

ART. XXI.—*Roman Altars at High Moor House and Hale Church.* By R. G. COLLINGWOOD.

*Read at High Moor House, July 13, and Gosforth, September 14, 1927.*

THESE two altars are alike in having been seldom visited or described, and never published with satisfactory illustrations, by any student of Roman inscriptions. As our Society visited one and passed close by the other in 1927, I take this opportunity of republishing both, with my own drawings.

#### I.

Altar of local red sandstone, 35 inches high by 23 at its greatest width. The capital and base are boldly moulded; the capital is a good deal damaged and the face of the die is in many parts completely worn away. It stands in the garden of High Moor House.

It was first noted by William Hutchinson (*Excursion to the Lakes*, 1776, p. 231), as an altar built into the horsing block in an adjoining farm-yard to Old Carlisle; the inscription so injured that only a few letters were visible. Bruce published it in the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, no. 819, with a careful and evidently for the most part accurate drawing. These are the only publications; Hübner (in C.I.L. vii, no. 345), merely copies Bruce.

On examining it, by kind permission of the Hon. Gilbert Rollo, and with the help of Mr. R. C. Bosanquet, I found that the inscription is much less legible than appears from Bruce's woodcut; but also that this woodcut is not wholly satisfactory, for the third line has been misrepresented, and therefore some later lines, now invisible, may be misrepresented also. Here are the three versions.

<i>Hutchinson.</i>	<i>Bruce.*</i>	<i>Myself.</i>
M O	I O M O	I O M O
ROSALV	ROSA . LV	ROSALVT
N	NI	MI
V	VC	V
EG	IOV	/ / /
OP	O . P	/ / /
MCOIS	ACO	/ / /
NSFCRM	NSECRAV	ONSECI \
Q	Q	Q



Fig. 1. Altar from Old Carlisle, at  
High Moor House ( $\frac{1}{10}$ )

\* I have omitted a number of letters faintly drawn in Bruce's illustration, as not confidently claimed by his draughtsman as being visible.

Bruce's draughtsman has misread M in line 3 as N, and the concluding leaf-stop as Q; but on the other hand I can now see no trace of letters in lines 5-7. This being so, it is of little use to attempt a restoration from Bruce's text. Clearly the inscription began *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) [p]ro salut[e]* . . . "to Iuppiter Good and Great for the welfare of [some emperor or emperors]." The O at the end of line 1, which is rather less well cut than the rest, may be a bungled leaf-stop or it may betray the erasure of an earlier first line DEO, for which there are parallels; but it may also be a bungled D, for *Dolicheno*, Iuppiter "of Doliche" being a god much worshipped in the Roman army. After line 2 no sense can be made out with certainty except, at the end, that somebody [*c*]onsecrav[*it*] "consecrated" the altar.

## II.

Built into the vestry wall at Hale (or Haile) church is a little Roman altar, 14 by 9 inches, the inscribed portion intact and exposed to view, the capital broken and the base cut down to square it for use as a building-stone. It was found in the fabric of the church in 1883, and has been published in these *Transactions*, o.s., vii, p. 150, in the *Ephemeris epigraphica*, vol. vii, no. 968, and in Dr. Parker's *Gosforth District*. The lettering is clear throughout, but of a character indicating either poor quality or a rather late date. The text runs:—*Dibus Herculi et Silvano fe(cit) Primus cu(stos) ar(morum) pro se et vex(i)l(l)atione; v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*. "To the gods Hercules and Silvanus, Primus, *custos armorum*, made this altar for himself and his vexillation; he paid his vow willingly and deservedly." There are two points requiring comment: the "*fe*" of line 5 and the "*cuar*" of line 6. The former has been read as "*F(lavius) E(nnius)*" or the like, part of Primus's name; but these contractions (and indeed any others of the kind) are highly unnatural, and "*fecit*"

is almost certainly intended. It is true that a stop separates the letters, but the same applies to the letters of "et" in line 3. And the verb is otiose; but that is not unprecedented. The latter should probably be read *cu(stos) ar(morum)*. This officer, the keeper of the weapons, existed in a legion and also in an *ala* of auxiliary cavalry. Each century of a legion had one, and the larger centuries more than one (v. Domaszewski, *Rangordnung d. r. Heeres*, p. 44), though this number seems to have

been reduced during the third century. For the existence of the office in the *ala*, cf. *op. cit.* p. 55, C.I.L. viii, 2094. Evidence of its existence in an auxiliary cohort seems to be lacking.

We seem therefore to have a *vexillatio* or detachment of troops, in this case perhaps a mere handful of picked men, detailed for some special duty from a cavalry *ala* in the neighbourhood, or from the cavalry of an equitate cohort, operating apparently under the command of a *custos armorum*, an officer

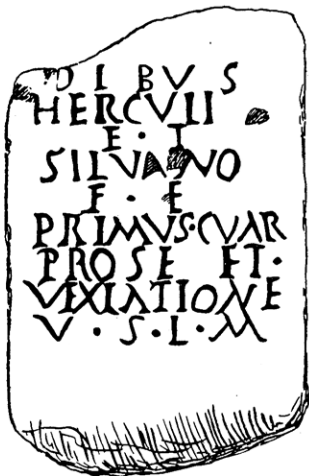


FIG. 2.

of very humble rank. Where it was operating and what its duties were is uncertain. A small stone like this may have been brought some distance as ready-made building-material, but it is unlikely to have been brought many miles, and therefore it is unlikely to belong to any of the known Roman forts of Cumberland. Most probably it records an expedition by a patrol or fatigue party into country remote from its headquarters.