

ART. X.—*Roman Altars from Cumberland now at Rokeby, with a Note on the Crosscanonby Altar.* By J. B. BAILEY.

Communicated at Carlisle, September 8th, 1904.

IN vol. xvi. of the *Transactions* (p. 138) I communicated an article on "Lost and Re-found Roman Altars," specially dealing with five altars at present standing on a platform at Rokeby Hall, near Greta Bridge, Yorkshire.

Three of these are known to have been removed from Naworth to Rokeby by Sir Thomas Robinson, to whom they were given by his brother-in-law, the Earl of Carlisle.

With regard to the others, I ventured to suggest that they too were from the same source; and, further, that they are altars which are reported by Dr. Bruce in the *Lapidarium* as missing.

The inscriptions on these two latter, so far as I was able to decipher them, apparently confirmed my suggestion; but no really definite decision could be arrived at, as the photographs taken were not altogether satisfactory.

I am glad, however, to report that another step has been taken towards the elucidation of this difficulty, and I trust that, as regards at least one of the altars (No. 358, *Lapidarium*, and 807, *Corpus*), we may now be able to say that its identity with one of the "missing" altars is finally established.

On Easter Monday, April 4th, 1904, accompanied by my brother, Dr. T. L. Bailey. I went to make a further examination of the altars; and, if possible, to secure a satisfactory photograph. We soon came to the conclusion that there was very little prospect of doing the latter; but, not wishing to return without trying every method

that suggested itself, after some considerable amount of trouble, I was able to distinguish three or four very indistinct letters which I slightly chalked over. Judging that a photograph taken under such circumstances, however allowable in some cases, would not be a satisfactory solution of this difficulty, my brother lightly chalked over the whole surface of the altar, hoping thus to be able to detect the letters. This plan also failed, and, as we could not leave the altar in this condition, my brother took some rain water which happened to be in the somewhat large focus and sponged off the chalk marks. To our intense surprise and gratification the three last lines were at once rendered perfectly intelligible, so much so that they could be read with perfect ease at a considerable distance from the altar. Needless to say that, although rain was falling at the time, the camera was at once put into requisition and a photograph secured. We were much disappointed with the result, which gives but a faint representation of what we saw so very distinctly. Still an ordinary lens reveals the inscription.

The lettering is of a very bold, but at the same time of a rude character, and had apparently been scratched with some pointed iron tool, rather than chiselled. This part of the inscription was exactly as I deciphered it on July 15th, 1881, viz. :—

E S T A M M
V I C T O R I N
T R I B

The downstrokes are at various angles, and the letters of unequal size. Those in the first line above are approximately three inches high, whilst those in the next are nearly two and a half inches.

As, however, parts of other letters were to be seen, I had several prints taken from the negative on various kinds of printing paper, and in different degrees of intensity.

By the aid of a good lens I carefully examined each of these in varying lights and positions, and at length was able to make out the inscription as follows :—

I . O . M
 C O . .
 D A . . . V M .
 Q . . . P R A E
 E S T . A M M
 V I C T O R I N
 T R I B

This only served to increase my interest in the altar, and as I was able to revisit Barnard Castle during the summer, I again went to Rokeby on July 16th, and was agreeably surprised to find that the last three lines were now perfectly distinct. Evidently the chalk and water had proved efficacious.

Favoured with bright sunshine, I was able without much trouble to add the letter A, evidently the initial of AELIA, to the second line; whilst DAC in the third line and QVB.PRAE in the fourth were faintly, though clearly discernible.

There was thus very little difficulty in making a suggested reading of the full inscription as follows :—

I . O . M
 C O H . Ī . A E L .
 D A C O R V M
 Q V B . P R A E
 E S T . A M M
 V I C T O R I N
 T R I B

For purposes of comparison, the inscription on another and almost identical altar—viz., No. 357, *Lapidarium*—and now at Netherby, but originally from Birdoswald, is given, viz. :—

I . O . M
 C O Ī A E L I A
 D A C O R V M
 Q V B P R E E S T
 A M M O N I V S
 V I C T O R I N V S
 T R I B

So far all seems quite clear, but the *Corpus* reading of the "lost" altar, as kindly supplied me by the late Chancellor Ferguson, is:—

I . O . M
 S O
 C V I P R A E
 E S T A M M O
 V I C T O R I N V S
 T R I B

This gives six lines only, but there are clearly seven lines on the Rokeby altar—if not, indeed, eight—for I fancy there is another line between DACORVM and QVB.PRAE, and there are indications which lead me to think that the word itself is GORDIANA.

The letter o in AMMO and the letters vs at the end of VICTORINVS are not present, nor is there room for them even allowing, which is apparent, that part of the edge of the altar has weathered off.

With regard to No. 813 *Corpus*, the second of the missing altars, I have very little to add to what I said in my last paper (*Transactions*, vol. xvi., pp. 141-143).

On July 16th I narrowly scrutinised this altar, but unfortunately it had been too well cleaned of its covering of lichen, and the surface shows strong signs of scaling, so that we took no photograph. At the same time, I was able to decide definitely that the dedication was I.O.M; whilst the letter N in the last line was fairly distinct. Another examination of the photograph taken in 1898 has added one or two other letters to those already reported (p. 143), including what appears to be the compound letter TR.

On the face of the altar I noticed a cross (+), and thinking that this might have been put on as a means of identification, I examined the other altars and on each of them found the same mark.

Perhaps we may be allowed to infer that this classes all the five altars as belonging to one set, and hence incidentally makes this altar one from Naworth, even though it be not the missing one. As I remarked before, it has all the characteristics of a Naworth altar, besides which it bears a striking similarity to the drawing of the missing altar in Hutchinson's *Cumberland*.

But there are three other Roman altars at Rokeby placed in alcoves. These I examined in 1898, but being unable to come to any definite decision, I left them over for further consideration. My only reason for alluding to them now is owing to the fact that, since the photograph was taken, I have been able to secure quite a different and, I trust, a more satisfactory reading to any yet advanced; at any rate, so far as two of the three are concerned, the third being self-evident.

Various readings have been given of the first of these altars, which doubtless came from Birdoswald, and hence comes within the notice of this Society. Speaking of it, Gough says:—"In the museum at Rookby, I saw in 1763 the following inscription brought from Naworth Castle, and hence from Amboglanna probably:—

D E O M A X
 . V O .
 V I .
 M A "

This inscription is, of course, quite unintelligible, but the note accompanying it is an exceedingly valuable one, as it adds another to our list of altars brought from Naworth Castle by Sir Thomas Robinson. There seems no reason to doubt the credibility of Gough's statement, as Sir Thomas was at Rokeby at the time, and hence

would doubtless supply the information. But it seems strange that Gough should mention this altar alone, and yet omit all reference to the others, supposing them to have been there, especially as he knew that several had been given to Sir Thomas.* It is probable, however, that at this time this was the only one that had been brought from Naworth. Certainly it is the most elegant of all of them, and hence would be most likely to attract the attention of Sir Thomas.

The *Corpus* reading of this altar—No. 827—is as follows:—

D E O M A P
 . T V . . C T O .
 E C
 V A A R T I
 S . . S I N

And the following remark is added:—"Ego paene nihil distinguere potui." The photograph somewhat qualifies this statement.

My own reading of it is as follows:—

D E O M A R T
 M E T V I C T O R I A E
 A V G . . . V I . . .
 . . V A R I M
 . . S E . V S L M

The first two and the last lines I give almost without reservation. The initial letter in the second may be for *militari*, as in two of the Maryport altars; whilst the letters RIAE at the end are apparently compounded into one letter, as also are the letters ME at the beginning of the line.

The third line is given with diffidence, but the fourth cannot, I think, be VAARTI. The letters in the last line are not so well cut as those in the other lines, but there is very little doubt but that they are as I have given them.

* *Transactions*, xvi., p. 141.

The second of these altars is *Corpus*, 276, which adds the remark :—"Potest allata esse ex Amboglannis." The inscription is given as :—

D E O M A R T
E N E M V
G E N V S A
R A M P O S
V I T V O T
V M F E C
S O L L M
E T P R O S E

On the whole this is a tolerably correct rendering, but it seems strange that when the lettering is so distinct that in the sixth line the word *FEC* occurs when there are really four letters; and again in the next line where, instead of *LM*, there are clearly three letters. To this part of the question we shall return shortly.

That it is unintelligible the *Corpus* apparently admits, as the transliteration supplied is given as follows :—"Deo Marte Nem(etius?) (In)genus? aram posuit votum fec(it) l(ibens) m(erito) et pro se?"

Having in 1898 got an excellent photograph of this altar from Mr. Yeoman, The Teesdale Studio, Barnard Castle, I am able to supply the following alterations, viz.,

Line No. 1 is clearly *DEO MARTI*.

Line No. 2 is either *INEMAV* or *INEMN*, but I favour the former.

Line No. 6 appears to me to be either *ELSM* or *ELSV*; whilst in line 7 the concluding letters are only one-third the size of the preceding letters *SOL*. Instead of reading them as *LM*, I should prefer either *ISM* or *HSM*; whilst the last line is really *IT PRO SE*, if not *VIT PRO SE*. The letters *IT* are much smaller than those which follow, and are placed in such a position as to suggest the idea that they had been cut or scratched after the later letters. Still, even allowing that the suggested alterations are correct, the meaning is not thereby made more apparent.

Hence one of my reasons for examining this altar again on July 16th was to settle the exact letters if this were possible. Favoured by a brilliant sun, which shone across the face of the altar, I had no great difficulty in deciding that the letters at the end of line 6 were undoubtedly ETSV and in line 7 ISM. Thus the *Corpus* rendering would have to be altered as follows :—

D E O M A R T I
 I N E M A V
 G E N V S A
 R A M P O S
 V I T V O T
 V M

E T S V
I S M

 S O L
 (v) I T P R O S E

This being so, and I give the suggested alterations without the slightest hesitation, we may ask how they affect the interpretation. It would appear to me as though the person who dedicated the altar (Julius Numetius Augenus?) first scratched on that part of the inscription, excluding the portion at the end of lines six and seven round which I have placed the lines. Finding, then, that he had not got in the whole of the common formula "pro se et suis," he apparently inserted it afterwards in what I take to have been a vacant part of the altar, and then finished it by placing the letter M for "merito" at the end. Perhaps the fact of his making the letters ISM so much smaller than the rest may be intended by him to point to this fact.

This may be a somewhat fanciful explanation, nor can I bring to mind any inscription which would lend itself as a precedent for my so regarding it. But the letters are so clearly as I have given them that I can see no alternative.

I might add that on one side of the altar is the head of a boar, and on the other a shield.

The third altar (277, *Corpus*) is simply inscribed :—

D E O
M A R T I

and the remark appended is “Potest aliunde allata esse.”
The letters TI are compounded.

NOTE ON THE CROSSCANONBY ALTAR.

In vol. iv., p. 323-4, of the *Transactions* the discovery of the above is alluded to, and the inscription is given as :—

.
. V S . P R A E F E
. O H . I . D E L M .

As I made several enquiries at the time of its discovery, the results may probably be of interest as they add somewhat to the account there given.

On September 22nd, 1877, whilst digging a grave immediately opposite the west end of the church, the sexton came across a large stone which it became necessary to remove in order that the grave might be dug to the required depth. As, however, it extended beyond the grave space, the sexton broke off the portion which he wished to remove. This proved to be part of a Roman altar. For some months it lay in the churchyard, and various attempts were made to decipher the inscription, the same being duly communicated to the local press. As all these attempts were quite unintelligible, on Easter Tuesday, 1878, I went to see the altar as it lay in the

churchyard. As a result, I made out the inscription to be :—

.. A C (I L I A N)
 V S . P R A E F E C
 . O H . Ī . D E L M A

This, it will be observed, is somewhat longer than that given in the *Transactions*, and apparently decides the name of the officer. In the portico at Netherhall are two altars by Acilianus, Prefect of the first cohort of the Dalmatians, and there is just room on the altar for the letters ILIAN.

Previous to its removal to Netherhall three or four of the letters were broken off, though there is still sufficient of each left to show the correctness of my reading.