

ART. III.—*The Roman fort at Moresby.* By ERIC
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Read on the site, Sept. 11th, 1947.

THE Roman fort at Moresby¹ has been unaccountably neglected by this Society; it has never previously been made the subject of a paper in our *Transactions*, and (as far as I can trace) we have only once visited it in the past, namely on 4 July 1924,² when the Rev. H. J. Allen, then rector of Moresby, exhibited two or three Roman objects preserved in the porch of the church, and no doubt described the fort itself; and even stray references to the site are few and far between in the sixty odd volumes of *Transactions*. And yet there was a time when few Roman forts in our district had received so much attention as this one; it was visited by Camden, Stukeley and Horsley, honoured with a drawing in the Lysons brothers' volume on Cumberland, and subjected to excavation in 1860, six years before the foundation of our Society. Even today the western portion of the fort, between the churchyard which covers its eastern half and the edge of the steep escarpment on the seaward side, stands up prominently and invites attention; but there is no Roman masonry exposed, and

¹ The following abbreviations are employed:

AA2	..	..	..	<i>Archaeologia Aethiana</i> , 2nd series.
C	..	..	..	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , vol. vii.
CW1, CW2	..	..	..	<i>These Transactions, Old and New Series</i> .
EE	..	..	..	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica</i> .
JRS	..	..	..	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> .
LS	..	..	..	<i>Lapidarium Septentrionale</i> .
O.	..	..	..	Oswald, <i>Index of Figure-Types</i> , etc.
RW1-3	..	..	..	Bruce, <i>The Roman Wall</i> , 1st-3rd editions.

² CW2 xxv 351.

no doubt the casual visitor will find this site relatively unimpressive in comparison with the bold mounds and ditches of Old Carlisle, or the excavated walls and gateways of Birdoswald on Hadrian's Wall, or the solitary ruins of Hardknott Castle; besides, the traces of the industrial revolution hem in the green plateau on which it stands: to northward the great spoil-heap of Harrington colliery obscures the view, while the railway and road, the houses of Parton village and ruins of forgotten factories, cut off the site of fort and settlement from convenient access to the shore where there was once a harbour—perhaps the reason why the Romans first selected this place for occupation. But though there may not be much to see above ground now, a study of past records will show that the site is not an uninteresting one, and a good case can be made out for us to pay further attention to it. Some of the problems which it presents can only be solved by excavation; others depend on field-work for a solution, and I hope that one outcome of our visit here today may be to focus local attention on the points which can only be cleared up satisfactorily by people living in the district, with time and opportunity for that methodical detective work which is one of the most arduous, but not the least rewarding, parts of archaeological investigation.

A. EARLY ACCOUNTS.

The first writer to record a Roman site at Moresby was Camden, the great Elizabethan antiquary. In the early editions of his work³ he does no more than infer the existence of a fort there and note that the place had produced many fragmentary inscriptions (two of which, nos. 2 and 8 below, he quotes), though none to confirm his identification of the place (from the similarity of the names) with the *Morbium* of the Notitia. In the 1600

³ 1586, p. 452; 1590, p. 630; 1594, p. 596: "*Moresby viculum ex his munitis fuisse par est existimare . . .*"

edition,⁴ however, he has local details to add, as a result of his visit to the district, in company with Sir Robert Cotton, in the previous year: "There are many traces of antiquity there, in vaults and foundations, and many caves which they call Picts' holes . . . and we saw there this altar, recently dug up, with a horned image of Silvanus" (no. 3 below), while he notes the existence of a harbour at Moresby. Finally the 1607 edition gives the text of a further inscription (no. 9 below), communicated to him by J. Fletcher, the proprietor of the place.⁵

Our next visitor seems to have been Stukeley, who came here with Roger Gale on his northern tour in 1725 (though his account was not published until 1776); he gives a description of the site, much of which is worth quoting:⁶ "Here is a Roman *castrum*, notorious enough, at some distance, by its elevation above the plain of the field it stands in. . . The wall that stood on the edge of the *vallum* was just 400 feet square, as that at Elenborough. There is a great dry wall of stones now stands in its place, the stones taken originally from it: they are all squared: the stones of all the pastures, fences, and houses round about, and the stones of Mr Brome's house, and the churches, are most evidently taken thence; being of the Roman cut, as the inhabitants take notice, and wonder at it: they own the stone is of a different grit from that of the place. The site of the Roman castle has been ploughed up. Many coins and urns found about the place . . . A reddish sort of slate to cover houses is dug here; they do not know of any such nearer than Scotland: such was the indefatigable labour of the Romans. There is no ditch about this castle, but the

⁴ Pp. 691-2; for his tour with Cotton cf. p. 694 of the same edition.

⁵ P. 630; J. Fletcher cannot be traced, as Mr C. Roy Hudleston has been good enough to inform me; according to Nicolson & Burn the Fletcher of that period was Henry, son and heir of the William Fletcher who had purchased the estate in 1576 (cf. p. 192 below): it may be simplest to infer a misprint for H.

⁶ *Iter Boreale* (in *Itinerarium Curiosum*, 2nd ed., ii), pp. 52-4.

vallum is pretty high quite round. . .” Then comes an account of two sculptured stones used as stiles some way east of the fort (nos. 7 and 12 below), followed by: “There are evident signs of a Roman road from *Morbium* to Papcastle all the way, especially over the moor. . .”

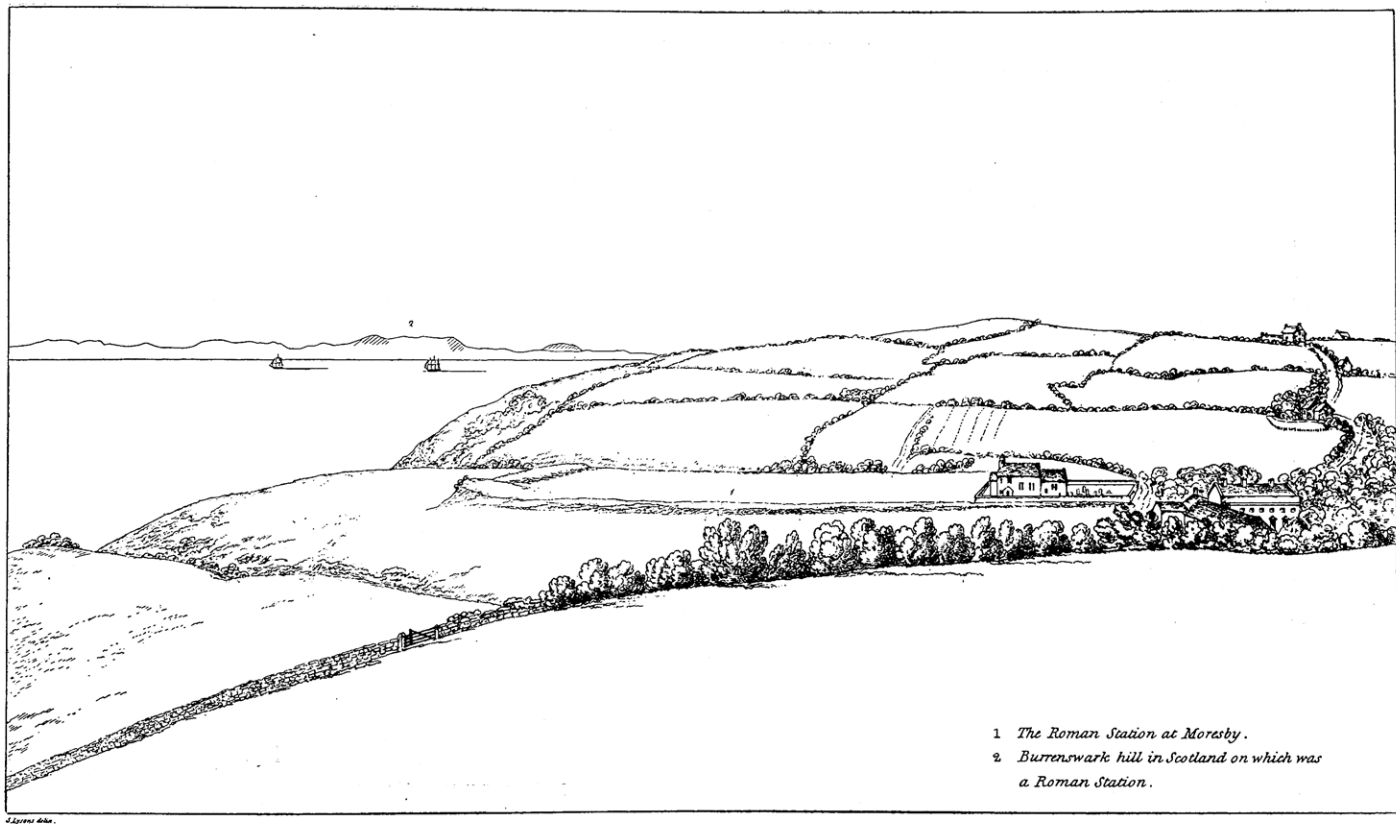
Horsley’s account, published in 1732, is disappointing by comparison with Stukeley’s; it is clear that he cannot have paid more than a flying visit to Moresby, and he had been less concerned with the structural remains than with the inscribed and sculptured stones; his description of the site is as follows:⁷ “At *Moresby* I met with evident proofs, though little remains, of a station. In a field which lies between that town and *Barton*, called the *crofts*, they continually plow up stones and cement, which have all the usual appearance of being *Roman*: and besides the *Roman* inscriptions mentioned in *Camden*, I saw two other monuments of that nature my self, which I have described in their place;⁸ yet it is not easy now to discern the limits of the station. The field, in which the stones are now plowed up, looked to me rather like the place of the town, than the station. There appeared, as I thought, somewhat like two sides of a fort near the church. Perhaps the station, or part of it, has been destroyed, or washed away by the sea, towards which there is a very large prospect. . . The remains indeed are not so large and conspicuous, as might be expected in a *Notitia* station”—but he concludes that Moresby was in fact the *Arbeia* of the *Notitia*.

The next description comes in Hutchinson’s *Excursion to the Lakes*,⁹ published in 1776 (like Stukeley’s account), two or three years after his visit to the site:

⁷ *Britannia Romana*, p. 483.

⁸ Nos. 7 and 12 below.

⁹ Pp. 222-3. Nicolson & Burn (1777), ii 47-8, quote Camden and Horsley, but add nothing fresh.



- 1 The Roman Station at Moresby.
- 2 Burrenswark hill in Scotland on which was a Roman Station.

FIG. 1—(reduced from Isyons' double-page plate).

" A Roman station, yet very distinguishable, situate at the west end of the church, a square of one hundred and twenty paces, with obtuse angles, on an elevated plain near the brink of the sea banks. . . The vaults mentioned by Camden are not now to be seen. There are several recesses, cut on the sides of the hills, which to this day are called *Picts Holes*, and appear to have been habitations formed by building a sort of cabin against the mouth of a cave; miserable habitations indeed! being such as are described by travellers in countries the least cultivated." Eighteen years later, in his *History of Cumberland*,¹⁰ Hutchinson reverted to the subject; the main additions to his original account are as follows: " The area lies to the west and south-west of the church . . . commanding a large tract of shore, and many creeks now frequented by small craft. . . The west agger is very conspicuous and lofty, the southern one is on the edge of a high ridge, and distinct; the stones and mortar in many places breaking through the turf. The east agger is but low, but very observable; and the ditch is also discernable: the northern agger is much defaced by building the church and fencing in the burial ground. The interior part of the station has long been cultivated, and forms a beautiful field; which has no other fencing to the south, than what is formed by the agger. . . "

In 1816 the Lysons brothers published their volume on Cumberland, including an extensive essay on its Roman remains by the Bishop of Cloyne; his description of this fort¹¹ is merely a precis of Hutchinson's, but its lack of originality is more than made up for by the inclusion of a double page engraving of the site viewed from the south (here reproduced as fig. 1), showing the old church and Moresby Hall in addition, Lowca

¹⁰ Vol. ii (1794), pp. 90-1.

¹¹ P. cxliv.

hill beyond (still unspoiled by the workings of Harrington colliery), and the long range of the Scottish skyline beyond Solway Firth, on which a couple of sailing ships may be seen.¹² Samuel Lysons was the artist; would that he had provided more such views—for example, of Old Penrith, which was to be drastically denuded by seekers after stone a few years later; and in any case, within six years the church which he depicted here was to be pulled down, all but its chancel arch, to give place to the present structure.

A letter¹³ published in the *Carlisle Patriot* of 13 April 1822, dated Moresby 10 April and signed CLERICUS, is our next source: "The inhabitants of Moresby having formed a resolution to build a new church, and the site fixed upon being within the far-famed Roman Station there, I determined to be on the look-out for any antiquities that might tend to illustrate the dark period when those old heathens bore sway in Britain. On interrogating two labourers, who were busily engaged in digging for a foundation, I heard that they had hitherto discovered nothing but the remains of a wall, which, not being directly in their way, did not give them material interruption. One stone, however, or flag . . . was left untouched by them, as they had got to the required depth without having occasion to remove it. This I prevailed upon them to do; and was agreeably surprised to find on the other side a Roman inscription" (no. 1 below). The writer was the Rev. George Wilkinson,¹⁴ who presented the stone to the Earl of Lonsdale; nearly

¹² One of the hills on the Scottish skyline is wrongly identified as Burnswark—which is too far east to be visible from Moresby, and too small to stand out so prominently across a dozen miles of sea; it is in Kirkcudbrightshire that the true identification must be sought.

¹³ Referred to by Hodgson, *Hist. Northumb.* II iii (1840) 248; I am indebted to Mr T. Gray for a transcript of the letter, from the Tullie House file of the *Carlisle Patriot*.

¹⁴ The identification is based on a comparison of subject-matter and style with Wilkinson's later account, communicated to Bruce; cf. also Jefferson's *Allerdale Ward* (1842), pp.368-9.

twenty years later he communicated an account of the site, and of the discoveries made in 1822, to Samuel Jefferson, who included it in the *Additions and Corrections* at the end of his volume on Allerdale Ward:¹⁵

“ The northern boundary is no longer apparent above ground; nor could any traces of it be discovered by a local antiquary who broke the ground for that purpose some years ago. By far the strongest part of the station, judging by the remains, appears to have occupied the eastern line, possibly because that side was least favoured by nature. While the ramparts to the west and south, on being cut through, present nothing more than a slight admixture of stone with the turf, without any appearance of mortar, those on the east, on examination, disclose the foundations of a wall of great strength, grouted with hot lime and sand, and resisting the utmost efforts of the sexton’s pick and mattock. In the same direction have been considerable buildings, which also occupied the site of the present church yard. In 1822, when the foundations of the new church were dug, a great quantity of stones, flags, etc., was discovered, evidently the remains of a building, though not one stone had been left on another, that had not been thrown down. Underneath these, and deeply imbedded in one of the trenches, a large stone or flag was discovered, with its face downwards. . .” He notes that coins of Constantine and Constantius had been found on the site, and concludes: “ That the area of the station is rich in Roman antiquities, and would amply reward a search, the present writer, who has once or twice slightly explored it,¹⁶ entertains no doubt; though the richness and depth of the soil almost forbid all hope of a future attempt. The vicus, or town for the camp followers, lay, as usual, to the south of the station; the foundations of its walls were

¹⁵ Pp. 447-8.

¹⁶ This seems to identify Wilkinson with the “ local antiquary ” referred to earlier in the account.

very conspicuous a few years ago, when the neighbouring field was drained."

Twenty years later, in the spring of 1860, Mr Wilkinson himself had an opportunity of further excavation. The only published account comes in a paper contributed by Collingwood Bruce (who had included brief notes on Moresby in the first¹⁷ and second¹⁸ editions of his *Roman Wall*) to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne: ¹⁹ "The station is of the usual quadrilateral form, and contains about 3½ acres. . . The distance of the eastern from the western rampart is 440 feet, and of the northern from the southern 358 feet. . . Last winter, Lord Lonsdale directed that such investigations should be made into the station as were likely to reveal whatever was worth knowing, putting the excavations under the charge of the Rev. George Wilkinson, of Whicham. The north wall of the station, which was a point in dispute before, has been ascertained. The thickness in the foundation has been proved to be 5 ft. 11 in.; in the next course, 5 ft. 3 in.; and in the course above that, 4 ft. 9 in. The north-west angle of the station was laid bare, and was found to be rounded in the usual manner. The site of the northern gateway was also found. Several buildings in the interior of the camp were laid open; but some of these have evidently been of a date subsequent to the Roman era. Very few coins were found . . . some portions of the south gateway have been laid bare; and water-courses have been traced at the north gateway and at the south-west angle. . ." Bruce quotes from a letter written to him by Mr Wilkinson "at the close of his investigations," expressing disappointment at the scanty results; I have recently come across the original letter, and a number of MS. notes, by Bruce,

¹⁷ RW¹ (1851) pp. 366-7.

¹⁸ RW² (1853) pp. 345-7.

¹⁹ AA2 v 138-9; a brief summary, which gives a more pessimistic judgement on Wilkinson's results, is given in RW³ (1867) pp. 294-5.

of further information derived from Mr Wilkinson, which it will be convenient to print here, in order to complete the record of the excavation.²⁰

The letter is dated 21 March 1860, and reads as follows: "We have ceased our excavations at Moresby from despair of finding any thing likely to reward the noble proprietor of the field for the havoc made in it. The soil on the area of the camp, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres is most valuable, and as in every part where we have been there is incontestable evidence of every thing worth notice having been removed, I was unwilling to deprive the new tenant of the herbage. A foot here, and two feet there, of the Walls of the several apartments, with the upper stones thrown down and mixed with the soil, were all that was left even in places most likely to reward our labours. To have uncovered the area, as has been done at Bremenium, would have required more labourers and a longer time than I could command. By finding and laying bare the north wall, previously unknown, we have ascertained the size of the Camp, and this, I fear, is all that has been accomplished." But one of the MS. notes gives a less sombre picture: "In many parts of the camp walls and even apartments are left a yard high, and in one part towards the west a chamber of 45 ft. long and 15 ft. broad is found having strong walls not less than four feet high at a depth below the surface of six feet." In addition, the MS. notes mention the discovery of a number of coins "in making the new road near Moresby Hall some 20 years ago; the earliest Domitian the latest Constans," and describe the discovery of the inscription in 1821 (a slip of the pen for 1822) "some fifteen or twenty feet eastward of the Eastern Gateway—in fact in the very centre of the site of the present

²⁰ These papers are bound up in Bruce's working copy of the second edition of his *Roman Wall*, now preserved in the Durham University Library under reference X 913.42012; I am indebted to the University Librarian, Mr David Ramage, for permission to quote them here.

church''; and they add that Mr Wilkinson's operations were almost all inside the fort.

Whellan's *Cumberland and Westmorland*, published in 1860, had gone to press before these excavations took place; its account²¹ of the site of the fort itself is of no independent value, but it reports the discovery of several skeletons²² underneath the hall fireplace of Moresby Hall, "each being enclosed between four stones or slates": these burials may conceivably belong to one of the cemeteries of the fort, though there were no specific indications of Roman date found with them. Finally, in January 1882 William Jackson reported to the Society of Antiquaries²³ the discovery of a Roman altar "when making the cutting of a railway just below the site of the Roman Camp at Moresby," and of "a horned bust, of about 15 inches high, found in the same cutting" (nos. 5 and 13 below).

B. INSCRIPTIONS AND SCULPTURES.

Eight inscribed stones have been found at Moresby, and a ninth, found in the fabric of Harrington church, was doubtless originally taken from there; it will be convenient to number the sculptures in the same series. Most of the stones have long vanished, and none are now to be seen at Moresby itself.

I. C 362, LS 913; *Carlisle Patriot*, 13 April 1822 (p. 48 above); for some time kept at Whitehaven Castle, thence removed to Lowther Castle:

imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traiani Hadriani Aug(usti) p(atris) p(atriciae) leg(io) XX V(aleria) V(ictrix)—"The twentieth legion, (styled) Valeria Victrix, of the emperor Caesar Trajanus Hadrianus Augustus, father of his country." Hadrian only accepted the title *pater patriae* in A.D. 128, and though it occurs (incorrectly) on one or

²¹ P. 422.

²² P. 420.

²³ PSAL2 ix 62.

two inscriptions set up before that date (for example, on a milestone of A.D. 120²⁴ from near Leicester), on an official military record such as the present slab it may be taken with confidence as evidence for the *terminus post quem*: the inscription no doubt recorded the building of the east gate of the fort and hence of the fort itself, which may accordingly be dated within the decade A.D. 128-138 (since Hadrian died in the latter year). From Mr Wilkinson's accounts of the stone's discovery, quoted above, it seems possible that it had fallen outwards into the fort's east ditch when the gateway collapsed into ruin (compare the similar case of the Hadrianic inscription from the main west gate of Haltonchesters fort on Hadrian's Wall); but we cannot exclude the possibility that it had been re-used as a flagstone, upside down, in the floor of a late building well outside the line of the east rampart, for the findspot must be nearly thirty feet east of the outer face of the gateway.

2. C 366; Camden, 1586 ed., p. 452; seen by no subsequent writer.

coh(ortis) VII—" (Work) of the seventh cohort." The stone presumably served to record one cohort's share in the construction of the fort by the legion to which it belonged, namely the twentieth, in A.D. 128-138; compare the cases of Ribchester in Lancashire (C 227: *leg. XX* and 228: *coh. X*) and Lanchester in County Durham (C 447: *leg. XX*, 448: *coh. I* and 449: *coh. VIII*). There is no need to suppose that it was a mere fragment from a larger text mentioning *coh. VII [Thracum]*, known to have been stationed in Britain but not yet assignable to any particular fort.²⁵

3. C 359; Camden, 1600 ed., p. 691: " altar, lately

²⁴ C 1169.

²⁵ Diplomas: CIL xvi 69 and 82; 46 lead seals at Brough-under-Stainmore, CW2 xxxvi 117 f.

dug up, with a little horned image of Silvanus ";²⁶ seen by no other writer.

deo Silvan[o] coh. II Ling[on.] cui praees[t] G. Pompeius M. [f.] Saturnin[us] prae[ef.]. — "To the god Silvanus, the second cohort of Lingones, commanded by Gaius Pompeius Saturninus, son of Marcus, prefect." The style of the text suggests a date in the second century rather than the third, and the dedication to Silvanus can be matched by several second-century instances (for example, C 1081 from Newstead or C 1096 from Castlecary); the cohort was at Ilkley in Yorkshire at one time, probably during the period A.D. 161-169 at least, but the present inscription and no. 4 below may well be earlier than that date: in that case, *coh. II Lingonum* will be another instance of a cohort moved south soon after the middle of the second century, to take part in the general reoccupation of forts in the southern Pennines which is attested by epigraphy, pottery and structural evidence.²⁷ In the third century it returned to Cumberland, if its location at *Congavata* in the Notitia may be accepted as evidence for that period.²⁸ The prefect cannot be identified elsewhere; Pompeii Saturnini occur widely throughout the western provinces and in Italy, and his origin must remain uncertain.

4. EE vii 969; CWI ix p. 294, cf. AA2 xii p. 287; CW2 vi p. 153; found in 1885 in the fabric of Harrington church, some three miles north of Moresby (whence no doubt it had been carried by the mediaeval builders),

²⁶ "Et hanc aram, cum cornuta Silvani imaguncula nuper effossam ibi vidimus." I have not given the image of Silvanus a separate number in the inventory; it is conceivable that no. 13 below is part of a similar sculpture.

²⁷ Compare *coh. I Aquitanorum*, at Carrawburgh on Hadrian's Wall *circa* 130 (C 620a), at Brough on Noe in Derbyshire *circa* 158 (EE ix 1108); Mr John Gillam's detailed study of the pottery and structural evidence will, I hope, be published before long.

²⁸ *Not. Dig. Occ.* xl 48, *Congavata* (presumably Drumburgh); diplomas: CIL xvi 43, 69 and 70; inscriptions: C 208 (Ilkley), a lead seal from Brough-under-Stainmore (CW2 xxxvi 120) and the *cursus* of a second-century commander from Forum Sempronii in Italy (CIL xi 6123).

placed in the Black Gate Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne, before March 1887, and finally transferred to Netherhall, where it now is: none of the published readings is satisfactory, and I am indebted to Mr R. P. Wright for the following reading.

] *curan(te) Valerio Lup[e]rco praef(ecto) coh(ortis) II Ling(onum)*—"under the charge of Valerius Lupercus, prefect of the second cohort of Lingones." The lower part only of the text is preserved; as it stands, it suggests a record of building rather than a religious dedication, and though the stone has hitherto been described as part of an altar, there seems little doubt that it is really an inscribed panel once displayed on some building. The prefect may be a kinsman of the senator Q. Valerius Lupercus Iulius Frontinus who is attested by two inscriptions from Vienne in Provence;²⁹ Gallia Narbonensis may therefore have been his province of origin.

5. EE vii 967, Tullie House *Catalogue of Inscriptions*, 2nd ed. (1922), no. 19; PSAL2 ix p. 62; *Arch. Journal* xxxix p. 357; found *circa* 1878 "near the station at Moresby,"³⁰ first kept at Workington but now at Tullie House, Carlisle.

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | coh(ors) II T(h)ra [c(um)] | eq(uitata) c(ui) p(raest) Mani[li] | us Nepos pra | ef(ectus) — "To Jupiter Best and Greatest, the second cohort (part mounted) of Thracians, commanded by Manilius³¹ Nepos, prefect." The text is later in style than that of no. 3 above: note in particular the abbreviation *c. p.*, which is matched by third-century instances from Birdoswald;³² we need have no hesitation

²⁹ Cf. *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* III, V. 70.

³⁰ According to Jackson (PSAL2 ix 62), found in making a railway cutting immediately below (i.e. west of) the fort.

³¹ The reading of the *nomen* is mine; Haverfield read *Manius*, not allowing for letters missing where the surface of the stone has flaked away (in any case, there is nothing to recommend the acceptance of *Manius* as a *nomen*).

³² C 820 (= ILS 2553), 810, 813, 819, 821, 822, 823.

in assigning the altar to that period, and hence in accepting the identification of Moresby with the *Gabrosentum* of the Notitia.³³ At some time in the Antonine period the cohort was at Mumrills on the Scottish Wall; it occurs in the British diplomas for 103 and 122; this inscription and the two following are its only other records in Britain.³⁴ The prefect is otherwise unknown.

6. C 363, LS 914; apparently found at some time between 1850 and 1859,³⁵ but neither the date nor the precise find-spot can be traced; at Lowther Castle.

coh(ors) II T(h)raq(uum) fec(it)—"the second cohort of Thracians made (this)." The stone is closer in style to the centurial type than to the elaborate slabs placed on gateways or headquarters buildings or granaries, such as no. 1 above; it must record work on the fort wall or some relatively unimportant building within the fort. The lettering is so crude that it cannot well be used as evidence for date; note the mis-spelling of the ethnic title.

7. C 364; Stukeley, p. 53, cf. RW² (1853), p. 347 (giving Stukeley's unpublished reading of the text, from his MS. note then in the possession of C. Roach Smith); Horsley, p. 285; not seen since Horsley's day, when it was in use as a stile "in a field called *Ingclose*, a little east of *Moresby hall*": fig. 2 (from Horsley, Cumberland lxxv).

d(is) m(anibus) Smert[ri]o Mac[ri f(ilio)] m(iliti) coh(ortis) I[I T]hrac[um e]q(uitatae), stip(endiorum) [X]X, vicsit [an(nos) X]XXX, Qu[— —] "sacred to the memory of Smertrius, son of Macer, soldier of the second (part mounted) cohort of Thracians, of twenty

³³ *Not. Dig. Occ.* xl 50.

³⁴ Mumrills: C 1091 with EE ix p. 623; diplomas: CIL xvi 48 and 69; the only other record is ILS 9090, of the period when the cohort was still in Upper Germany.

³⁵ According to one of Bruce's MS. notes, it was exhibited at the Carlisle meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute in 1859; it was clearly unknown to him when his first account of the site was compiled.

years' service, he lived forty years. Qu— (his heir, set this up)." The exact wording of the text cannot be recovered with certainty, but the foregoing reading seems at least an improvement on any put forward hitherto. Stukeley's account and Horsley's drawing combine to show that one or two letters are missing at each end of every line but the first, and Horsley adds: "I believe that the inscription has been continued farther at the bottom;" Stukeley calls it the "monumental



FIG. 2 (after Horsley)

stone of an old man; for such seems to be the head cut in the *tympanum* above." *Smertrius* seems preferable to *Smertalus* (C 364—apparently invented by Huebner: at least Holder³⁶ has no other instance of the latter name to quote); *Qu—* at the close is presumably the beginning of the heir's name, to be expected at this point in the text, rather than *quinque* written out in full, as Horsley took it to be. The inscription cannot well be later than the time of Severus, since the dead man has the single name of a *peregrinus*, and after A.D. 212 we should expect

³⁶ *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz, sub voce.*

him to have received Roman citizenship and a Roman *nomen*; whether it is earlier than that period cannot be judged. *Smertrius* is a Celtic name, recently studied by R. Egger;³⁷ the Thracian cohort's Brigantian soldier buried at Mumrills is thus matched by a Gaul or Briton at Moresby: it had been too long in Britain to retain a Thracian element amongst its rank and file.

8. C 365; Camden, 1586 ed., p. 452; seen by no subsequent writer.

"*Lucium Severinum ordinatum*"—"Lucius Severinus, company commander." Camden describes this as one of several fragmentary inscriptions, and we must take it (unlike no. 2 above) to be part of a longer text—probably an epitaph like no. 7 above; it does not appear whether the words were in fact in the accusative case, as the construction of Camden's Latin sentence required, or whether they were in fact written out in full. The term *ordinatus* occurs sporadically in the second and third centuries in substitution for *centurio* on inscriptions relating to auxiliary cohorts;³⁸ it cannot on present evidence be used as evidence for a particular date, and it remains uncertain whether this was an officer of the Lingones or of the Thracians.

9. C 360; Camden, 1607 ed., p. 631; communicated to Camden, some time after his visit to the site in 1599, by J. Fletcher of Moresby; not seen by any later writer.

]ob prosperitatem culminis instituti — "to celebrate the success of the roof built." Camden records that the inscription was a fragment, while his wood-cut suggests that it is the second half of a fairly short text: the name of some deity must have come first, and there can have been no room for the name of the dedicator. It is an interesting and unusual inscription, presumably from some shrine in the village outside the fort.

³⁷ *Wiener Jahreshefte* xxxv (1943) 100 f.; the whole paper is of very great interest to the student of Celtic religion.

³⁸ Cf. C 404 (Maryport); C 1078 with EE ix p. 615 (Birrens—assignable to the period 158-196).

10. CW1 ix p. 294, cf. AA2 xii p. 287; CW2 vi p. 153; history as no. 4 above. Described by J. B. Bailey as "apparently the right hand portion of the top of an altar. . . An ornamental band runs across the top, and then some eight inches down the right side. Assuming that the same band was on the left side, the space included between these lines was taken up with three sunk panels, each some two inches wide. . ."

11. Bruce, RW¹ (1851), p. 366; RW² (1853), p. 345, with figure from sketches made by John Mackinlay of Whitehaven in 1850;³⁹ formerly built into the wall of the old church at Moresby, on its demolition placed under its surviving chancel arch, and at some time after 1853 removed to Lowther Castle, where it now is. Sculptured fragment, perhaps part of an altar; on one face is Mars to front, with his left hand resting on his shield, and his right hand holding, just below its head, a spear the butt of which rests on a globe by his right foot; the other original face shows a partly draped male figure to front, wearing a pleated kilt and with a plaid or the like covering his left shoulder, leaving his right breast and arm bare: his right hand holds an indeterminate object, below which stands a pigmy bull to front. Two of the original faces and the top of the stone have been trimmed away.

12. Stukeley, p. 53; Horsley, p. 286 and Cumberland lxxvi (here reproduced as fig. 3); once used as a stile in a field east of Moresby Hall, close to no. 7 above; recorded by no later writer. The upper part of a sculptured tombstone, of which Horsley has a brief description as well as a drawing, while Stukeley provides an account which deserves to be quoted: "it was a monument of some young Roman, but pretty much worn: he is robed with a *toga*, and holds a scroll in his

³⁹ The original sketches are preserved in Bruce's working copy in the University Library at Durham (cf. footnote 20 above).

right hand, to denote his being a scholar, perhaps a pleader, a disciple of the famous Papinian. I could not see to the bottom of it, where probably is an inscription."



FIG. 3 (after Horsley).

13. W. Jackson in PSAL2 ix, p. 62; found "when making a cutting of a railway just below the site of the Roman Camp at Moresby" together with no. 5 above, seen at Workington in December 1881, and now at Tullie House (*Catalogue of Inscriptions*, 2nd ed. (1922) no. 147, cf. 1st ed. (1899) no. 20 and fig. 4). "Horned head and bust in grey sandstone . . . 12 in. high, broken below. It is supposed to be Roman; the dress is peculiar." I have nothing to add to Haverfield's description, except that there seems no reason to doubt the Roman origin of the piece.

14. JRS XXXV (1945) p. 81; found in 1944 in the churchyard. "A stone with a wreath, swags, and palm-leaves carved on it" (reported by Miss Mary C. Fair).

15. Unpublished; found in 1947 in the churchyard, and presented by Mr J. B. Jackson to Tullie House Museum, where it now is. An uninscribed altar, 19 inches high.

C. COINS.

The record of coins from the site and its immediate neighbourhood is brief and unsatisfactory. Stukeley,

p. 53, speaks of many coins having been found there, and Bruce records that "very few coins" were found in 1860 but gives no identifications; we are left with the following specific items:

1. Domitian (MS. note by Bruce, p. 51 above), found *circa* 1840 near Moresby Hall and thus outside the fort.
2. Constantine (Wilkinson in Jefferson's *Allerdale Ward*, 1842, p. 49 above).
3. Constantius (as no. 2).
4. Constans (as no. 1).
5. Constans (exhibited to this Society in 1924, CW2 xxv p. 351: a "small brass").

Nos. 2-5 at least indicate occupation in the first half of the fourth century if not later; no. 1 might well have continued in circulation into the middle of the second century, so that it cannot be taken as evidence for pre-Hadrianic occupation of the site. I should add that our member Miss Mary C. Fair reports that a former incumbent of Moresby, now dead, claimed all coins found in the churchyard as his perquisites, and took them away with him when he left.

D. POTTERY.

There is no record of any pottery found in Wilkinson's extensive excavations in 1860, nor have successive sextons at Moresby accumulated any while digging graves, but Mr J. B. Jackson has succeeded in rescuing a small group of material from the churchyard during the last year or two, and it will be convenient to publish it as a group here.

(a) *Samian ware*. (Fig. 4).

1. Several pieces of a bowl, Dr. 37, in free-style, attributable with certainty to the potter CINNAMVS, the one Lezoux potter who can be traced using all the figure-types (*lion and boar* O.1491, *lion* to 1. O.1421, *lioness* to 1. O.1507, *panther* to 1. O.1518, *panther* to 1. O.1570,

stag to r. O.1720, horse to l. O.1976, dog to l. O.1980, pigmy O.696A and the *ovolo* with *bead-row* below); the drawing gives the outline of the largest piece, and adds details from detached fragments.

2. Part of a similar bowl in the easily recognisable style of ALBVCIVS of Lezoux (*Venus* O.286, *astragali*

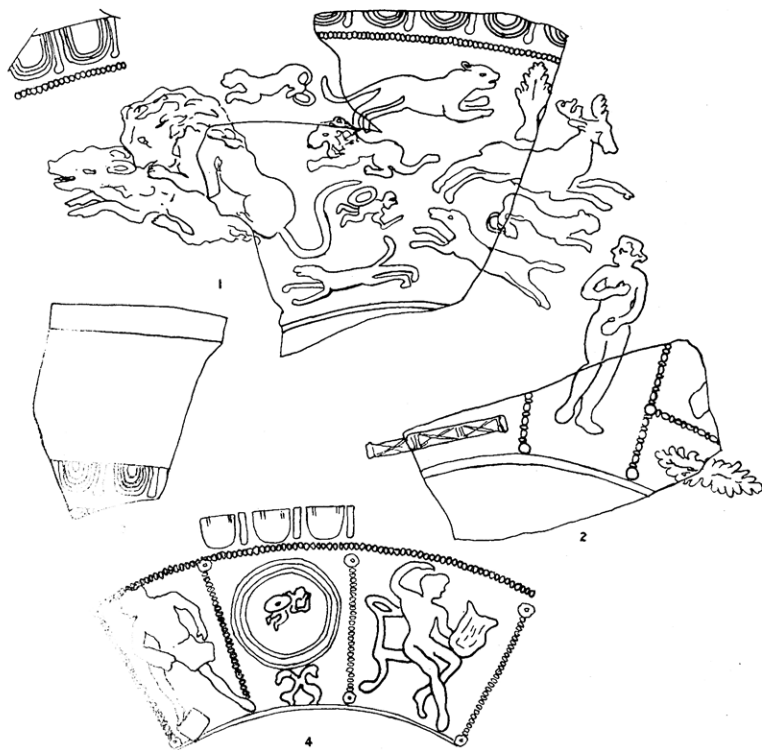


FIG. 4 (2).

in series as dividing lines with plain *circles* at junctions and ends, *conjoined leaves* and *column ornament* characteristic of this potter).

3. Rim-fragment showing *ovolo* and *bead-row* below, of an indeterminate Lezoux type which may also be assigned to CINNAMVS or a closely related potter.

4. About half of a small bowl, Dr. 37, also attributable to CINNAMVS (*Vulcan* to l. O.66 but lacking his tongs, *Apollo* to r. O.83, a reduced version of the same *pigmy* as in no. 1 above, a rather featureless *ovolo* and *bead-rows* with crude *rosette* terminals); it comes from a worn mould, and the figure-types themselves are reduced copies, impressed with worn stamps, of the original types: the bowl must represent the closing stages of this firm's activity. Mr Jackson has presented it to Tullie House Museum, where its reference number is 3-1947.1.

5. Portion of platter, Dr. 18/31, with potter's stamp CANAIM. Dr Oswald, in his *Index of Potters' Stamps*, has only two examples from Britain of this potter's work, a Dr. 33 from London and an unrecorded form from Corbridge; the potter's name was CANAVS or CANAVVS, and Dr Oswald assigns him conjecturally to Vichy, and dates him provisionally to the time of Hadrian: but the occurrence of his stamp at Corbridge does not accord with a Hadrianic date, and there seems no reason to date the present platter earlier than the figured bowls, nos. 1-3 above.

The whole group may be assigned to the Antonine period, and with the exception of no. 4, which is somewhat later, may well fall into the period c. 140-160.

(b) *Coarse pottery*. (Fig. 5).

I am indebted to Mr J. P. Gillam for the following notes, and for the accompanying figure.

"Rather more than a dozen fragments of coarse pottery have been submitted to me; four of them are large enough to leave no doubt as to the type of vessel concerned, and these I illustrate in fig. 5. The smaller fragments are not worth drawing, but their fabrics are in each case of a type common in the north of Britain in the period from Hadrian to the end of the third century; there is nothing pre-Hadrianic, and nothing assignable to the fourth century. Notes on the illustrations follow.

1. Rim of an amphora; buff, sandy fabric with pinkish tinge, self-coloured throughout. Amphora rim-sections are of no help in dating, but serve to show which type of vessel is in question, in this case the globular amphora usually assignable to the southern Spanish oil trade; its handles will have been thick, circular in section, and probably bearing on one the stamp of the *figlina* (pottery) in which the vessel was

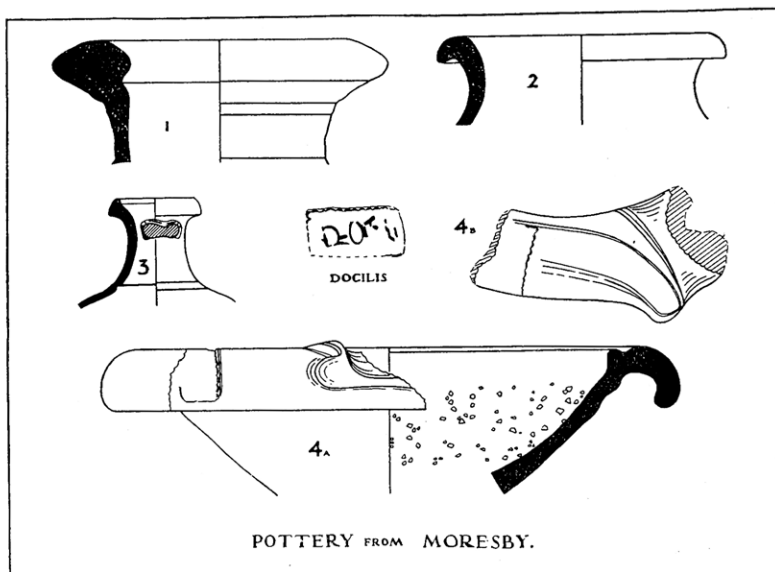


FIG. 5 (1/2).

made, and on the other the stamp of the exporting firm which shipped the oil. The period of maximum importation of southern Spanish globular amphorae and their contents into the north of Britain may be set at A.D. 130-196.

2. Fragment of rim of a narrow-mouthed jar; orange fabric with reddish burnished surface. The nearest parallels to the shape are *Balmuildy* pl. xlv 1 (almost

certainly Antonine) and an unpublished example from a second-century context at Binchester; a vessel of the same class comes from a deposit of A.D. 162-196 at Corbridge (AA4 xv, fig. 9, 3).

3. Complete neck of a single-handled flagon, the upper portion of the flat, single-ribbed handle remaining; light grey ware, fairly hard and smooth. This type of flagon rim is quite distinct from, though probably contemporary with the later developments of, the screw-neck flagon. A close parallel to the shape, though in a different colour, comes from Milecastle 50 on the Turf Wall, showing that the type had already developed by c. A.D. 125; the present piece may be dated A.D. 120-140.

4. Fragment of rim and wall of a mortarium, with half the spout and the greater part of one of the potter's stamps surviving; hard, brick-red ware with traces of cream slip; the grit is sparse and large, mostly light brown but mixed with white and grey. The piece is also drawn in plan, to illustrate the type of spout. The stamp is one of two stamp types used by the north-western potter DOCILIS, for whom cf. CW2 xlvii 119 (Cardurnock); it may be noted that the wares of this potter were in use during the early Antonine period, but that they were already on the market before the building of the Antonine Wall.

The four pieces here discussed all belong to Wall period I (A.D. 125-196), and there is no compelling reason why the undrawn scraps should not be assigned to the same period."

It will be seen that there is no pottery which need be earlier than c. A.D. 128, the date of the Hadrianic building-inscription which presumably records the construction of the existing fort; but chance finds within the churchyard are not likely to include material from the lowest levels, and the possibility of still earlier occupation cannot yet be excluded.

E. THE SITE (Fig. 6).

The fort stands on a flat-topped hill, just above the 100-ft. contour, from which there are steep slopes northward to Lowca Beck and westward to the shore; to south there is at first a slight dip, but thereafter the ground rises steadily to the main road (Workington-Whitehaven, whence Lysons' view, fig. 1, was taken), and beyond it to a summit of more than 500 ft. south-east of Quality Corner; to east there is a pronounced drop to the hollow now occupied by Moresby Hall and its gardens and thence to the upper reaches of the Lowca Beck, and it is when one approaches from inland, along the road from Workington, that one gets the strongest impression of the fort standing up on a hill, against the skyline. Its long axis lies approximately east and west; of the 440 ft. length which Wilkinson's excavations established for it, some 190 ft. are within the churchyard and 250 ft. in the pasture field to the west of it, in which Wilkinson's excavations were conducted; that means to say that the north and south gates which he found, of which no remains are now to be seen, must have been nearer the west than the east end of the fort, which itself faced seawards—as was the case with the other coastal forts further north, Maryport and Beckfoot and Bowness-on-Solway.⁴⁰ Its area of some $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres provided comfortable accommodation for a part-mounted cohort five hundred strong; of the two cohorts of that type attested here by inscriptions, it seems tolerably certain that *coh. II Lingonum* occupied the fort for a time during the second century, and *coh. II Thracum* during the third: and in view of the regularity with which third-century inscriptions tally with Notitia entries in the list *per lineam*

⁴⁰ Maryport: CW2 xxxvi 87; Beckfoot: *ibid.* 78; Bowness: CW2 xxxi 141. On a clear day it is the tangled hills of the Stewartry, across the blue waters of Solway, which first attract the eyes of a spectator standing at any of these places—even at Bowness, despite its nearer view of the Dumfriesshire coastline and Burnswark due north of it.

Valli,⁴¹ we shall be justified in inferring that the latter cohort's station according to that list, *Gabrosentum*, gives us the Roman name of Moresby. The name itself is an interesting and appropriate one; *gabro-* means he-goat and *senton* a road or path,⁴² and "goat's path" might well describe the way up the steep slope from the shore to the summit selected for the fort: and, incidentally, it may be suggested that the name was given to the site by someone arriving there by sea, and thus getting the most impressive view of the place and its eponymous he-goat. But it must be remembered that the name is Celtic in origin, though its termination has been romanised from *-on* to *-um*, and it may well have been assigned to the place long before the Romans arrived there.

When this Society visited Moresby in 1924, the then rector exhibited some local finds: these comprised one or two Roman objects, and in addition some flints, including an arrow-head, and a bronze spear-head, found in 1892 north of the church and outside the east wall of the fort.⁴³ Here we have at least a suggestion of native occupation of the site, before the arrival of its first Roman garrison (though it must not be forgotten that in this backwater of Roman Britain there may well have been people still in a Bronze Age culture when the Romans entered the district); it is unfortunate that the present whereabouts of these objects cannot be traced: they have never been illustrated or described, as far as I have been able to discover.

The Hadrianic inscription, as we have seen, proves that a fort was built here in or shortly after A.D. 128, and at present there is no compelling reason, on a scrutiny of the known finds from Moresby, to assume Roman occupation of the site before that period; but reference

⁴¹ Cf. CW2 xxxix 210 f. and a forthcoming paper by Mr. Gillam, which will, I hope, appear in the next volume of these *Transactions*.

⁴² *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, *sub voce*.

⁴³ CW2 xxv 351.

to the Roman road-system of the district (fig. 7), in so far as it is known or can be inferred with some confidence, seems to suggest that it was a key-site from the very outset: for the main road south-westward from Carlisle, past Old Carlisle and Papcastle, heads directly for

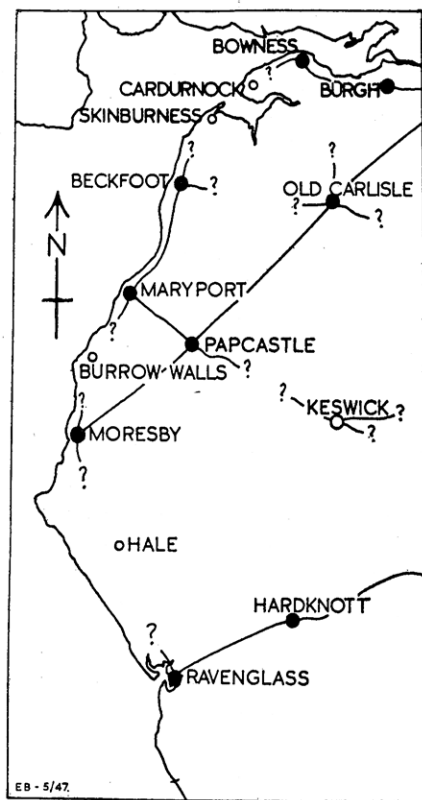


FIG. 7.—The road system.

Moresby, whereas Maryport (often regarded as its terminus) lies off the direct line, and is only connected with it by a branch road from Papcastle. The coastal road northwards to Maryport, Beckfoot and Bowness was presumably constructed at the same time as the system of mile-fortlets and signal-towers, in continuation

of Hadrian's Wall along the Cumberland coast,⁴⁴ and a southward extension of it towards Ravenglass may be postulated with some confidence; but a good deal of field-work will have to be done before we can be sure of the precise course of this road in any of its sectors, and most of the work will have to be done by people living in the district.

At Moresby itself the outstanding problems are two-fold. A certain amount of digging will be needed in the fort, to recover particulars of the structures already examined by Wilkinson, but never planned, and to establish the sequence of structural periods; it seems clear that there was considerable reconstruction here in the latter part of the Roman period, for the buildings which Bruce or Wilkinson thought to be evidently later than the Roman era, were doubtless the rough and ready work of Constantian or Theodosian reconstruction, such as we have learnt to expect in the Roman forts of our district—and there is sufficient coin evidence to show that Moresby was still occupied during the fourth century. But from the time of Hadrian onwards, the history of this fort will have been, broadly speaking, the same as that of any other link in the Hadrianic frontier system, and there is no great need for its upper levels to be examined, once the structural sequence has been determined; it is in the lowest level that the main problem can be solved, namely the period when the site was first occupied, and whether the Hadrianic fort was the first Roman structure here, or merely the re-building in stone of a fort established in the Flavian period. With luck, one or two sections through the defences should be sufficient to establish the structural sequence, and it is to be hoped that the Cumberland Excavation Committee may be able to devote a short campaign to this

⁴⁴ For the coastal fortlets and towers cf. now CW2 xlvii 78 f.; for the coastal road it will be sufficient for the time being to refer to CW2 xxxvi 87 f., but a fresh field-survey is badly needed.

problem within measurable time; re-examination of the two gateways could conveniently take place concurrently, and the work would give an opportunity for some of our members in the district to get experience of excavation.

Outside the fort there is a wider range of problems for attention. First of all, the external settlement is far less well known than it should be. We cannot identify one of the "Picts' holes" which gave the site its earliest claim to distinction, nor can we judge as yet how large or important the settlement was; there is certainly less room available here than at Maryport, where there is reason to suppose the growth of a town rather than a village during the latter part of the Roman period:⁴⁵ but there have been several buildings in the field south of the fort, from one of which, barely a dozen yards from the south rampart, Mr J. B. Jackson recovered a considerable collection of roofing tiles when the ground was broken recently to allow the insertion of a telephone pole; the building had cement floors, and may conceivably have been a bath-house, though the name "Sooty Field," attached to the next field, adjoining the main road,⁴⁶ seems to suggest the discovery of smoke-blackened hypocaust pillars there, and the existence of a bath-house at a greater distance from the fort. If ever this field should be selected for a building project, it will be necessary to arrange for careful excavation there; otherwise, the examination of this settlement may safely be deferred until the day when the site as a whole comes into the custody of the Ancient Monuments Department, as we must hope that it may eventually do. But there is more pressing need for attention to the roads leading away from the fort, as a basis for the larger problem of the Roman roads in West Cumberland; the road which led north-eastward towards Papcastle should be the easiest to pick up, between the Lowca Beck

⁴⁵ Cf. R. G. Collingwood, *The Roman Fort and Settlement at Maryport*, CW2 xxxvi, particularly pp. 88-94.

⁴⁶ Information from Mr. J. B. Jackson.

and the modern main road—where Stukeley and Horsley saw the two tombstones doing duty as stiles: it may be presumed that this road, at least, was flanked by cemeteries, which may yet yield evidence for the history of the site, even if they do not provide us with further inscriptions. To northwards there has been so much interference, what with roads and railways, colliery workings and houses, that there seems little prospect of the coastal road being picked up within half a mile of the fort; but on the south side there is a far better chance of finding it, and here investigation of the road might well produce, incidentally, evidence for buildings in the settlement and cemeteries beyond its limits, in addition. Judging by Joseph Robinson's discoveries at Beckfoot,⁴⁷ the road will have issued from the south gate of the fort, and have crossed the line of the modern road down to Parton close to the west end of Moresby Terrace (see fig. 6), leaving the bulk of the external settlement on its east side. Finally there is the problem of the Roman harbour. It is hardly to be believed that it was not the usefulness of Parton Bay as a harbour which first attracted the Romans to the place; but the industrial age has not been kind to us, and the prospect of structural remains of the Roman harbour being recovered can only be of the very slightest: yet local observers may perhaps be able to recover isolated Roman material from the mouth of the Lowca Beck, or on the foreshore.

It remains for me to express my thanks to Miss Mary C. Fair, Mr J. B. Jackson and Mr R. D. McCowan for their assistance in the study of the site, and to Messrs. J. P. Gillam, T. Gray, R. Hogg and R. P. Wright for help in interpreting finds from it; and to emphasize my hope that some of our members who live in the Whitehaven district may soon be able, in the light of the case here stated, to add appreciably to our knowledge of Roman Moresby.

⁴⁷ Cf. CW2 xxxvi 78-9.