

ART. VIII – *Lord William Howard and the Naworth-Rokeby Collection of inscribed Roman Stones*

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DURING the early 17th century Lord William Howard assembled a significant collection of inscribed Roman stones, mainly altars and building stones, in the garden of his home at Naworth Castle. These came from the fort at Birdoswald and adjacent sections of the Wall. Howard was a scholar and antiquarian, and a friend to William Camden and Robert Cotton. He contributed information to Camden's *Britannia*, and his Naworth collection was one of a small number of important, early collections of antiquities in England. The collection was neglected after Howard's death, and was later moved to Rokeby in North Yorkshire, where part of it remains today. Although the details of individual inscriptions in the Naworth collection are referenced in Collingwood and Wright's monumental *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*,¹ there has been no attempt to study the history of the collection from its inception to the present day. That is the aim of this paper, tracing a narrative from Howard's first days at Naworth through to the present situation, the remarkable survival of much of the collection, and bringing together the various scattered printed and manuscript sources. Throughout the paper, individual inscribed stones are identified by their *RIB* numbers from Collingwood and Wright's catalogue. Lord William's collection was a significant one, and it deserves more attention and recognition.

Lord William Howard and Naworth

Lord William Howard was born in 1563 as the third son of Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, who was executed for treason in 1572. As a child he was betrothed to Lady Elizabeth Dacre, one of two Dacre heiresses. They later married and their Dacre inheritance of Gilsland and Naworth was to become the major focus of their later life. However, the Howard family remained under suspicion as long as Queen Elizabeth reigned, and Lord William, a Catholic, spent several years imprisoned in the Tower of London.² His wife's inheritance was disputed by her Dacre uncles, and it was not until the accession of James I in 1603 that Lord William and his wife gained effective possession of their Cumbrian estates. After 1603, Lord William made Naworth Castle his home, restoring it and improving the estates, and he lived there until his death in 1640. His "Household Books", edited for the Surtees Society in the 19th century, reveal the details of his life there, the purchases for the house and the transporting of furnishing, pictures and books from London to the far north.³ As a Catholic, Lord William played a less significant role in the border politics of James I's reign than has sometimes been ascribed to him (notably by Sir Walter Scott), but his presence and firm management, of what had been a rather leaderless and ungoverned part of the border, made an important contribution to the growth of stability and legality in the region.⁴

Howard was a considerable scholar and antiquarian, collecting books and

manuscripts. In 1592 he published an edition of Florence of Worcester's *Chronicron ex Chronicris*. Before his move to Cumberland, he had been an active member of antiquarian circles in London, and knew William Camden and Robert Cotton well. Indeed, his favourite daughter Margaret, whom Lord William described as "the childe that from her infancie did never displease me", married Robert Cotton's eldest son Thomas. After 1603 he moved his library of books and manuscripts to Naworth.⁵ At Naworth, Howard was joined by a Catholic friend and fellow scholar, the Cornishman Nicholas Roscarrock. Roscarrock had also been in the Tower, where he had been put to the rack. There he and Lord William had met. The two became lifelong friends and Roscarrock later joined the Naworth household, living there until his death in 1633.⁶

Camden, *Britannia* and the Roman Wall

William Camden's *Britannia*, published in 1586, was the first major survey of the history and antiquities of Britain, and certainly the start of a discovery of the legacy of the Roman province of Britannia. The work transformed historical and archaeological knowledge in Britain, and it remains the foundational work for the study of Roman inscriptions in Britain. Camden based his study on documents, information from correspondents around the country, and his own travels. From the 1570s onwards he made several major tours around the English countryside, but it was not until 1599 that he came as far north as Cumberland and the Roman Wall. In that year he and Robert Cotton came to Old Penrith, to the Cumbrian coast at Moresby and Ellenborough (where they saw the magnificent altars unearthed by John Senhouse), and then to Carlisle and the Roman Wall.⁷

From Carlisle they journeyed eastwards, to the south of the Wall itself, and came to Naworth. But in 1599 Lord William Howard had not gained possession of Naworth and the castle was still unoccupied. Camden's 1600 edition of *Britannia* says simply, "Naworth est castrum, nuper Baronum de Dacre". From Naworth, Camden and Cotton went straight to the crossing of the Irthing at Willowford, collecting some inscriptions there, but missing out the Roman fort of Birdoswald itself and the rich store of inscriptions to be found there.⁸ They then entered Northumberland, and observed a stretch of the Wall before turning south and following the low road through Haltwhistle and Hexham. The inscriptions collected at Willowford were *RIB* 1876, 1887, 1889 and 1911. Three of these can still be seen today, a notable feature given the high loss rate of inscriptions found in or before 1600. Two (*RIB* 1887 and 1889) became part of the Naworth collection and now are at Rokeby, the other (*RIB* 1911) is at Corby Castle.

Camden, Cotton and Howard

Camden had a number of northern correspondents who sent him details of inscriptions and other antiquities. In Cumberland, Oswald Dykes had supplied him with information for the first edition of *Britannia*, and continued to do so, also accompanying Camden and Cotton for part of their 1599 tour. His key correspondent at this time was, however, Reginald Bainbrigg, headmaster of the

grammar school at Appleby.⁹ Camden and Bainbrigg did not meet on the 1599 tour, for Bainbrigg was himself travelling round Roman sites on or beyond the Wall. His travel reports of 1599 and 1601 provided Camden with a host of new inscriptions for his next edition in 1607, and several of the additions became items in Robert Cotton's collection of inscribed stones at Conington. Altogether, Bainbrigg's reports generated 22 new inscriptions for the 1607 edition. In particular, for the present purposes of the Naworth-Rokeby collection, Bainbrigg reported three altars from Birdoswald (*RIB* 1875, 1885 and 1893) and a Birdoswald building stone (*RIB* 1916), which appeared in the 1607 edition.

After 1603 Camden and Cotton also had Lord William Howard present in the Roman Wall region and able to send information. In the 1607 edition, Camden repeated his note about Naworth castle – “Naworth est castrum, nuper Baronum de Dacre”, adding “nunc Guilielmi Howard (quem dixi) qui restaurat”.¹⁰ He also included inscriptions sent to him by Howard, here quoted from the 1610 English translation:

Beneath this [Mote, by Brampton] and by Castle steeds, like as at Tredermain joining unto it, were found these inscriptions exemplified for me by the hand of the right honorable Lord William Howard of Naworth, third sonne unto Thomas late Duke of Norfolk, a singular lover of venerable antiquity and learning withall, who in these parts in right of his wife, a sister and one of the heires of the last Lord Dacre, enjoys the faire possession.¹¹

Amongst Camden's papers, collected and preserved with Robert Cotton's manuscripts, are a substantial number of letters to Camden (and Cotton) reporting finds of inscriptions and other antiquities. These include the Bainbrigg reports already referred to. They also include two anonymous reports that seem to emanate from Lord William Howard and his associates. The first is a series of roughly jotted inscriptions on the reverse of a sheet containing two inscriptions in Camden's hand.¹² The list describes a number of Birdoswald altars: *RIB* 1898, 1906[?], 1907, 1965, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1993, and 1911. The majority of these stones later appear in the collection at Naworth, and so it is reasonable to assume that the report came from someone associated with Howard and that they mark the inception of the Naworth collection. The second report lists several of the same items (*RIB* 1907, 1970, 1974, 1993) but adds a number already noted by Bainbrigg (*RIB* 1875, 1887, 1916, 1999) and two new ones (*RIB* 1906, 1944).¹³ The two additions are building stones, one is titled “Tredermaine from Birdoswald, 18 Septembr 1604” (*RIB* 1944) and the other “from Tredermaine castle”. Who actually wrote these letters remains a mystery: the specimens reproduced by Haverfield do not readily match specimens of Howard's or Roscarrock's hands, but it seems highly unlikely that the letters did not originate in the Naworth household.

Neither of these letters is reflected in details of the new inscriptions in the 1607 *Britannia*, even though the second note includes an inscription dated 1604. The letters may therefore date from after 1607. The letters themselves did not enter the published literature until Huebner examined them in the 1860s for his *Corpus*.¹⁴ The inscriptions may be part of the substantial number claimed in two letters for which the authors are known: Nicholas Roscarrock in 1607 and Lord William Howard himself in 1608. Roscarrock wrote to Camden in 1607:

Understanding (good Mr. Clarenceulx) that your Britayne ys at this present in printine, and redde to come forthe, I thought fitt (in a small showe of our ancient love) to geve you notice of twoe escapes in the last edition. The one is Cornwall (f.156), where you make S. Columbanus, a manne, to gyve name unto S. Columbes: whereas in truthe it taketh name of Columba, a woman saint, who was a Virgyne and Martyre, whose lyfe I have in my handes, translated out of cornishe; besydes, the day of her Feaste differeth from the Feaste of S. Columbanus, or S. Columba, the Scottish or Irishe. The seconde is an inscription which you have of the twoe Philippes (699), which you had at Thoresby in Cumberlande, in which you were misinformed, both for the fashion and forme of the stoane, being four tymes as longe as broade, though my Lord William, who hath yt now, with a great many more, in his garden-wall at Nawarde, where he woulde be gladde to see you, to reede them, hath made yt shorter: as also for the lines and letters, which I have sent you heere enclosed, drawn out by our good Lorde's owne hands; and would have sent you some more, but that we thincke yt to late, and that you meane not to overcharge your booke with to many of thate kinde. I also sende you heere an inscription which my Lord founde out in a Crosse in a greene before the Abbey-church of Lanner-coaste; which though yt be since the conquest, yeat yt is (for the rarenesse) not to be contemned. Yf you have any occasion to speak of the Cross of Buechastell, I assure my selfe the inscription of one syde ys, Hubert de Vaux; . . .¹⁵

Similar tantalising promises of new inscriptions in the expanding Naworth collection are made in a letter from Lord William to Sir Robert Cotton. Howard acted as an intermediary in Cotton's acquisition of inscribed stones from the Wall and from Redesdale in Northumberland. In a letter of 1608, he writes to Cotton about the difficulties of getting adequate transport in the wet weather and then in the busiest time of the farming year, eventually using his own large wagons. He then continues:

For that I much feare I shall not this yeare see you in these extreame partes, I thought good to informe you in generall but not to mention in any particuler that I have gotten and know weare to have heere about me at least 12 stones, most of them are faire inscriptions that you have not yett heard of, and your pennance shalbe to come your self and pick out the contents before you get any knowledg of them. And so earnestly desiringe so much happines as once to see you in this cold regeon. I will evermore rest your professed frend William Howard (Naward Castle, 13 Augusti, 1608).¹⁶

These two letters show that Howard had started his collection of inscribed stones at Naworth. Roscarrock's letter refers to the octagonal milestone, "the twoe Philippes", originally found by the road at Old Carlisle about 1564. Camden had seen this in 1599 at Thursby, but by 1607 Howard had collected it to his garden at Naworth. Howard himself, in his letter to Cotton, refers to "at least 12 stones" he has collected. Undoubtedly several of these are inscriptions from Birdoswald given in the two anonymous letters.

After 1608 Howard continued to send details of inscriptions and antiquities to Camden and Cotton. A letter from Nicholas Cowper, dated 5 May 1609 and addressed "To the right noble Willm Howard sonne of the right honorable Wm Lord Howard Baron of Gillesland att Naworth", is to be found amongst the Camden letters, presumably forwarded by Howard.¹⁷ It contains an altar from near Brampton (*RIB* 2066). In a little booklet of Camden's manuscript notes and drawings of inscriptions, there is a drawing of a Catterick inscription with the note "By the L. William Howard neare Caterick 1622".¹⁸ Inserted into Camden's own copy of the 1607 *Britannia* is a manuscript note, probably in Robert Cotton's hand, saying "I receaved this morning a ston from my lord of Arundell sent him from my Lord William it was the head of a Cross at Bewcastell".¹⁹

Howard's letter of 1608 claimed "at least 12 stones" with new inscriptions in his

garden at Naworth. The two anonymous letters contain ten new items, all contenders as Naworth acquisitions. There are also six inscriptions catalogued by Camden in 1607 or earlier, which appear later at Naworth. In addition there are a small number of further inscriptions, which appear in reports of the Naworth collection at various dates. There may be other items never reported, perhaps too illegible by the 18th century (see comments by Stukeley and Horsley below). In total, therefore, the collection assembled by Lord William must have neared 20, mainly altars but also some inscribed building stones, together with the Old Carlisle milestone. Apart from this item, the others came from Birdoswald camp, or from the adjacent sections of the Wall.

Howard's collection at Naworth was one of a small number of early collections of Roman antiquities associated with Camden's work and correspondents. Such collections involved moving the inscribed stones from their original archaeological contexts, but they were the only sure way of preserving them from use in everyday buildings, walls or simply loss. Moreover, most collections were "local" in that the stones came from the immediate locality, being moved only a few miles; the exception was Sir Robert Cotton's collection at his house near Huntingdon, which acquired stones from the Roman Wall country. Amongst the early collections, only Cotton's rivalled Howard's in terms of its size and significance. At Netherhall in Cumberland, the Senhouse collection was magnificent but smaller, Bishop Godwin's collection from Caerleon was small, and Bainbrigg's collection at Appleby was substantially composed of copies. Like Italian Renaissance collections of Roman antiquities, these early collections associated with Camden were generally displayed outside, often in a garden setting.²⁰

The later history of the collection

Lord William Howard's antiquarian enthusiasm was not shared by his descendants. By the time he died in 1640, he had been predeceased by his eldest son, and he was succeeded by his grandson William. He lived only until 1644 and it was Lord William's great-grandson Charles who was to inherit the estates and also the family propensity for politics. It was politics, high office and society life that were the focus during the century after Lord William's death, not an interest in antiquities. Charles Howard managed to serve both Royalists and Parliamentarians in the Civil War and Commonwealth years, including a period in Parliament, and in 1661 Charles II created him Earl of Carlisle. As well as serving as Lord Lieutenant of Cumberland and Westmorland, he also served in the post for Durham. Later he was governor of Jamaica. His son and grandson continued the pattern he had set, acting as MPs for the family borough of Morpeth and then, after succeeding, as Lord Lieutenant and other royal appointments.

Nor were the decades after 1640 an active time for antiquarian research in the far north. As Birley notes,

After Camden's active concern with the *Britannia* had come to an end, there was no longer a focus for the study of new discoveries, and the rest of the 17th century, until 1695, is almost a complete blank as far as the Wall and its associated forts are concerned; the northern clergy and gentry had more pressing matters to attend to during the middle decades of that century.²¹

One notable exception was Thomas Machell in Westmorland, but he never ventured north towards Naworth.²² When Edmund Gibson assembled material for his new edition of Camden's *Britannia*, the Cumberland additions were made by Dr. Hugh Todd, Prebendary of Carlisle cathedral, and they were not numerous. But he did record a visit to Naworth:

In the garden-wall are a great many stones with Roman inscriptions, which were collected and placed there by some of the family. Some of them are not legible, others are. One is
IVL. AVG. DVO. . M SILV . VM [RIB 1965]

On another

. IOM . . . II AEL DAC. C.P. EST
RELIVS. FA. L. S. TRIB. PET. VO. COS. [RIB 1875]

On another

LEG. II. AVG [RIB 1964]

On another

COH. I.AEL. DAC. CORD. . . . ALEC.PER [RIB 1893]

With some others which are plainly the same with those Mr. Camden has copied out, and which in all likelihood were brought hither from Willyford.²³

Two of Gibson's inscriptions are new publications, the two building-stone inscriptions RIB 1964 and 1965, though the latter had been reported in one of Camden's anonymous reports.

The end of the 17th century saw the beginning of a revival of active antiquarianism and an interest in genuine archaeology.²⁴ In the north this began with John Hunter, Christopher Smith, Sir John Clerk and Alexander Gordon.²⁵ But none of these antiquarians reported visits to Naworth. Howard's collection had to await the visits in the 1720s of two distinguished antiquarians, William Stukeley and John Horsley. In 1725 William Stukeley made his journey along the Roman Wall and came to Naworth. In his manuscript account, he noted

we visited Knaworth castle, near here, a great house of the Howard family built of stone and castellated. many family pictures, the great earl of Arundel, the revivor of learned curiosity among us: a library once as well-stored with books & MSS. Here is the famous Glastonbury abby book or rather skreen, for tis big enough. an account of the saints buried in that place. in the garden are many altars and inscriptions. I copyed all those tolerably fair, with much regret I saw those noble monuments quite neglected and exposed. Some cut in half to make gate-posts. A fine park here and much timber. the country hereabouts good land and pleasant.²⁶

The key visitor for our knowledge of the Naworth collection was John Horsley, also visiting in the 1720s, as he assembled information for his *Britannia Romana*. Horsley, like Stukeley, described the condition of the collection, but he also listed both the inscriptions and the physical form of the stones. Horsley identified 14 inscriptions at Naworth, six of them not published previously (but actually reported in the letters to Camden) and one not listed at all previously (RIB 1902). On the Naworth location, he reported "This [RIB 1893, with 1875, 1887, 1889, 1902, 1898, 1906, 1993] with several others mentioning the same cohort are now in the garden at Naworth, and were all brought from Burdoswald, most of them being the same with those Camden copied, and afterwards published".²⁷ Of one of the others (RIB 1889), he noted "This inscription is upon a very beautiful altar, that was standing in the walk with a sun-dial upon it. The letters having been so long exposed to the weather are now become very obscure, though yet discernible".²⁸ He also wrote

Several of the curious inscriptions that are in this garden, have been very fortunately preserved in a great measure from the injuries of the weather by a laurel hedge, which grows against a wall, where they are placed. But many of them have been long exposed to the weather, and suffered greatly by that means. This has rendered them obscure and difficult to read, which has been the true reason, I believe, why several of them have not been published before.²⁹

Like Stukeley, he noted the gate-post: "There was besides all these an half altar set up for a gate post; it was cut through the middle from top to bottom, but not a letter to be seen upon it, though the face was entire".³⁰

Horsley also observed "This stone [*RIB* 1970] is without the garden at Naworth, in a wall near the back door of it", and "This with the three following [*RIB* 1965, 1972, 1964, 1916], are in the garden at Naworth, or near it, and have, I suppose, been brought from the face of the wall, and most probably from some part of it near Burdoswald, or between that and Cambeck. Those which mention the Legion have, 'tis most likely, come from the station itself. This is over the back door in the garden . . .".³¹

The move to Rokeby

The material neglect of the Naworth antiquities reflected their lack of significance for the Howard family in the early 18th century. Charles Howard (1674-1738), the third Earl of Carlisle, was much more interested in building the grandeur of Castle Howard on his Yorkshire estates. In the 1720s the family came to know a young Yorkshire gentleman, Thomas Robinson of Rokeby near Barnard Castle. Robinson, born about 1700, had inherited the family estate at Rokeby when only 20, and had undertaken the Grand Tour, developing a particular interest in Greek and Italian architecture. In 1727 he became one of the two Members of Parliament for the "Howard borough" of Morpeth in Northumberland, where Henry Howard, the Earl's eldest son, held the other seat. A year later he married the Earl's eldest daughter Elizabeth. Robinson was also an enthusiastic amateur architect, and his growing connection with the Howards led to him design the west wing of Castle Howard.³²

At his own estate of Rokeby, Robinson rebuilt the mansion and remodelled the park, recording the process in 1737 in two Latin inscriptions on marble tablets fixed into the gate piers of the park entrance. He had collected classical sculpture and inscriptions during his Mediterranean travels, and it is therefore not surprising that he should become the recipient of the neglected Naworth collection. Later suggestions (such as that by Brand³³) that he plundered the Naworth garden seem rather unfair and wide of the mark.

The date for the transfer to Rokeby is uncertain, and all we can do is try to narrow the range. Haverfield thought it took place as early as 1730.³⁴ Certainly the Naworth stones (or at least some of them) were at Rokeby by 1763 when Gough visited. Robinson sold Rokeby in 1769, and they were certainly all there before that date. One stone discovered and recorded at Naworth in 1746 became part of the collection, but that does not mean others were not transferred before that year. The evidence suggests that Robinson was given the collection by his brother-in-law, the fourth Earl, rather than his father-in-law, and this might suggest a date after 1738, when Henry Howard succeeded to the title.

The most likely dates are thus somewhere in the period 1746 to 1760. The transfer involved the bulk of the Naworth collection as recorded by Horsley. Richard Gough observed of Naworth, “In the garden walls was fixed a collection of Roman inscriptions from the neighbourhood (this being the greatest receptacle in this county except that at Elenborough hall), which, when Dr. Stukeley was here, were neglected and some even cut up to make gateposts. The remainder were given . . . to Sir Thomas Robinson”,³⁵ implying that only those built into walls, or damaged, were left behind. Brand, visiting Naworth in 1783, noted “Two still remain built up in the garden-wall, but the inscriptions are nearly defaced by the weather”.³⁶ Certainly little remained (or remains) at Naworth itself. In the 1860s Bruce noted that “An altar, which is quite illegible, and a slab, which exhibits the semblance of a letter or two, are still to be seen in the garden walls at Naworth”.³⁷ It should come as no surprise that two of the Horsley stones not appearing in any of the Rokeby listings are the building-stone [RIB 1970] “without the garden at Naworth, in a wall near the back door of it”, and the building-stone [RIB 1965] “over the back door in the garden”.

Apart from these few “built-in” stones, little else seems to have been left behind. If there were, then the items must be largely unrecorded ones. There are claims that stones from Naworth went to Netherby as part of Dr. Graham’s collection, but there is little evidence for this. John Brand noted:

October 7th 1783, I visited Naworth Castle, well worthy the attention of the English traveller, though it has been plundered at different times of its Roman stones, by Sir Thomas Robinson and Dr. Graham of Netherby.³⁸

Similarly Bruce later asserted that “Several of the inscriptions now at Netherby formed part of the antiquarian stones of Lord William Howard; this may have been derived from the garden at Naworth” [of RIB 1945].³⁹ Graham undoubtedly acquired inscriptions from Birdoswald and the neighbourhood of Naworth, but there is no proof that any of the Netherby stones were from the Naworth collection.

The first recorded sighting of the collection in its new home was by Richard Gough, on his tour of Yorkshire in 1763. In his manuscript notes, he wrote:

. . . monuments [from Greta Bridge Roman camp] and some dug in Sir Thomas Robinson’s Park at Rookby on the other side of the road. All these and many others presented to Sir Thomas by the Earl of Carlisle and brother-in-law from his seat at Naworth are preserved in a Museum built by Sir Thomas on purpose adjoining to his House, where by favour of his Steward I copied the following.⁴⁰

Gough then noted the Roman Milestone from Old Carlisle (RIB 2286), the legionary building stone (RIB 1916) and an altar from Greta Bridge (RIB 750). He also noted a large Greek inscription on white marble, “a number of Egyptian idols in earth and metal”, and the statue of a gladiator, commenting “This cost Sir T 100 Guineas in Italy, and was just then broken to pieces by the carelessness of a worker who let a Board fall against it”.⁴¹ A subsequent visitor was Thomas Pennant, who visited Rokeby in 1773 and described the house, museum and collection thus:

The front extends ninety-six feet: it has a rustic basement, and in the centre four columns and two pilasters support a *Corinthian* ordonnance. The entrance is through a low vestibule on the round floor, in which are several low apartments; more suitable to the warmer climate of Italy, than to our chilly vapoury regions, where the sun should meet the fullest welcome. In the principal story is a gallery sixty-seven feet long: in this, as well as throughout the house, is a profusion of statues, busts, sculptures, and most elegant sepulchral urns, collected from abroad; and in a room, called

the *Museum*, are piled, in disorder, multitudes of altars, inscriptions, sculptors, &c. found either at the adjoining station and burying ground near *Greatabridge*, and at *Bowes Castle*, or brought here from the castle of *Naworth*, in *Cumberland*, and gathered from the neighbouring stations on the wall.⁴²

A major source for the collection during Robinson's ownership is a manuscript catalogue, headed "Antique Marks & Inscriptions at Rookby the seat of Sir Thomas Robinson".⁴³ This is anonymous, except for a "W Marb." after the title, and is a series of drawings of inscriptions and antiquities, with a few at the end authored "B Marb.". There is no date to the 41 sheets of drawings and, although the title refers to "the seat of Sir Thomas Robinson", parts may have been added after 1769, when J. S. Morritt bought Rokeby, for the first sheet continues:

Rookby Hall Built by Sir T Robinson 1730 who brought hither a great variety of altars, Inscriptions etc – collected in Britain and Foreign Countries.
Several of the Inscriptions were brought from Naworth Castle & were found on or near the Roman Wall.
This seat is now possessed by Mr. Morritt.

The last sentence may have been inserted onto the sheet at a later date.

The Catalogue contains many foreign items, and some medieval ones, but it also demonstrates the mass transference from Naworth: there are seven altars (*RIB* 1875, 1887, 1893, 1898, 1900, 1993, and, possibly 1889), the Old Carlisle milestone (*RIB* 2286), and three inscribed building stones (*RIB* 1916, 1944 and 1964). It also includes several inscriptions found locally at Greta Bridge and its vicinity.⁴⁴ However, this Rokeby Catalogue was not used until Haverfield in 1913,⁴⁵ and commentators between 1750 and 1913 did not know of its existence.

The Naworth collection had thus found a new home, where it was valued and protected (though Pennant's description of the museum "piled, in disorder" is not reassuring). However, this security was not to last long. Sir Thomas Robinson acquired some lucrative positions (such as a Commissioner of the Excise from 1735 to 1742), but he spent money more rapidly than he acquired it. There was his extensive building and landscaping at Rokeby, and his extravagant spending in London society. There "he gave balls to all the men and women in power and fashion, and ruined himself".⁴⁶ A period as Governor of Barbados damaged his finances further rather than replenishing them. In 1769 he was forced to sell Rokeby and its collections. Robinson was very tall and thin, and the nose and chin on the head of Joseph Andrews' cudgel was supposedly "copied from the face of a certain long English baronet of infinite wit, humour and gravity".⁴⁷ He was somewhat eccentric, but was also a talented dilettante, a Fellow of the Royal Society who had valued the Naworth collection sufficiently to rescue it from neglect. He died in Chelsea in 1777.

The purchaser of Rokeby, and new owner of the Naworth collection, was John Sawrey Morritt, of a local family. Morritt died in 1791, and was succeeded by his son Bacon Morritt, a young classical scholar and a published expert on Homer and Troy.⁴⁸ His diary of his Grand Tour of Greece and Asia Minor was recently republished.⁴⁹ He was a friend of Sir Walter Scott, who visited Morritt several times at Rokeby and dedicated his poem "Rokeby" to Morritt "in token of sincere friendship".⁵⁰

Opinions about the care of the Naworth collection under this new ownership

differed. Gough, in his edition of Camden's *Britannia*, commented that

[the bulk of the Naworth stones] were given by the late earl to Sir Thomas Robinson, and are now neglected and abused in the museum at Rookby, the seat of Bacon Morritt, Esq.⁵¹

William Hutchinson, who visited before 1794 in connection with his *History of Cumberland*, merely noted on several inscriptions, "This inscription is now deposited in the museum of J. B. S. Morritt, Esq of Rokeby, in Yorkshire, of the collection left there by the late Sir Thomas Robinson, who brought it, with several others from Naworth Castle".⁵² By the time Thomas Whitaker wrote his *History of Richmondshire* in 1823, he was much more impressed by the foreign antiquities than by the British ones:

But besides these are several stones in the back-yard of the house at Rokeby, the tradition concerning which is, that they were given by Lord Carlisle to Sir Thomas Robinson, and brought from Naworth castle. The circumstance, however, of the last-mentioned discovery on an estate belonging to the same nobleman within five miles of Rokeby, led me to suspect that these also had been found at the same place, and that the story of their having been brought from so great a distance was an invention.

With respect, however, to several of the following numbers [on his engraving], I now find the tradition to be correct, though I am still uncertain with regard to the rest.⁵³

Whitaker then illustrates seven Naworth inscriptions (*RIB* 1875, 1889, 1893, 1899, 1916, 1993, 2286) and details another (*RIB* 1887). "The rest" are the Greta Bridge stones (*RIB* 742, 749 and 750). He continues:

These rude remains of Roman Britain, however, wherever discovered, and now remaining at Rokeby, are so completely thrown into the back-ground by the collection of Greek and Roman inscriptions, urns etc, in marble, brought by the taste of the present owner from Greece or Italy, that they are scarce likely to meet with the degree of attention to which from local circumstances they are entitled.

Later he returns to the comparison:

The present [house] is an elegant and commodious mansion, but its most interesting feature to an antiquary is a collection of basso relievos and inscriptions, collected in Italy by the taste of the present owner, together with a few of ruder style and baser material turned up in the neighbouring station, or brought from Naworth castle.⁵⁴

It is likely that Whitaker was crediting Bacon Morritt with the entire foreign collection, whereas much of it dated from Robinson's travels, but Morritt, who later wrote an essay on the *History and Principles of Antient Sculpture*, was himself a connoisseur and enthusiastic collector (including Velazquez' famous painting known today as "The Rokeby Venus" and in the National Gallery). What does seem to have happened is that the Naworth collection, now "thrown into the back-ground" in Whitaker's words, was also thrown out of the museum and into the backyard. This must have happened between Hutchinson's visit *c.* 1794 and Whitaker's *History* of 1823, that is after Bacon Morritt's Mediterranean travels.

The next sighting is by John Collingwood Bruce in the 1860s. In the research for his *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, Bruce sent his draughtsman, Mossman, to Rokeby, and later visited the house himself. Bruce identified a number of Naworth stones at Rokeby, but one disappeared between Mossman's visit and his own:

This altar was in the garden at Rokeby when Mr. Mossman made the drawing from which the woodcut has been prepared. Since that period it has disappeared. The editor has sought for it

personally in vain. Search has also subsequently been made by the gardener at Rokeby, at the request of the editor, but without effect.⁵⁵

This item was the altar fragment *RIB* 1893. Bruce did identify the altars *RIB* 1875, 1889, 1993 and the legionary building stone *RIB* 1916.

Bruce's comment confirms Whitaker's observation that the British inscriptions were now left outside to the mercy of the elements, rather than being in Robinson's "museum". However, rather than the "backyard" of Rokeby, the inscriptions were now "in the garden", and by Bruce's time the Morritt family may have already constructed the stone platform to display them elegantly on the lawn adjoining the house. Certainly this arrangement was in place when visitors came shortly afterwards.

In the last decades of Victoria's reign, Rokeby was visited independently by the Cumbrian archaeologist J. B. Bailey and by the leading archaeologist of Roman Britain, Francis Haverfield of Oxford. Bailey made three visits, in 1881, 1898 and 1904, with his first report published in 1899. He found the majority of the altars and other inscribed stones located on the lawn at Rokeby. Several were "placed on a raised platform to the left of the carriage drive as we approach the Hall", together with three others "placed in alcoves".⁵⁶ The stones had stood outside in the Naworth garden for over a century, and many were very worn by the 1720s. Now they had undergone further weathering, and Bailey's task was to identify them from the surviving inscriptions. During his three visits he worked at decipherment and took detailed photographs. He identified all those seen by Bruce, plus two which Bruce thought were missing (*RIB* 1887 and 1906), though he could not find "Mossman's stone" (*RIB* 1893). Inside the house Bailey also identified three altars "placed in alcoves". One was a Naworth altar "To the god Mars and to Victory" (*RIB* 1899), which Gough had first recorded in 1763. The other two (*RIB* 742 and 743) were altars from Greta Bridge.

Haverfield visited in 1895, accompanied by his Oxford colleague Arthur Headlam whose family home was at Whorlton Hall, only a short distance from Rokeby, but Haverfield's notes were not published until 1913.⁵⁷ He saw the altars and stones previously seen by Bruce, though he did not recognise the altars *RIB* 1887 and 1906, which were on the platform when Bailey photographed them and remain there today.⁵⁸ He also saw the three altars in alcoves seen by Bailey. Haverfield's 1913 discussion was the first to make use of the Rokeby Catalogue, helping to identify what had been there in the eighteenth century and what had since been lost.

Subsequent visits by Robin Collingwood and Richard Wright for *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* – by Collingwood in 1926 and Wright in 1944, 1951 and 1955 – have confirmed Bailey's identifications. Today the surviving Naworth collection remains on its raised platform on the Rokeby lawn, and when the present author visited in June 2001 the layout was almost the same as in 1899 (Plate 1). The five altars seen and identified by Bailey are there, though the legionary building stone (*RIB* 1916) is no longer part of the garden display but is stored within the house.⁵⁹ In the centre of the display stands the altar to Jupiter (*RIB* 1889), an inscription first seen by Camden on his tour in 1599 and recorded in the 1600 *Britannia*, later used as a sundial in the garden at Naworth and then transported to Rokeby.



PLATE 1: The Naworth altars at Rokeby in June 2001. From left to right, the five altars are *RIB* 1993, 1906, 1889, 1887 and 1875.

Conclusions

The surviving stones from Lord William Howard's collection may perhaps have little to offer to contemporary epigraphy. Today they are weathered and hard to decipher. Yet the remarkable thing is that the collection survives at all, and in such numbers. Thanks first to Howard himself building the collection, then to that laurel-bush in the Naworth garden protecting a group of them, to Sir Thomas Robinson for his enthusiasm at a time when the Howards had lost their interest in the collection. Thanks also to the Morritts, who, although they initially valued these British antiquities little against their Mediterranean siblings and threw them out into the backyard, yet still recognised their significance enough not to throw them out completely. They kept these stones (whereas the Mediterranean siblings have gone) and later displayed them adjacent to the house. They stand today as a legacy from the antiquarians of Queen Elizabeth I's and James I's reigns: two of the altars were seen and recorded by Camden in his tour of 1599, three others were recorded in the 1607 edition, others in letters from Naworth to Camden in the same period. Like the Senhouse collection (now recognised and preserved in the Senhouse Roman Museum at Maryport), the Cotton collection (housed and preserved in the Museum of Archaeology at Cambridge) and the Godwin collection from Caerleon (now in the Museum there), this collection is an important part of the history of collecting in England. By tracing the history of Lord William's collection, these historical links can be made over the 400 years since 1600 to the stones standing at Rokeby today.

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Notes and References

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- ² *Dictionary of National Biography* (henceforward DNB), vol. 28 (1891), 12.
- ³ G. Ornsby, *Selections from the Household Books of Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle* (Surtees Society, volume 68, Durham, 1877).
- ⁴ For recent assessments of Howard on the borders, see P. Williams, "The Northern borderland under the early Stuarts", in H. E. Bell and R. L. Ollard (eds.), *Historical Essays 1600-1750 presented to David Ogg* (London, 1963), 1-17; H. S. Reinmuth, "Border Society in Transition", in H. S. Reinmuth (ed.), *Early Stuart Studies* (Minneapolis, 1970), 231-250, and "Lord William Howard (1563-1640) and his Catholic associations", *Recusant History*, 12 (1974), 226-234; and R. T. Spence, "The pacification of the Cumberland border, 1593-1628", *Northern History*, 13 (1977), 59-160.
- ⁵ D. Mathew, "The library at Naworth", in D. Woodruff (ed.), *For Hilaire Belloc* (London, 1942), 117-130.
- ⁶ On Roscarrock, see A. L. Rowse, "Nicholas Roscarrock", in J. H. Plumb (ed.), *Studies in Social History: A tribute to G. M. Trevelyan* (London, 1955), 3-31, and N. Orme, *Nicholas Roscarrock's Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon* (Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, 35: Exeter, 1992), which has a full bibliography on Roscarrock.

- ⁷ The 1599 tour has been the focus for several recent papers, in the context of Cotton's collection of Roman inscribed stones from the north. See L. W. Hepple, "Sir Robert Cotton, Camden's Britannia, and the early history of Roman Wall studies", *AAS*, 27 (1999), 1-19; D. McKitterick, "From Camden to Cambridge: Sir Robert Cotton's Roman inscriptions, and their subsequent treatment", in C. J. Wright (ed.), *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector* (London, 1997), 105-128; and G. Davies, "Sir Robert Cotton's collection of Roman stones: a catalogue with commentary", in *ibid.*, 129-167.
- ⁸ The fort at Birdoswald has proved to be a rich site for archaeological investigation, with a long subsequent history of excavation, notably by Haverfield, Simpson, Collingwood and Birley up to 1940. Since 1987 there have again been important excavations, and this work (together with references to the earlier studies) is reported in T. Wilmott, *Birdoswald: Excavations of a Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall and its successor settlements* (English Heritage Archaeological Report 14, London, 1996); T. Wilmott, *Birdoswald Roman fort: 1800 Years on Hadrian's Wall* (Stroud, 2001); see also J. A. Biggins and D. J. A. Taylor, "A survey of the Roman fort and settlement at Birdoswald, Cumbria", *Britannia*, 30 (1999), 92-110.
- ⁹ F. Haverfield, "Cotton Iulius F. VI: Notes on Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby, on William Camden and on some Roman Inscriptions", *CWZ*, xi, 343-378. Bainbrigg's important work and his collection of inscriptions have recently been studied by Edwards: B. Edwards, "Reginald Bainbrigg, *scholemaister*, and his stones", in N. J. Higham (ed.), *Archaeology of the Roman Empire: A tribute to the life and works of Professor Barri Jones* (BAR International Series 940, Oxford, 2001), 25-33.
- ¹⁰ *Britannia* (1600), 708, and (1607), 644.
- ¹¹ *Britannia* (1610), 782.
- ¹² B.L. Cotton Julius F VI f308d-309. See also Haverfield, *op. cit.*, 308.
- ¹³ B.L. Cotton Julius F VI f347. See also Haverfield, *op. cit.*, 378.
- ¹⁴ E. Huebner (ed.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, volume vii (Berlin, 1873).
- ¹⁵ B.L. Cotton Julius C. V f77. The letter is printed in Ornsby, *op. cit.*, 506-507.
- ¹⁶ B.L. Cotton Julius C III f210. The letter is also printed in Ornsby, *op. cit.*, 42, and Hepple, *op. cit.*, 11.
- ¹⁷ B.L. Cotton Julius F VI f428.
- ¹⁸ Bodleian MS Smith 84, f8d
- ¹⁹ This copy of the 1607 *Britannia*, which later belonged to Cotton and has his name inside, is now Bodleian MS Smith 1. The inserted note is at page 645. Details on this and other early source material on the Bewcastle Cross are in R. N. Bailey and R. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, vol. II Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands* (Oxford, 1988), 19-22, 61-73 and 172-173 (by R. I. Page).
- ²⁰ See L. W. Hepple, "The museum in the garden?: displaying classical antiquities in Elizabethan and Jacobean England", *Garden History*, 29 (forthcoming, 2002).
- ²¹ E. Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (Kendal, 1961), 8-9.
- ²² See J. M. Ewbank (ed.), *Antiquary on Horseback: the First Publication of the Collections of Thomas Machell*, CWAAS, extra series, volume 19 (Kendal, 1963).
- ²³ Edmund Gibson (ed.), *Camden's Britannia* (London, 1695), 844.
- ²⁴ For this process, see M. Hunter, "The Royal Society and the Origins of British Archaeology", in M. Hunter, *Science and the Shape of Orthodoxy* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1995), 181-200.
- ²⁵ See E. Birley, *op. cit.*, 14-18 and the references given there. A fascinating essay on northern antiquaries of this period and after, mainly using the Clerk papers, is provided by I. G. Brown, *The Hobby-Horsical Antiquary, A Scottish Character 1640-1830* (Edinburgh, 1980).
- ²⁶ Bodleian MS Top. Northumberland e.2, *Iter per lineam valli*, or an account of a journey the length of Roman Wall in Northumberland in the year 1725 by Wm Stukeley, f60-61. An amended version of this tour appeared posthumously as *Iter Boreale* in the 1776 (second) edition of *Itinerarium Curiosum*. For Stukeley, see S. Piggott, *William Stukeley, An Eighteenth-Century Antiquary* (Oxford, 1950).
- ²⁷ J. Horsley, *Britannia Romana* (London, 1732), 254.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 255.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.
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- ³² *DNB* (vol. 49, 1897), "Sir Thomas Robinson", 49-51.
- ³³ J. Brand, *History and Antiquities of the Town and County of the Town Newcastle upon Tyne* (London, 1789, 2 vols), vol. I, 614.

- ³⁴ F. J. Haverfield, "Additamenta Quinta ad Corporis Volumen VII", in *Ephemeris Epigraphica, Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum Supplementum, Volume IX* (Berlin, 1913), 509-690. The Rokeby inscriptions are discussed on pages 564, 600-603. The suggested date of 1730 is on page 600.
- ³⁵ R. Gough (ed.), *Camden's Britannia* (London, 1789), 204.
- ³⁶ J. Brand, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 614.
- ³⁷ J. C. Bruce, *Lapidarium Septentrionale* (London and Newcastle, 1875), 176.
- ³⁸ J. Brand, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 614.
- ³⁹ Bruce, *op. cit.*, 199.
- ⁴⁰ Bodleian MS Top. Gen. e.25, Gough's Tours, volume X: "Warwick to York", f279.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, f285.
- ⁴² T. Pennant, *A Tour from Alston Moor to Harrogate, and Brinham Crags* (London, 1804), 38. The tour was made in 1773, but only published posthumously in 1804.
- ⁴³ Bodleian MS Top. Yorkshire d.1, Anon., Catalogue of Stones at Rokeby.
- ⁴⁴ These are *RIB* 742, 743, 744, 745, 748, 749, 750 and the milestone *RIB* 2279. Haverfield identified most of these in the Catalogue, but did not identify *RIB* 744, which is on f30, or *RIB* 749, which is on f32. The Catalogue drawing of *RIB* 749 is noted by Collingwood and Wright, but altar *RIB* 744 is not, although the Catalogue drawing is very clear and similar to Horsley's drawing from the 1720s. These entries in the Catalogue are of some interest, as they show several local items were first added to the Rokeby and then dispersed locally, for *RIB* 745 was later taken to Windlestone Hall, near Bishop Auckland and *RIB* 750 was at Mortham Tower, north of Greta Bridge, where Bruce saw it; both are now lost.
- ⁴⁵ F. J. Haverfield, "Additamenta", *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁶ Horace Walpole, quoted in *DNB* (vol. 49, 1897), "Sir Thomas Robinson", 50.
- ⁴⁷ *DNB* (vol. 49, 1897), "Sir Thomas Robinson", 50.
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- ⁵⁰ On Scott, Morritt and Rokeby, see the essay by Una Pope-Hennessy in *Durham Company* (London, 1941).
- ⁵¹ R. Gough (ed.), *Camden's Britannia* (London, 1789), 204.
- ⁵² W. Hutchinson, *A History of the county of Cumberland* (Carlisle, 1796), volume 1, 68.
- ⁵³ T. D. Whitaker, *A History of Richmondshire in the North Riding of the County of York* (York, 1823), volume 1, 150.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.
- ⁵⁵ Bruce, *op. cit.*, 176.
- ⁵⁶ J. B. Bailey, "Lost and Re-found Roman Altars, with a Note on a Silver Coin found at Maryport", *CW1*, xvi, 138-145, and J. B. Bailey, "Roman Altars from Cumberland now at Rokeby, with a Note on the Crosscanonby Altar", *CW2*, v, 119-128.
- ⁵⁷ F. Haverfield, "Additamenta", *op. cit.* In 1895 A. C. Headlam was a Fellow of All Souls' College, and later became a leading Anglican cleric, both as Professor of Divinity and the Bishop of Gloucester. Haverfield and Headlam were both contributors to the collection: S. R. Driver *et al.*, *Authority and Archaeology Sacred and Profane, Essays on the Relation of Monuments to Biblical and Classical Literature* (London, 1899).
- ⁵⁸ Haverfield was somewhat sceptical of Bailey's readings: "Qui postea rem tetigit J. B. Bailey ait se, musco detero, C. n. 807. 813 [i.e. *RIB* 1906, 1887] quoque agnovisse: de lectionibus coniecturas non bonas attulit" (*op. cit.*, 600). Bailey's identification of 1906 is firmly accepted by Collingwood and Wright, but, of *RIB* 1887, they "found this altar too weathered to read".
- ⁵⁹ Information from Sir Andrew Morritt, 2 September 2001. The three "alcove altars" (Greta Bridge *RIB* 742 and 743, and the Naworth altar *RIB* 1899) are also stored within the house, but not on display as formerly. The Greta Bridge milestone (*RIB* 2279) is still present, situated immediately outside the house at the junction of the west wing and the main structure.

