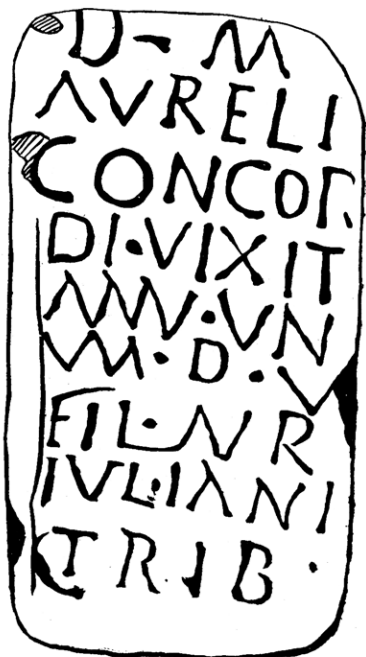


ART. II.—*A Tombstone from Birdoswald.* By R. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

THE tombstone here illustrated was seen by the Society during our recent visit to Lancaster and drawn by me on that occasion by kind permission of the curator of the Storey Institute, in whose charge it now is. As a Cumberland stone whose history is in some ways obscure, I venture to republish it here with a brief account of its history so far as that is known to me. (Scale of cut, $\frac{1}{8}$).

It is a rather rough slab, 26 inches by 14, with 9 lines of rather poor but quite legible letters from 2 to $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. A plain marginal moulding is visible on the left hand, but not elsewhere. The inscription runs:—D(IS) . M(ANIBVS) | AVRELI | CONCOR | DI . VIXIT | ANN(VM) . VN | VM . D(IES) . V | FIL(IVS) . AVR(ELI) | IVLIANI | TRIB(VNI). "In memory of Aurelius Concordius, aged one year and five days, son of Aurelius Julianus, tribune." Ligatures are used in the case of the ANN of the sixth word, the VM of the seventh, and the AV of the eleventh.



The first antiquary to see the stone was Brand, author of a well-known *History and Antiquities of the town of*

Newcastle-on-Tyne in two quarto volumes (London, 1789). He saw the stone built into the dairy at Birdoswald in 1783, and published an excellent drawing of it in the work named above, at p. 614 of the first volume. His text is entirely correct except in two places. Line 3 he reads as CONCDI, and this leads him to the name Concdidius, which after all is not much more fantastic than the familiar name of the god Cocidius, and the somewhat D-shaped second O and the obscurity of the R, both visible in my drawing, show that his error was not due to carelessness. In l. 6 he mis-reads the final V as X: this again, in view of the broken state of the stone, is quite pardonable. Apart from these points his drawing is perfect.

In 1808 he was followed by the Lysons brothers, whose accuracy in such matters is well known.* Their text as printed in the Cumberland volume of the *Magna Britannia* (p. clx, no. 132; cf. p. clxxxiii) corrects Brand's two errors but commits one new mistake in reading the tied VM of line 6 as VV.. Thus Brand and Lysons between them give a correct reading of the whole, accessible to anyone critical enough to select the right version from their divergent texts.

At this point the inscription disappears from history. John Hodgson, the historian of Northumberland, in his volume of 1840 (*History of Northumberland*, part ii, vol. iii, p. 211) reports the stone vanished and attempts to reconstruct the reading, which he does correctly all but the numeral at the end of line 6. Bruce (*Lap. Sept.* 383) and Hübner (C.I.L. vii, 865) both tackle the same problem, but both fail: they agree to take Lysons' VV.. as covering a lost M and numeral: "such-and-such a

* It has been thought that Dr. William Bennet, bishop of Cloyne, supplied all the readings of Cumberland inscriptions in Lysons: but Bruce (*Lap. Sept.*, p. 474) says that this is an error and that the Birdoswald inscriptions were drawn by the authors themselves.

number of months," instead of adopting Brand's correct version. Both these works were published in the early seventies. But before the *Lapidarium* actually appeared, W. T. Watkin found our stone in the garden of Mr. B. P. Gregson at Caton near Lancaster and pointed it out to Bruce, who was able to insert it in the appendix to the *Lapidarium*, with a correct and fairly accurate woodcut (*ibid.*, p. 474).

Here, however, a complication arose. In 1830, says Baines (*History of Lancashire*, ed. 1, 1836, vol. IV, p. 489) 'a stone was found by the workmen employed in digging a cellar on the Castle Hill [Lancaster]: it is a plain, square monument with an imperfect inscription, which seems to record the death of a son or daughter of Julian Probus.' Hübner had already seen Baines' statement and had repeated it in C.I.L. vii, 289, as a record of a lost stone from Lancaster, carelessly altering the name to Julius Probus. Now the statement obviously refers to our inscription, the TRIB of line 9, which is rather broken and irregular, being misread as PROB or PROBI, a quite easy mistake. If, however, our stone was dug up at Lancaster, how could it have come from Birdoswald? This reflection led Hübner (in *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, vol. iii, p. 136), commenting on the information contained in Bruce's appendix, to infer that the stone had been taken to Birdoswald after its discovery at Lancaster in 1830, and later brought back to its place of origin. Hübner not only overlooked the inherent improbability of any Birdoswald farmer having collected inscriptions from distant sites, but actually forgot that the stone had been seen and drawn at Birdoswald in 1783 and 1808.

Hübner's mistake was corrected by Haverfield (*Eph. Epigr.*, ix, p. 601) in a short note which merely pointed out that the stone in question, of which he had seen a squeeze made by Miss M. V. Taylor, now librarian of the

Haverfield Library at Oxford, undoubtedly came from Birdoswald. But the question remains, how and when did it come to Lancaster?

We know that it was still at Birdoswald in 1808, and that it was in Lancaster by 1830. Whether it was really, as Baines suggests, accidentally found in that year after having been lost in Lancaster I cannot say: in any case, his story cannot be true as it stands and must be rejected together with the story of another inscribed stone alleged to have been found on the Castle Hill, which was really found three miles away. It would appear that any Roman relic in or near Lancaster tended naturally to be ascribed to the site of the fort. The fact probably is that during the years 1810-1830 a local antiquary brought the stone from Birdoswald, and his heirs soon forgot its origin. It is only owing to the careful transcripts of Brand and Lysons that we are able to reconstruct, to some extent, its history.
