIS=fratris), etc.

a "Goth by birth" as *civis Gothus*.* It may be added that *Graecus* in this context does not necessarily mean a native of Greece. A Christian inscription, probably of the fourth or fifth century, found in Hungary, mentions a *civis Graecus ex regione Ladicena* (C. iii. 4200) and a Lyons gravestone records a man who was *natione Graecus Nicomedea* (Allmer *Lyon* i. 322, n°. 62). The first was a Phrygian, the second a Bithynian. This, of course, agrees with the literary usage of the word *Graecus*. It would be wrong, I think, to connect with this the proper name *Greca* on a Plumpton Wall inscription. (C. vii. 326).

4. The formula *plus minus*, familiar enough to classical scholars as good Latin, is rarely used on tombstones until Christian times and is indeed almost a mark of Christianity.

5. The lettering and general look of the inscription suggest the fourth century as the most probable date.

We may therefore conclude that the inscription belongs to the fourth century. Later we cannot put it, for the evacuation of Britain came early in the next century, and the proofs I have quoted forbid us to put it much earlier. We may, I think, go further and conjecture that the inscription was Christian. The formula *plus minus* is

* Mommsen *Hermes* xix. 35. The following examples may be quoted :—*civis Britannicus*, found at Cologne (Bambach 2033 *addenda*).

c. *Gallus*, Pola (Pais, 1096), Rome (Le Blant 656, 658, both fourth century).

c. *Helvetius*, Rothenburg (Brambach, 1639).

c. *Raetus*, Rome, Christian (*Eph.* iv. 943); Birrens and Netherby in Britain (C. vii. 1068, and 972).

c. *Noricus*, Halton and Castle Cary in Britain (C. vii. 571, 1095); Transylvania (C. iii. 966).

c. *Pannonius*, Africa, Christian C. viii. 8910; Rome, Christian (*Eph.* iv. 953), Chesterholm in Britain (C. vii. 723).

c. *Mensiacus*, (= *Moesiacus*), Bordeaux (Julian, i. p. 146, n. 44).

c. *Graecus* Hungary, Christian (C. iii. 4220), Bordeaux (Julian i. p. 187, n. 69.)

c. *Surus*, N. Italy (Aquilaia), Christian (C. v. 1633); Hungary (*Eph.* ii. 895); Cilli (*Oest. Arch. epigr. Mitth.* iv. 127, seen by myself).

c. *Armeniacus Cappadox*, Rome Christian, A.D. 385 (de Rossi, i. 355).

c. *Afer*, Cilli (C. iii. 5230), and possibly Spain (*Inscr. Christ. Hisp.* 71).

c. *Tuscus*, Rome, A.D. 408 (de Rossi, i. 558).

c. *Thrax*, Cherchell (*Bull. Epigr.* iv. 64).

c. *Francus*, Aquincum (C. iii, 3576), obviously late. See also C. iii, 1324, 3367. usually

usually, and I think rightly, reckoned as a mark of Christianity, though simple classical scholars will perhaps smile at the idea. The formula D.M., though in its origin Pagan, is not unknown on Christian tombstones and especially, as it would seem, on the earlier ones.* It must be remembered that, as Hirschfeld and Le Blant have pointed out, the early Christians used ordinary burial formulæ, indicating their religion only by preference for special words and phrases like *plus*, *minus*, *pius*, *sanctus*, which would not attract the attention or arouse the fanaticism of the hostile pagan majority round them.† At the same time, I must repeat that the Christianity of Flavius Antigonus Papias, however plausible, is a matter of conjecture.

So far we have dealt only with the first half of the inscription. The second is less certain and half requires a word. It is unfortunate that the stone does not tell us whether we should read *quemadmodum* or *quem admodum* or *quem ad modum*. It is also unfortunate that the last line is so broken that we can hardly tell how it ran. To me SEPTIMIADONI seems most probable, but it is also possible to read SEPTIMA, supposing the stroke after M (which is not quite vertical) to be an accident. The passage, thus involved, has puzzled many persons, and various distinguished scholars whom I have consulted, Prof. Domaszewski, Prof. Ellis, Prof. Wölfflin and others, have differed considerably in their interpretations. Of the views suggested, the most attractive is that which takes

* F. Becker *die heidnische Weihformel D.M. auf altchristlichen Grabsteinen* (Gera 1881). To his 100 examples (not all certain), add instances from South Gaul (C. xii. 409, 2114, 2311, 4059); Africa (C. viii 11897, 11205, 11905, 12197; *Eph.* vii. 492; Cagnat *année épigr.* 1891, n. 136); North Italy (Pais *Suppl.* n. 349; *Arch. Epigr. Mitth.* iii. p. 50, C. iii. 1043, 8588, 8575); Salonæ (C. iii, 9414; Larisa (C. iii, 7315); Rome (de Rossi, i, 24 and 1192; Brittany (Corneilhan, *Revue, épigr.* i. p. 107), etc. See also De Rossi, *Bull. Arch. Crist.* i. 174, and F. x. Kraus, *Roma Sotterranea*, p. 64, who consider the use as a rare one.

† *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift*, viii, 138. *Plus minus* occurs also on a tombstone found at Brougham (*Eph.* iii, n. 91; Bruce, *Lapidarium*, 814).

quemadmodum

quemadmodum as three words, "at which date," and renders it *revocavit* by the rare sense "gave up," and puts a fullstop after it. Then *revocavit animam* means "he gave up his soul," either as an equivalent to the common Christian formula *reddidit animam* or with the heathen idea (mentioned in Seneca and elsewhere) of life being a loan from the gods. Of the two alternatives, I prefer the former, but, whichever is accepted, it remains a difficulty that *revocavit* in this sense is very rare.* If, however, it be admitted, we shall render "at which time, he gave up his soul resigned to death (or its destiny)". We shall then suppose that *Septimia* (or *Septima*) *Doni* commences a sentence about the person, perhaps wife or daughter, who put up the tombstone. *Doni* may be part of *donicella*, that is *domnicella*, as Prof. Wöfflin suggests; for the form compare *Dominicellus* on an African inscription of Christian date (*Bulletin épigr.* vi. 39).

There are however other possibilities. We may translate *revocavit* in its ordinary sense and suppose that the nominative to it was in the lost part of the inscription. *Septima* (if that be right) may belong to a date, such as was often expressed on Christian inscriptions. We may take *QUEM ADMODUM* as two words, *quem* being in opposition to *animam* and *admodum* meaning "wholly," as it does both in classical and in post-classical Latinity: we should then render "whom, a wholly resigned soul. . . ." Prof. Robinson Ellis suggests to me that we should translate "he lived sixty years more or less, for so it was that, when his spirit was prepared to meet its doom, he recalled it to life (and did not die)"; that is, he was often

* Mr. G. Rushforth has pointed out to me in the African *Gesta Purgationis Felicis* (of the fourth century, Routh, *Rel. Sacrae*, iv. 290), *revocare* is used as the equivalent of *tradere*, *restituere* and *revocare*. The later African poet Corippus (*floruit* 560 a.d.) may possibly have used the word similarly in *Joh.* ii, 344, where the manuscript reading *captivos revocet* "let him restore the captives" would make good sense. But it is a far cry from African Latin to Carlisle.

on the point of death but recovered as often and lived to be sixty years old. On the whole, I fear that certainty is unattainable, but I cannot help thinking that the curious wording, whatever exactly it means, savours rather of Christian than of heathen epigraphy.
