

ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS DISCOVERED IN BRITAIN IN 1886.

By W. THOMPSON WATKIN.

As far as Britain is concerned, the additions to Roman epigraphy in 1886, have been about an average. The neighbourhood of the Wall of Hadrian has supplied, as usual, the greatest proportion of the inscriptions found. In this district, the month of January witnessed the first discovery of which I am aware. It was that of a small and rude altar, found at Caervorran, (*Magna*) which according to the report of the Newcastle antiquaries was inscribed

DEO
*ALIT
ICAV
ROV
OTV.

Dr. Bruce reported to the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, on January 27th, that he could not recognise the name of the deity, and that though he thought the second line might be *FALIT*, it was quite possible that what he took for *F* at the commencement was only "a chance stroke." Dr. Hübner of Berlin to whom a copy was sent, gave the reading *DEO . ALITI . GAVRO . VOTV* (*m. Solvit*), referring to Ovid (*Metam. II, 714*) and other works. He considered the *Deus ales* to be the "winged god" Mercury, and *Gauro* simply the Celtic name of the dedicator. To me this seems highly unsatisfactory. Had Mercury been intended, we should, I think, as in other instances, have had the name in full, "*Deo Mercurio*." I would read it (considering its rudeness), as *DEO . BALITICAVRO . VOTV*. (s), the latter letter being either obliterated or understood, and the two last words being *votv S(olutum)*. This seems confirmed by the fact that at the same station *Magna* we have an altar in which the name of the deity

is given as BELATVCAIRO. and another in which after his name we have simply VOTV . S. ; in neither is the name of a dedicator given. At Brougham an altar to the same deity was found (now in the Newcastle Museum) dedicated DEO BLATVCARO ; and at the stations of Old Penrith, and Burgh upon Sands, BELATVCA occurs upon altars to him (one of these is likewise without the dedicator's name). At Burgh upon Sands, also, the name is spelt BEHTCADRO. These numerous variations, suggest that the newly discovered altar at *Magna* is simply one to Belatucader, with still another variation in the orthography.

At the same station two other small altars have been taken out of the walls of the farm buildings in which they were built up. They are inscribed

(1)
MATRIB

. . . .

(2)
DIBVS.VITE

. . . . V.S
L.M.

The first is merely the upper half, and in a recess has the figure of a female holding a *patera* in her right hand over an altar. The inscription has been beneath. Only its first line remains entire, though the summits of the letters in the second line are partially visible ; the base and remainder of the inscription are broken off. It has evidently been dedicated to the *Deae Matres*, the first word being *Matribus*. No. 2 is entire, but the inscription is much obliterated. It is a dedication, *Dibus Viteribus* "To the ancient gods." The dedicator's name is lost by decay, but the final *formula* v.s.l.m. (*Votum Solvit Libens Merito*) is clear. All three of these altars have been added to Mr. Clayton's large museum at Chesters. During Mr. Clayton's recent researches at the station of *Cilurnum*, a portion of an inscription (probably an altar) to Jupiter, was found. The extant letters are (divested of ligatures).

I. O
PRO.SA
CAL.VER

and the expansion has probably been *J(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Pro Sa(lute) Cal(visii) Ver(ecundi)* "To Jupiter, the best, the greatest, for the welfare of Calvisius Verecundus." This is also at Chesters, but Dr. Bruce suggests that the first letter in the last line is G, and consequently

expands GAL. as *Gal(eru)*. The letter in question is very rudely formed. Another fragment found by Mr. Clayton measuring 11 inches by $6\frac{1}{2}$ is inscribed

ALI
OC
TN

It is manifestly impossible to restore the words of which these letters formed part. Perhaps in the first line we have part of AL(AE).

In the new Catalogue of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Museum recently issued, No. 19 is a fragment containing part of the first line of a large inscription (evidently dedicated to an Emperor) which has not, so far, been published. The only letters remaining are

OCAE

with a portion of the upper moulding of the stone, as marked by the lines. These letters have no doubt been part of some such words as (ANTONIN)OCAE(S).

On 25th June there was unearthed at the farm of Underheugh, in the parish of Gilsland, and near the station of Birdoswald (*Amboglanna*) a handsome altar, 4 feet 2 inches high inscribed

I. O. M.
C^oH.I.AELDA
C^oR.CCAIVL
MARCELLI
NVS.LEG.II
AVG.

The only doubtful point in the inscription is at the end of the third line, where CCAIVL, may be, as pointed out by M. Robert Mowat, the celebrated French archæologist, C.CAM. the letters which seem IVL being very close together and looking like M. M. Mowat reads the inscription (apparently) as *J(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Coh(ors) I. Ael(ia) Dacor(um), C(aius) Cam(minus) Marcellinus Leg(ions) II Aug(ustae)* but the difficulty of such a reading is that while the cohort dedicates, an officer of an entirely different force (the second Legion) is named immediately afterwards, without his connection with the first named corps being explained. Instead, therefore, of C.CAM., I am inclined to think that C.CA.IVL. is correct, and that as in the altar recently found at Jedburgh, we have the letters Q.C.A. (*Archæol. Journal*, vol. XLII, p. 158), before the name of the commander of the force, which have

been expanded *Q(uorum) c(uram) a(git)*, so here c.c.a. should be expanded *C(ujus) c(uram) a(git)*, which would make the reading of the inscription plain *i.e.* "To Jupiter, the best, the greatest, the 1st cohort of the Dacians, surnamed the Aelian which is commanded by Julius Marcellinus of the Second Legion." The officer named, was probably a centurion of the Legion, and the centurial mark has been accidentally omitted in the inscription, as in many other cases. The words "which is commanded by" are I know a "free" translation, but they approach nearest to the sense of the inscription in English; "overlooked by" would hardly bear out the meaning.

At Corbridge, three inscriptions have occurred, of which the lettering appears to be.

(1.)	(2.)	(3.)
I. O. M	*****	
* RO. SALVTE	****SB****	ERIT
VEXILLATI *	*****	OALAE
* VMLEG****	*****	* AE.
*** IMI ****	***ANIVS**	
*****	ET. MATER	

The first is on a large altar, much cut away to fit it for a building stone. It was found in pulling down an old cottage in Water Row, embedded in its walls. The asterisks mark missing letters, the sixth line with the exception of two strokes in its centre, each resembling an I, being entirely gone. It was erected for the welfare of vexillations of a legion or legions, the first portion reading *J(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) pro salute vexillati (on) um Leg(ionum)*. Dr. Hubner suggests with great probability that *xxii (Pr)imi(geniae et . . .)* followed this, as we know that a vexillation of the Twenty Second Legion, which was surnamed *Primigenia* was in Britain. On its left hand side the altar bears the figure of a *praefericulum*. It is now in the Newcastle Museum.

No. 2 is on "the lowest stone on the south side of the west door of the church" and, with the exception of the letters shewn, is entirely obliterated, but it would seem, from what remains to have been sepulchral.

No. 3 was also found built up into the Church. The second and third lines may I think be the remains of *(EQ)Q. ALAE (AVGVSTAE PETRIAN)AE.*, as traces of that *Ala* have been found in the adjoining town of Hexham.

Chester-le-Street is commencing gradually to reveal its hidden epigraphic treasures of the Roman age. During the year it has yielded two inscribed altars as follows:—

(1)	(2)
DEOMARTI	DEO
CONDATI. V * L	VITI
* ROBINVSP * O	RID
SEETSVISVSLM	VIIH
	NOVS

The first was found about 300 yards north of the Roman station, beneath six feet of alluvial soil near the brook called Chester Burn which flows into the river Wear, and is 21½ inches high. The letters are formed by a series of punctures. The altar is broken into two pieces, the fracture being immediately in front of the last letter of each of the three lower lines. The inscription apparently reads *Deo Marti Condati. V(a)l(eri)us (P)robianus p(r)o se et suis V(otum) S(olvit) L(ibens) M(erito).*

No. 2 is on a small altar found on the 28th July, on premises adjoining the Co-operative Stores, during excavations for the enlargement of that building. It was in a well about five feet deep and three feet in diameter, walled with masonry. Fragments of a Roman vessel of black pottery, and a number of bones were found with it. The locality of the discovery is outside of the Roman station, and near its north west angle. The altar which (like the one last described) is in the possession of Mr. S. Oswald, of Newcastle, is one of a numerous class (some thirty-three have been found) dedicated "To the ancient god." In some cases the dedication is, "To the ancient gods" and in one instance (which also occurs at Chester-le-Street) "To the ancient goddesses." With about a single exception they are all dedicated by individuals of only one name, and that a barbarous one. In the present instance the reading would appear to be *Deo Vitiri, Duihno* (for that seems to be the name) *V(otum) S(olvit).* "To the ancient god, Duihno performs his vow."

At Beaumont on the line of the Great Wall near the station of Burgh-upon-Sands, the members of the "Pilgrim Band" who visited the neighbourhood in July, found built up at the back of a house two unrecorded fragments, which it is advisable to put on record. They are

(1)	(2)
SAC	PA
V	

but of course from their smallness yield no information.

At the large station of Birrens (*Blatum Bulgium*) in Dumfriesshire, there have recently been found a small altar and the fragment of an inscribed slab bearing the following inscriptions :—

(1)	(2)
FORTV	MA
NAEVO	SA
TVM	

The altar (No. 1) is only $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and its inscription, *Fortunae Votum*, i.e., "To Fortune. A vow," without the dedicator's name is the extreme of simplicity. Being only a "household" altar, it was probably erected by the owner of the domicile to which it belonged. It is now preserved at Burnfoot.

No. 2 is a portion of a highly ornamented slab which has terminated in a pediment, with *rosette* ornaments at the angles. It is three inches thick, but it seems to me doubtful whether it has been part of a tombstone or of a votive tablet. If the latter, the dedication may have been *Ma(tribus)* &c. It is preserved at an adjoining farm house.

During some alterations at Cliburn Church, Westmoreland, two fragmentary inscriptions were discovered built into the walls, copies of which, free from ligatures, are annexed.

BALNEVM	*****
VETERIOP	** D (?)
NDLABSYM	* S ***
BILISPETRCPLA	* N Q **
****SEBVSII	* S *****
* * * *	* N S ***
	* I N S **
	DEDIT

No. 1 is the upper portion of the left hand half, of what has been a large slab, which has again been broken diagonally from the centre of the letter B in the 4th line, through the first S in the 5th line; of the 6th line only traces of the upper parts of the letters remain.

Taking the existing portion of the inscription in detail, the first line BALNEVM is plain. The commencement of the second has been purposely obliterated, but ANA appears to be visible, somewhat ligulate, as if some such word as (*Antonini*)ana had been there, but it would be in a most singular position. In the same line the I is formed by the prolongation upwards of the perpendicular stroke

of the R, and of what I have given as P, only the loop remains, and that is reversed, as if it were ligulate with a following letter. It is possible that it may be part of an R, and that the word may have been the comparative of *Vetus*, i.e. *Vetrior*, otherwise it is *Veteri*, followed by (possibly) *Operi*. In the third line it is evident we have part of CONDLABSVM, a variation of *Conlapsum* or *Conlabsum*, which is not, I believe, unique. In the fourth line the first I is formed by the continuation upwards of the perpendicular stroke of the L, the letters P and E are ligulate, followed by TR also ligulate, one perpendicular stroke serving for each and the second P may possibly be R. In the fifth line the upper part only of the first s remains and much worn, and on the left hand side of it, is either an accidental mark, or a portion of some ligulate letter, which gives it the appearance of the upper part of A.

From this we may I think gather satisfactorily the general purport of the inscription, though unable to technically restore it. A bath having fallen into ruin a new one was built upon the old work by two cavalry regiments, i.e. the *Ala Nobilissima Petriana*, and the *Ala Sebusiana*. The first named of these was a most renowned regiment, the only one in Britain which was decorated with the torques, and consequently bearing the epithet *Torquata*. From an inscription found on the Continent (Orelli, No. 516) we learn that it was *bis torquata*, and probably the only regiment in the Roman service, so decorated. An inscription found at Carlisle, gives it the prefix of *Augusta*, and I therefore think that in BILIS we have part of the word NOBILIS, the abbreviation of *Nobilissima*. The letters which follow PETR (the abbreviation of *Petriana*) are either C.P. for *C(ui) P(raeest)* "which is commanded by" or C.R. for *C(ivium) R(omanorum)* a title which we also know from the Carlisle inscription, the *Ala* assumed. In the former case the commencement of the name of the commander L(ucius) A would follow the C.P. and his name might be Lucius Alfenius Paternus, an officer who we know erected an altar to Jupiter Serapis at the neighbouring station of Kirkby Thore, from which there can be little doubt, both the inscriptions came. *Nobilissima* might well be applied to such a distinguished *corps*, though I cannot at the

moment say there is any precedent for it. The other *ala* named is the second of the Gauls surnamed the Sebusian, or Sebosian, of which various inscriptions have been found and which at one time formed the garrison of Lancaster. We can gather no fresh information from this inscription as to the locality of the station *Petriana*, at which the *Ala Petriana* was stationed, and which in previous papers in the *Archæological Journal*, I have tentatively fixed at Hexham; the only alternate station being Old Carlisle, upon the ground (first pointed out by Dr. McCaul¹) that the *Ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata* might probably be the same as the *Ala Augusta Petriana*, the title in each case being equally distinguished.

The second of these inscriptions is upon the right hand half of a noble altar 4 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, but the face has been much chipped away to make it available as a building stone. Except the word DEDIT, nothing can be made out of it.

At Chester on the 10th June, during excavations for a new gasholder on the Roodeye, there was found beneath twenty feet of river silt, and amongst gravel, logs of wood, and oak piles (evidently the remains of a wooden pier), two human skulls, fragments of Samian and Upchurch ware, a layer of concrete, several coins, amongst them "first brasses" of Vespasian and Titus, and an inscribed pig of lead. The latter which weighs 192lb., is 24 inches in length by $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and 5 inches wide, and is in generally good condition though the last three letters of the larger inscription upon it are hidden by the adherence of a small lump of metal, which has become much oxidised. This inscription is:—

IMP. VESP. AVG. V. T. IMP. III. * * *

and is upon the upper face as usual, whilst upon the side is the inscription—

DE. CEANGL.

There can be no reasonable doubt that cos has succeeded the numeral III, and that the date of the pig is of the same year (A.D. 74) as that found in 1838, at Tarvin Bridge near the city. The expansion of the lettering would be *Imp(eratore) Vesp(asiano) Aug(usto) V, T(ito) Imp(eratore) III Co(n)s(ulibus)*. In the above named year,

¹ *Canadian Journal*, vol. xii, pp. 120-121.

Vespasian for the fifth time and Titus for the third time were Consuls. The letters are nearly $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, and the spot where it was found is about 50 yards distant from the present channel of the river. The inscription upon the side is, like others, to be [expanded *De Ceangi(s)*], and proves that the lead came from the territories of the *Ceangi* or *Cangi*, a tribe inhabiting a portion of North Wales.

At the same city, in June, in the ruins of a hypocaust found in Blackfriars a portion of a tile occurred bearing the inscription—

A
OCO.PRI

It is quite possible that it is a portion of a tile similar to the fragment found in 1876, in Bridge Street (*Roman Cheshire* p. 119) inscribed—

LEG.X . . .
2VB.LO . . .

In the first we have the latter half of the lower line of the inscription, in the second we have the first half of the two lines. The whole I take to read, *Leg(ionis) Vicesimae V(aleriae) V(ictricis)*. *Sub Loco Pr(aedii)* but the last word is the only doubtful one. It can hardly be *Pr(aetorii)*, though at first, I imagined such might be the case. The *Praetorium* would be too distant, whereas it is quite possible that the bricks for this particular villa or *praedium* might be made in the locality.

At Chester also there was found, about the same time, in Grey Friars Street, a small leaden plate or *lamina* $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches and $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch thick, bearing a rude inscription which appears to have been repeated on the back. The letters which are scratched with some sharp instrument, to my eye seem to read—

COH.I
V ATTII
ANTONI

The Rev. H. M. Scarth to whom I sent it for examination, as I considered it might be compared with the leaden plates found at Bath, says that he thinks it has been nailed to a frame and subjected to much pressure. It was found amongst other Roman remains at the usual level,

but of its use I can say nothing. It would seem to be a tessera or pass. The expansion is plainly *Coh(ortis) I. Centuria Attii Antoni(ni)*. It is now in the possession of Mr. Chas.⁵ Roeder of Greenheys, Manchester.

In June also, a tile was found in Warwick Lane, Newgate Street, London, with an inscription scratched upon it with a *stylus* or some sharp instrument, before it was dried or burnt; when found it was much covered with mortar, having been built into a wall. The mortar was removed by Mr. Alfred White, F.S.A., by the aid of acid, when the following letters were visible—

AVSTAQIS
DIBVS ///
VAGATVR.SIB
COTIDIM.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to give the true reading of this. The letter which I give as *q* in the first line resembles a *u* with the tail of a *q* at its base and is read by Mr. C. Roach Smith as *l*. It appears to me, also, doubtful what the first letter of the inscription is. It more resembles the lower part of a large *x* than *a*. M. Robert Mowat conjecturally restores the whole as (*f*) *austa q(u)is* (*custo*) *dibus*. *vagatur sib(i)* *cotidian*; whilst Mr. C. Roach Smith thinks it a joke scribbled on the tile to the effect that “Austalis wanders off (from his work) by himself to the (temples of the) Gods, daily.”

A few inscriptions which have been discovered for many years, but are omitted in Dr. Hübner's work, have to be added. The first is the fragment of the bowl of a silver spoon, “found near Sunderland,” (*Archaeol. Journal* vol. xxvi, p. 76.) inscribed—

—NE.VIVAS

Mr. Albert Way thought it when entire to have borne the words *BENE VIVAS*, but this is, I think, erroneous, for it is probably the termination of a proper name as we have in similar examples such names as *CENSORINE*, &c.

Another inscription not given by Dr. Hübner is that on an intaglio in carnelian set in a ring, discovered in the last century at Castlesteads (or Cambeck Fort) on the Roman Wall.¹ The stone is engraved with three human

¹ See also *Archaeologia*, vol. xi, p. 71.

heads, described by the Rev. C. W. King as representing "Serapis crowned with the *modius* between Isis and Horus, each with the lotus, probably typifying the Supreme Deity between the genii of the Earth and the Sun." Beneath these heads are the letters

€ Z C

These letters Mr. King makes out to be the initials of the formula, EIC. ZEYC. CAPA T. IC. "The one Jupiter Serapis." The ring was discovered in a Roman urn in the churchyard at Castlesteads and now belongs to the Rev W. Dacre of Irthington.

In Longstaffe's "Guide to Richmondshire" (1852) there is an account given of the discovery of "a square-arched vault," which from the description seems undoubtedly to have been Roman, found about the beginning of the present century in digging the foundation of the farm-house at Bainesse, closely adjoining the large Roman Station at Catterick (*Cataractonium*). It is said that each of the bricks of which the vault was composed bore the inscription—

BSAR

I am inclined to think this has been wrongly read and that it should be either N SAR or AL SAR (in this last case the A and L probably being ligulate) referring to the cavalry regiment, *Ala Sarmatarum*, quartered at Ribchester. Roman foundations, coins, and a steelyard have been found during the last few months at Bainesse.

In the Harleian MSS. vol. 2111, p. 21, there is an account of a Roman hypocaust found in the middle of the seventeenth century at Crue or Crew on the Cheshire side of the Dee, opposite Holt Castle. The tiles in this hypocaust were all stamped—

LEG. XX. V.V.

and the discovery, remained unpublished until I noticed it in *Roman Cheshire*, p. 306.

There is also in Additional MSS. British Museum 11.338 fo. 95, an account of a sepulchral inscription found at Chester, but as I am doubtful whether it was not originally found at Rome, I refrain until further investigation from reproducing it, though I have described it in *Roman Cheshire*, p. 208. The stone is now preserved in the

Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and is described in the *Museum Disneianum* p. 97.¹

In the *Archæological Journal*, vol. xli, p. 180, I have described a centurial stone bearing the inscription

COH.I
▷ OPSILI

on which I remarked that the name of the centurion was puzzling. Re-examination shews that OPSILI for *Opsilii* is the correct word.

With two other inscriptions, one the forged reproduction from a Continental stone, the other from the Continent also, though genuine, I close the list. The first named was stated to have been discovered on a small statue in a "water hole" on Stainmoor, Westmoreland. It was inscribed on the side—

DEO.ARVALO
SATVRNO

and on the back—

SEX
COMMODVS
VALER
V.S.L.M.

In the *Academy* for November 6th, I treated of this inscription (and papers upon it have been published elsewhere) under the impression it was genuine. It is I find however, merely the reproduction of an inscription found at Brescia in Italy, prior to 1693, described by Rossi, Marini, and also by Orelli (No 1510).

The other inscription is upon a tile which is now preserved in the Shrewsbury Museum, and has recently been described as having been found in that town, or at Wroxeter. The fact is however, that my friend the late Mr. Samuel Wood, of Shrewsbury brought it from Treves. The inscription which is incomplete, is:—

—CENTIO

before the c is part of what appears to be the upper portion of a p.

The altar to Maponus found at Armathwaite in Cumberland (C.I.L. VII No. 332), has been removed from The Nunnery to the Carlisle Museum.

One or two other inscriptions have been found but they have not yet been satisfactorily read, owing to the worn and obliterated state of the stones.

¹ See my letter in *Chester Courant*, Oct. 20th, 1836.