

ART. IX.—*The Cardewlees Altar*. By R. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.

Read at Penrith, July 5th, 1923.

THE Roman altar at Tullie House of which I offer a reading has been a puzzle to antiquaries ever since its discovery. I do not claim to have solved every problem connected with it; but I can at least claim to have dated it within a margin of five years to 253-258, and thus shown it to be among the latest Roman inscriptions which we possess in the north of England. Setting aside milestones, of which we have examples going down into the fourth century, the only inscriptions in the north bearing a later date are of Postumus (258-267; C.I.L. vii, 820, 822) and Tetricus (270-273; C.I.L. vii, 823), which all come from Birdoswald. I except undated inscriptions such as tombstones, of which we have some belonging to a later period.

It is part of an altar of red sandstone, originally measuring about 39 by 20 inches and 22 by about 17 over the inscribed face; it has been split lengthwise, probably for use as the lintel of a door, and the portion which we possess is 38 inches long and 12 across at the broadest part. There are 10 lines of lettering, which are ill cut, ill spaced and unprovided with the usual ruled lines; as we shall see, the matter of the text as well as its form leaves something to be desired.

It was found in 1896, and the discovery was reported by Chancellor Ferguson to the Society of Antiquaries in the following terms.

I also exhibit and present a photograph of a Roman altar, now at Baldwinholme near Carlisle, to which my attention was drawn by the Rev. W. F. Gillbanks, the rector of Great Orton. It was

found about two fields from the New Inn at Cardewlees, on the Carlisle and Wigton road. It was struck by a ploughman, who was sufficiently interested to excavate it, and convey to the house of Mrs. Pattinson the landowner. The altar is much defaced, evidently by repeated ploughings. One side is broken away, and the back of the stone has "mitred." Its height is three feet one and a half inches, width at the base one foot and half an inch, at top nine inches. The field in which it was found is close to the great Roman road from Luguwallium (Carlisle) to the west. (*Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xvi, p. 299, under date Feb. 11, 1897).

The photograph was not published with the description, but it is reproduced in these *Transactions*, O.S., xv, p. 45, where Chancellor Ferguson again described the stone and quoted a letter about it from Professor Haverfield. The photograph was a very good one, and well reproduced; but no photograph can really illustrate this stone, and the block used in *Transactions* suffered serious damage before it was once more used in the supplement which in 1905 was added to the catalogue of Roman stones at Tullie House. The illustration in the catalogue, therefore, is valueless, and it has been omitted from the second edition.

Haverfield's letter points out that the stone is damaged not by ploughing but by intentional erasure, which has rendered the lettering very obscure. "I can only put forward what I seemed to see," he continues, "though it provides no proper sense." This suggests that he enclosed some attempt at a reading of the whole; but if so, Chancellor Ferguson did not think it worth publishing, and the text of Haverfield's letter as printed only contains the remarks that the M at the beginning "will convince any doubter," and that "at the end *voto* is plain and a word which may be the end of *dedicavi*."

This letter seems to imply that Haverfield saw the stone itself in 1896 or 1897, when he was much in these parts. His words do not suggest that he is relying on a photograph or squeeze. On the other hand, when in 1913 he pub-

lished his *Additamenta Quinta ad Corporis volumen VII* (*Ephemeris Epigraphica*, vol. ix), he offered the following reading (*Eph. Epigr.* ix, 1224).

M

ONNVA

ΛΙΙΙΙG

ESIVALE

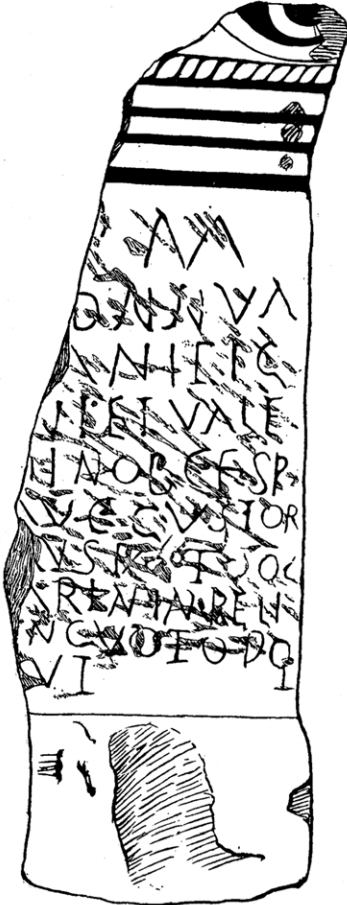
P

*five
lines
altogether
disappeared*

Here he silently retracts the *voto dedicavi* which he had in part plainly seen some sixteen years before. This is explained if it is supposed that the reading given in 1913 was based on what he could then see in the photograph published in *Trans.*, O.S., xv; for in this photograph the first four lines are much clearer than the rest, and the end is invisible. I think therefore that the 1913 reading does not represent a new attempt to decipher the stone itself, but is entirely based in the old photograph.

These are the only occasions on which the stone has been published, so far as I have been able to discover; and I have long fancied that a fresh study of it might increase our very scanty knowledge of the inscription, concerning which nothing could be said except that it almost certainly recorded a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The difficulty of reading the inscription is due to the fact that the whole inscribed face has been tooled over with strong diagonal chisel-strokes, admirably designed to confuse the eye and to make the lettering illegible. Mr. L. E. Hope gave me much valuable assistance by photographing the stone repeatedly in various lights, and after a close examination of the photographs I spent the best part of a day turning the stone about in sunlight and under other conditions in an attempt to "think away" the diagonal

chisel-strokes and to plot on a full-sized drawing all the cuts which remained when that was done. By these means I have been able to decipher the following letters:—



THE CARDEWLEES ALTAR.

O M
DNNVA
ANIETG
NIETVALE
IINOBCESP 5
AVGGVSTOR
VSI///T//O
ARINIAVRELI
NCVOTODO
VT IO

In line three the ET is not absolutely clear but may, I think, be accepted with tolerable confidence. In line five the initial stroke seems to belong to a letter which can hardly be anything but N. In line eight the AV are tied into a ligature, and in line 10 the last letter is T rather than I.

The restoration of this incomplete inscription presents, for the first six lines, no difficulty. The first line can only read *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*. The DNN of line two irresistibly suggests some case of

Domini Nostri, "Our Lords" the Emperors; and the names of these Emperors are *Va ani et G ni et Vale ni, Nobilissimi Caesaris*. The blanks are easily and certainly supplied. The emperor Valerian came to the

throne in 253, and associated himself with his son Gallienus as co-emperor; these two, as "Augusti," are obviously named on the stone. The third name is that of the younger Valerian, son of Gallienus, who was elevated in 255 to the rank of "Nobilissimus Caesar," a title confined since the early days of the third century to young men of imperial rank who could not yet be given the rank of an "Augustus" but were marked out for future promotion to that rank. Had the young Valerian survived he would no doubt have dropped this title and become "Augustus" in 258 when his grandfather was taken prisoner by the Parthians; but he lost his life in that very year.

The *p* at the end of line five suggests either *p(ro)* [*sal(ute)*] *Auggustor(um)*, "for the welfare of the Augusti," or else *p(iorum)* [*f(elicium) inv(ictorum)*] *Auggustor(um)*, "pious, fortunate, invincible, and august." If the former is right, the second line must be supplied [*et n(uminibus)*] *d(ominorum) n(ostorum)* "and to the deities of our lords the emperors"; but the dedication of an altar to the deities of the emperors for the welfare of the same persons is scarcely conceivable, nor can I find a parallel. Therefore one is driven to read line two [*p(ro) s(alute)*] *d(ominorum) n(ostorum)* and lines five-six *p(iorum)* [*f(elicium) inv(ictorum)*] *Auggustor(um)*. Even this does not avoid a solecism, for these titles do not belong to the younger Valerian, who was only a Caesar, and ought to precede his name instead of following it. Of two evils, however, this is the less. The mis-spelling *Auggustor(um)* is due to an original abbreviation AVGG having been expanded subsequently; the letters VSTOR are cut more slightly and more irregularly than the rest.

The name of the dedicator must have followed. Here the letters become very difficult to see. In line seven I seem to see *G* (suggested by its tail), *VS* certainly, and *TA* probably; a mark which might be *CO* for *milliaria*; and *T . . . O*, perhaps for *TORQ*, with possibly a *v* at the end

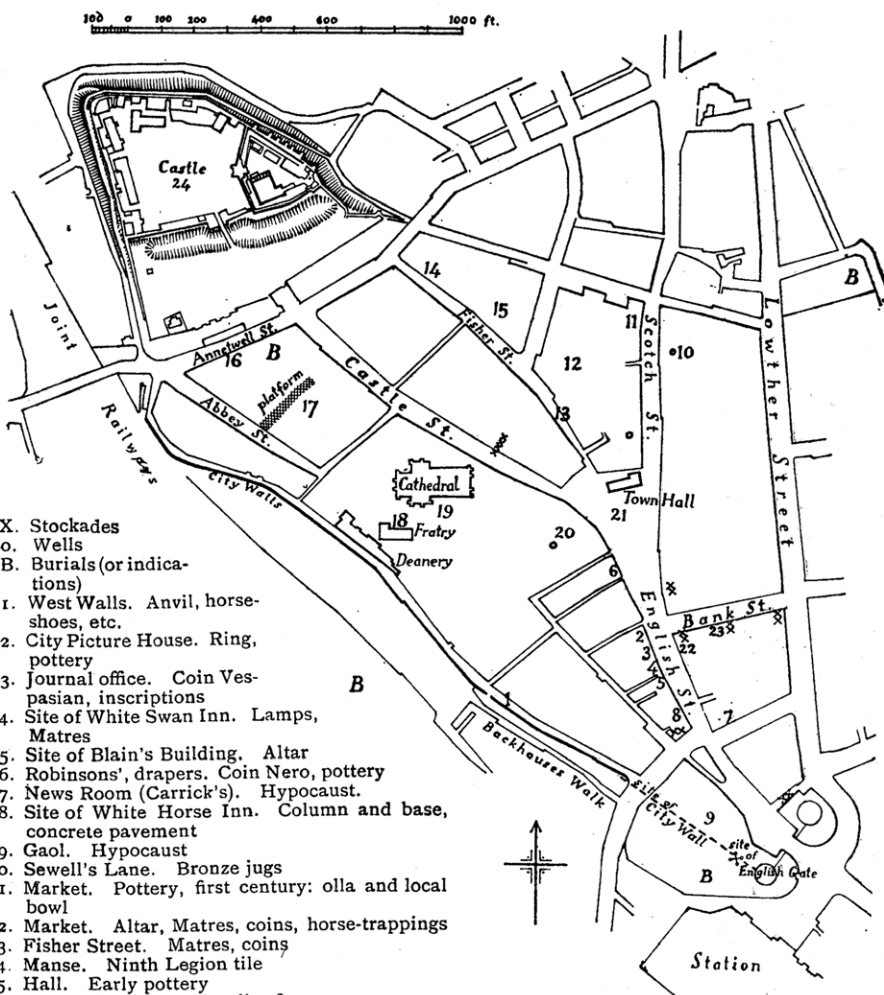
of the line. This would give *Al(a) Au]gust[a m(illiaria)] t[or]qu(ata)*, a version of the name and titles of the cavalry regiment in garrison at Old Carlisle, which is the nearest fort to Cardewlees, and whose garrison is the likeliest unit to have dedicated an altar which may have been brought from Old Carlisle itself for use as building stone. This regiment is once called *Ala Augusta Petriana torquata milliaria civium Romanorum* (C.I.L. vii, 929); it was generally called, for short, either *Ala Petriana* or *Ala Augusta* simply (C.I.L. vii, 323, 872, 1125, E.E. vii, 995; C.I.L. vii, 338, 342, 351, 353). Line eight contains a proper name, and may perhaps have run *[s(ub) c(ura) C. C]arini Aureli(ani)*; the name might be Carinus or Marinus or the like. In line nine the *NC* at the beginning may be *AVG*, the *AV* in ligature; in that case *[c(enturio) leg(ionis) ii.] Aug(ustae)* naturally suggests itself; and the inscription plainly ends *voto do[na]v(i)t*. The omission of the *i* in *donavit* is parallel to many well-known misspellings of the word *posuit*.

For the whole inscription, then, I suggest the following version which is far from certain in the later part but hardly, I think, beyond the limits of reasonable conjecture.

[I(ovi)] O(ptimo) M(aximo) [p(ro) sal(ute)] d(ominorum) n(ostrorum) Va[leri]ani et G[allie]ni et Vale[ria]ni nob(ilissimi) C(a)es(aris) p(iorum) [f(elicium) inv(ictorum)] Auggustor(um), [Al(a) Au]gust[a m(illiaria)] t[or]qu(ata), [s(ub) c(ura) C. C]arini Aureli(ani) [c(enturionis) leg(ionis) ii.] Aug(ustae), voto do[na]v(i)t.

“Dedicated in discharge of a vow to Jupiter Good and Great, for the welfare of our lords Valerian and Gallienus and the noble Caesar Valerian, pious, fortunate, invincible and august, by the Ala Augusta, 1000 strong and decorated with torques, under the command of . . . arinus Aurelianus, centurion of the Second Legion, the Emperor’s Own.”

I am indebted to Professor Stuart Jones and Mr. J. G. C. Anderson for suggestions and criticisms, but I cannot claim their authority for all my conjectures.



- X. Stockades
 o. Wells
 B. Burials (or indications)
 1. West Walls. Anvil, horse-shoes, etc.
 2. City Picture House. Ring, pottery
 3. Journal office. Coin Vespasian, inscriptions
 4. Site of White Swan Inn. Lamps, Matres
 5. Site of Blain's Building. Altar
 6. Robinsons', drapers. Coin Nero, pottery
 7. News Room (Carrick's). Hypocaust.
 8. Site of White Horse Inn. Column and base, concrete pavement
 9. Gaol. Hypocaust
 10. Sewell's Lane. Bronze jugs
 11. Market. Pottery, first century: olla and local bowl
 12. Market. Altar, Matres, coins, horse-trappings
 13. Fisher Street. Matres, coins
 14. Manse. Ninth Legion tile
 15. Hall. Early pottery
 16. Annetwell Street. Javelin, figure
 17. Tullie House. Early pottery, harness trappings, Sixth Legion tile, bronze bowl, etc.
 18. Fraternity. Phalera
 19. Cathedral Precincts. Lamp, pottery, sword-chape
 20. Crown and Mitre Hotel. Cobble pavement, oak tank, paddle blade, pottery, etc.
 21. Market Place. Coin Vespasian
 22. Lancs. and Yorks. bank. Oak tank
 23. Clydesdale bank. Oak tanks, pottery, bronze articles
 24. Castle Green. Bas-relief, Matres.

PLAN OF CARLISLE
 Showing Romano-British structural remains.