



FIG. I.

ALTAR FROM CHESTERHOLM (NOW IN THE CHESTERS MUSEUM.)

TO FACE P. 223.

ART. XIII.—*The Roman name of Birdoswald Fort.* By
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THE Roman names of the forts along the Wall of Hadrian are, for the most part, well-attested by satisfactory evidence, but here and there doubt remains as to the proper spelling of certain names. In the following note—unwilling as I always am to disturb current views—I wish to indicate one such doubt, respecting the exact spelling of the Roman name of Birdoswald.

That such doubts are permissible is shown (to give one instance) by the evidence for the Roman name of the fort at Chesterholm in Northumberland. This has usually been called Vindolana. That name is attested by the late Roman army list contained in the 'Notitia Dignitatum' (occ. 40, 41); on the other hand, the still later geographical list of place-names usually ascribed to an 'anonymus Ravennas,' spells the name (431, 11) 'Vindolanda.' In general, 'Ravennas' contains many errors and bad spellings, and no one has paid much heed to it; so that 'Vindolana' was long accepted as the correct form, although Celtic scholars found its second half, *-lana*, a little puzzling. But just before the war began, in July, 1914, a small inscribed altar was detected at Chesterholm, close to the fort, the inscription on which indicated that 'Vindolanda' was, after all, the correct spelling (fig. 1)—or at least the local spelling:—

*Pro domu divina et numinibus Augustorum, Volcano
 sacrum, vicani Vindolandesses (=denses), cu[r(am)] agente
, v(otum) s(olvunt) l(ibentes) m(erito).*

"For the Divine (i.e. Imperial) House and the divinity of the emperors, dedicated to Vulcan by the members of the *vicus* (village) of Vindolanda, under the care of . . . (name illegible)." * The *vicus* seems here to denote the 'civil settlement' outside the fort of Vindolanda.

This shows that no one need be surprised if one or another of the accepted place-names of the forts on the Wall turns out to be slightly incorrect.

With respect to Birdoswald, the evidence is rather complicated.

(A). The 'Notitia' (*occ.* 40, 44), in its list of the garrisons along the Wall, tells us that the first Cohort of Dacians was stationed at 'Amboglanna.' This name has generally been accepted without doubt. Indeed, Amboglanna, which is said to consist of two Celtic words meaning 'a stream' and a 'river-bank,' and which has been connected by people who knew Latin better than Celtic with the Latin word *ambo*, meaning 'both,' forms a good name for a place situated as Birdoswald is, overhanging the valley of the Irthing, which indeed runs below two sides of it: moreover, the first Cohort of Dacians actually garrisoned the fort, as many inscriptions prove.

(B). However, the other evidence which we have as to the form of the name suggests at least a doubt whether while the name is correct, its form may not be a trifle incorrect. In 1725, there was dug up on Rudge Farm, near Marlborough, in the parish of Froxfield (Wiltshire), a small bronze enamelled cup, generally known as the 'Rudge cup'; it is now one of the treasures of the important collection of Roman remains at Alnwick Castle, where I have examined it (*fig. 2*). This cup, which was noticed in our *Transactions* eighteen years ago by our vice-president, Dr. Barnes, bears round its outer rim an inscription:—

A. MAIS ABALLAVA VXELODVM C AMBOGLANS BANNA.†

* See my *Roman Britain* in 1914, p. 31, *fig. 16*.

† These *Transactions*, N.S., i (1901), 70, with cut; *Lap. Sept.* 416.

This, as has been generally recognised, is a list of five place-names mostly in the ablative case,* forming a sort of itinerary, and though we cannot tell exactly why such an object, bearing the names of places in Cumberland should turn up in a Roman farm or country-house in Wiltshire, there is little doubt that these place-names belong to our district, and indeed to the Wall and its neighbourhood. In fact, Ravennas (432-3) gives almost the same sequence of names, with one exception, in more or less the opposite order, while the portion of the Ravenna



FIG. 2.

list which contains this also enumerates, not very correctly, the names of forts on the Wall. The two lists are :

I—CUP	2—RAVENNAS (432, 20-433.3)
Mais	Banna
Aballava	Uxelludamo
Uxelodum (or Uxelodumc)	Avalana (or Avalaria)
Camboglans (or Amboglans)	Maia
Banna	—

If we allow for the errors in spelling which occur so

* For the case of *Uxelodum* see footnote below. Amboglans may well be for *Amboglan(i)s*, ablative. That is more natural than to expand *Amboglan(a)s*.

freely in Ravennas, and which are inevitable in all such lists of names, we can see that we have here a list which begins (or ends) near Birdoswald, and ends (or begins) in West Cumberland. (1) The first name in Ravennas, Banna, though not identifiable precisely, denoted a spot near Birdoswald. At Birdoswald, indeed, an altar* was found in 1821 (*Lap. Sept.* 370; *CIL.* vii, 830) which had been erected in honour of Silvanus by the 'venatores Bannienses'—that is, by certain soldiers who looked after the 'live stock' of the post at Banna. What exactly this live stock was, I cannot here discuss; probably, as a German scholar has remarked, the corn on which the earlier Roman (Italian) soldiers lived, was, in the later Empire, superseded by a meat-diet, when northern 'barbarians' came to serve in the army.† In any case, Banna must have been near Birdoswald, and the beasts in question (wild cattle or deer?) must have been hunted on Coldfell or on Spadeadam Waste, if indeed we may think that there were once wild cattle there as there still are at Chillingham, in north Northumberland.

To return to the Rudge cup: (2) *Aballava*, which is clearly the same as the Ravennas Avalana, is known by an inscription to be the name of the Roman fort at Papcastle in the Derwent valley, where Mr. Robin Collingwood was able to make useful excavations a few years ago.‡ Lastly, *Uxelodum* on the cup, and *Uxelludamo*, plainly denote the Roman fort at Maryport, known (see these *Transactions*, N.S., xv (1915), 136-7) as 'Uxellodunum'; so that the western end of the region indicated by these place-names is not doubtful.§ Whether the form

* Now at Lanercost where I have seen it.

† *Bonner Jahrbücher* 117 (1908), 46, where it is suggested that this may have been an innovation of the third century A.D. The Carvoran 'modius' (*Arch. Ael.* 1916, pp. 85-102) belongs to the corn-eating period and is dated A.D. 90-91. See also Dessau, *inscr. select.* 3548, 3562.

‡ These *Transactions*, N.S. (1913), xiii, 131.

§ It is well known that the ancient lists of the forts on the line of the Wall all cease to help us near its western end. They are satisfactory only as far west as Birdoswald. Thus, the 'Notitia' list (*occ.* 40, 33, foll.) gives precise

Uxelodum is to be considered an abbreviation of *Uxello-du(nu)m* must be left a little uncertain.

The eastern limit is equally plain, and we need not hesitate to follow the general view that 'Amboglans' on the Rudge cup is Birdoswald. Here I reach the point of orthography which I desire to emphasize, for the cup has not simply (as is usually stated) *Amboglans*, but *Camboglans*. Generally, this C has been taken to be a final O of the name Uxelloduno, slightly misengraved on the cup (MC for NO). But, though the spacing of the letters on the cup is not quite clear, the letter C is a C, and not an O, as, indeed, all who have seen the original agree.

If we turn now to the Ravenna Geography, we find in it (431, 1-10) a sequence of names which seem to belong to the western part of the Wall. In 431, 3 we can identify the Roman name of Ribchester near Preston (Lancashire). In 431, 6, 7, we encounter the Roman road which runs by Brough-under-Stainmore, through Penrith to Carlisle, which latter place is named (431, 8). There follow Magnis, Gabaglanda, Vindolanda (Chesterholm), and then some sites in county Durham and in north-east Yorkshire—as if the route lay north from Preston to Carlisle, thence east to Durham and south to Yorkshire. The whole is confused, and little can be made of it, but I incline to think that 'Magnis' may be a variation of 'Mais,' and 'Gabaglanda' a mis-writing for 'Camboglanna' (or '-glanda'). In a MS. *am* might naturally be written *ã*; then, it is easy for the stroke above the letter to be overlooked and the '*ã*' to be read '*a*,'—that is, for the '*m*'

information as far as Birdoswald. West of that, it adds Petrianae, Aballaba, etc., omits Carlisle and the forts west of it along the Solway estuary, and plunges off to the Derwent and West Cumberland. The same feature seems to underlie the lists of names on the Rudge cup, and in Ravennas. The result is, that, substantially, we have scanty ancient evidence relating to the names along the western part of the Wall. The exact cause of this I do not know, but I hope to return to the problem at a later date. It has not received sufficient attention from those who discussed the place-names of the western forts of the Wall—Bruce, Hübner and others.

to drop out. Therefore, not I only, but others before me have hit on the idea that the first syllable of Gabaglanda should be read *Camb-*, and that it is really the ancient name of Birdoswald with an initial C, as on the Rudge cup. The loss of an initial letter is extremely common in MSS., and many cases could be quoted.* The upshot is that I incline to accept the reading of the Rudge cup and to call Amboglanna 'Camboglanna.' That would mean, as I understand, the 'crooked river,' or 'crooked valley,' and anyone who has ever seen the Irthing valley at Birdoswald will agree that no better name† for it could be found, if place-names ever bear any relation to physical features. At any rate, the evidence which I have set out justifies a reasonable doubt whether Amboglanna can be considered the proper form. If it is not, I shall shed no sentimental tear; 'the rose by any name will smell as sweet.' Those who use indices may, no doubt, have to look out C as well as A; but the moral that I draw is that it is wiser not to use a Roman name, which may turn out to be wrong, instead of an English name, which can be known correctly. Journalists and others, including archaeologists, often seem to find a strange pleasure in using Roman names. They have, perhaps, a feeling that in them they have got to the real thing. Yet they may, in reality, have merely got astray.

* For instance, Ravennas (431.2) gives a place-name 'Ravonia,' which has naturally been connected with Ravenglass, on the Cumberland coast. But probably 'Ravonia' is really a shortened form of 'Bravoniacum,' the name of the important Roman fort at Kirby Thore in the Eden valley.

† It is possible that the name is a plural 'Camboglannae' or 'Cambo-glannas,' or '—glanae' (as Holder prefers to spell it); that would suit as well. On the continent several names of rivers, etc., occur, 'glanis' and the like, mostly with one 'n.'