

ART. XV.—*Four inscriptions assigned to Pike Hill.*

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SINCE the discovery of remains at Pike Hill, in 1870, four inscriptions have been assigned to this site, three in a verbal statement by Dr. Bruce, reported in these *Transactions* (O.S. i, 215), and the fourth in a later observation from his pen (*Handbook to the Roman Wall*, ed. 3, p. 208). But his considered opinion, expressed in *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, tacitly withdrew these ascriptions, going back to what was his earlier view in every case. These changes of opinion are worth analysis.

In the first edition of *The Roman Wall*, of 1851, which formed the basis of the *Handbook* text, Bruce gave (p. 263) no details between Wallbowers and The Pike. Later, when he knew the Cumberland sector better, he stated (*op. cit.* 3rd ed. 268) that "we reach Bankshead. Here a mile-castle stood, the traces of which are now nearly or quite obliterated. In it were found in the year 1808, two altars dedicated to the local deity, Cocidius . . . The Wall then goes over a small hill called The Pike." Thus, he differentiates quite clearly between Bankshead and Pike Hill. His account is a conflation of two primary sources, if we except Hodgson's derivative work. The first is *Britannia Romana*, where Horsley states (p. 153) that he saw "at a house belonging to one Mr. Bell" (i.e. Bankshead) "the foundation of a *castellum*;" the second is the statement of the brothers Lysons, in their Cumberland volume of *Magna Britannia*, published in 1816, that the altars to Cocidius (p. clxx; *Lap. Sep.* 374, 375; *C.I.L.* vii, 802, 800) were discovered "in the foundation of one of the watch-towers of the Roman Wall at Bankshead, near Lanercost Priory, in the year 1808."

This was the very year in which the two brothers made (*Magna Britannia*, p. clxix) their tour of Cumberland, seeing personally every inscription they could find, from Birdoswald to Bowness. Thus, their statement as to the find-spot is based on personal knowledge of the locality and personal inquiry, and must inspire confidence. Hodgson accepted their statement without comment. But Maclauchlan noted their ambiguous phrase "watch-tower," which is a translation of Horsley's *castellum*, and took it (*Memoir*, 58) to mean the milecastle site at Banks-head, knowing nothing about any remains at Pike Hill. In this view Bruce concurred (*Roman Wall*, ed. 3, 1867, p. 268); and to-day we also can concur, for a new and cogent reason. Until 1870, all the remains at Pike Hill were sealed below the public road, which existed before Horsley's day; and the fragment that was free of the road had never been deeply disturbed before we examined it. Thus, there is no spot on the Hill whence altars can have been got in 1808 in association with foundations, as assured by the contemporary account of the discovery.

Why, then, did Dr. Bruce change his mind, if only in an offhand speech? There can be little doubt that it was because he thought, when first confronted by the Pike Hill discovery, that here was a milecastle; an assumption that carried with it the necessity of transferring to Pike Hill not only Horsley's adjacent milecastle site, but all relics reported as coming from it. Accordingly, the altars of Cocidius were at once transferred thither by him, as being from the milecastle. But, at the time, he made a statement which shows indeed that he was not thinking deeply, namely, that the altar of the *Venatores Bannienses* (*Lap. Sep.* 370; *C.I.L.* vii, 830) came from Pike Hill. For the evidence about this altar is quite precise. J. Wilkin, after visiting these parts, stated, on the back page of the *Carlisle Patriot*, 16 June, 1821, in a letter dated June 5th, that "at Birdoswald . . . I was shown three new altars,

all lately dug out of the interior of the station." Of these, that of the Venatores was the only one legible. Thus, it is evident that the request to speak on the new discoveries caught Bruce unprepared with the facts which he himself published, only mistaking the *Carlisle Patriot* for the *Carlisle Journal*, in *Lapidarium Septentrionale*.

But by 1885, when the third edition of the *Handbook* emerged and when the facts presented in *Lapidarium Septentrionale* were still fresh in his mind, Bruce had concluded that the evidence for the milecastle site at Bankshead was sound, as we know it to be, and had returned to his first view, which excavation has provided us with such good reason to endorse. He then wrote (*Handbook*, 3, p. 208), "In 1808 two altars to the local deity Cocidius, which are now at Lanercost, were discovered at Bankshead. The Wall next goes over a small hill called Pike." But he added, "Here was discovered in 1862, a broken slab bearing the name of Antoninus Pius. When the road was lowered some years ago, a turret was found on the summit of Pike Hill." Now the slab in question was discovered at Bankshead, as is circumstantially described by Bruce himself in *Lapidarium Septentrionale* (no. 385) and confirmed by him to Hübner (*C.I.L.* vii, 836). Thus the misrepresentation which marks Bruce's observations on Pike Hill extends to this fourth inscription also. Yet here Bruce was perhaps not to blame. The order of the four consecutive sentences quoted is so awkward and the statement so contradictory as to suggest one of the printer's misplacements that mark insertions in the *Handbook*. The second and third sentences should change places: for the third is an addition to the first and the fourth an amplification of the second. Bruce, by then no longer young, was suffering from his editors.