

Excavations at the Roman Camp of Melandra, 1906=7.

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SINCE the publication in 1906 by the Manchester branch of the Classical Association of their report on the excavations at Melandra, which was included in our *Journal* for last year,¹ several important discoveries have been made by the Excavation Committee of the Glossop Antiquarian Society.

The remaining portion of the Prætorium has been excavated, and a large quantity of building stone, with a few fragments of roofing tiles and pottery, found amongst the débris.

On the western side a floor paved with flag-stones repaired with broken roofing tiles was uncovered (B on the plan). This floor measures seven feet from north to south, and nine feet from east to west; its northern face is fifteen feet from, and parallel to, the north wall; its western side abuts on the outer wall. No foundations were discovered either to the north or south of this pavement.

In the south-west angle (C) the boulder foundations of two walls two feet wide were laid bare. These short walls run at right angles to the main walls of the building, and together with them form a small chamber eight feet square.

In the middle of the boundary wall of the central chamber on the south, and to the north of it, is a small paved foundation (D), which may possibly have been the platform of an altar.

¹ Vol. xxix.

A portion of the Prætorium was covered with gravel. This has been removed and the original clay floor laid bare. Further investigation of those places where the clay had been disturbed led to the discovery of five oak posts in excellent preservation. (A) One was taken out and found to measure sixteen inches square, its flat base resting on a flag-stone three feet six inches below the surface. The excavations have revealed the manner in which they were originally placed in position: a round hole was first dug out and lined with boulders, the posts were then placed in the centre, and puddled clay firmly rammed round them. These five posts were in a straight line twenty feet from, and parallel to the wall of the southern chambers, the distance between them varying from nine feet to eleven feet six inches.

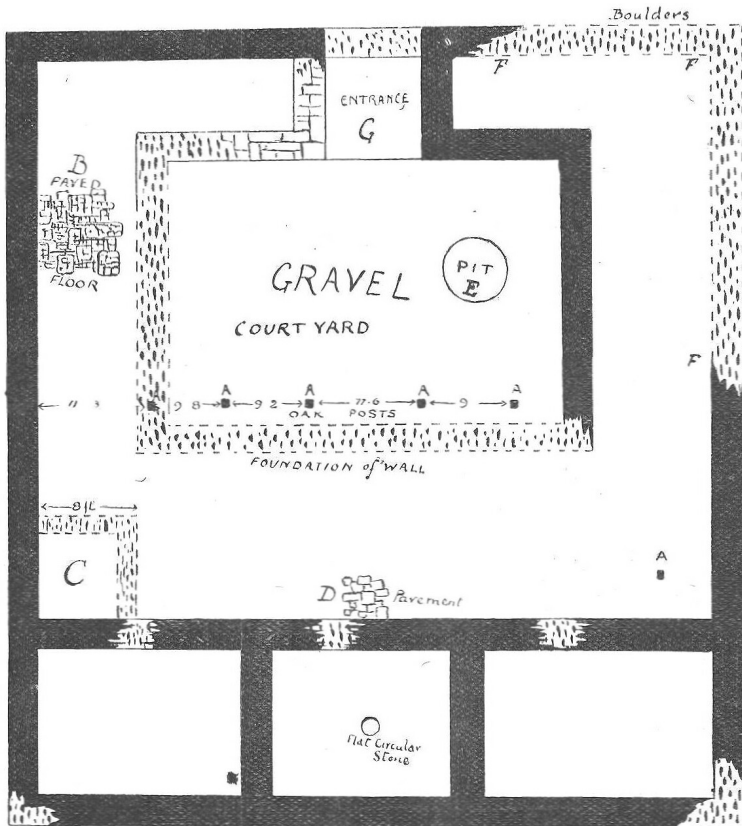
It seems quite clear from the position of the posts that they belong to an earlier building. Others will doubtless be discovered, and may assist in determining its extent. Most probably when the ground was being prepared for the stone building these posts were sawn off level with the surface and afterwards covered with the gravel of the courtyard.

Additional evidence of the correctness of this theory is provided by the discovery of oak timbers in other parts of the camp. One of the workmen employed in cutting a drain during the Cotton Famine of 1862 found at the North Gate what he described as "an oak gate stump as thick as the middle of a man's body." There is no reason to doubt this statement, as a modern drain has been found passing through the centre of the northern gateway, in fact through the *spina* itself. A cross trench revealed the existence of another road below the surface of the later one, covered with small pebbles and having almost the appearance of a Mosaic pavement. The upper road was lifted, and was found to be beaten so hard that it came up in large pieces. Underneath were four oak posts set in a circle, similar in size to the one uncovered in 1862. Adjoining one of the inner posts was an oak frame in the form of a letter I, the arms eighteen inches by six inches, and the central beam



OAK-POST, ALTAR, AND OTHER FINDS FROM MELANDRA.

five feet six inches long. The whole was placed in a horizontal position, evidently in its original situation, but was too decayed to be taken up. These remains are convincing evidence that



the gateways were of oak previous to the erection of the later stone buildings. Leaving these interesting relics of earlier fortifications on the site of the later Melandra and returning

to the Prætorium, a pit (E), some six feet in diameter, was discovered fifteen feet to the south of the most easterly post. Amongst the rubble with which the pit was filled was found, almost complete, the crown of an altar. This stone, which measures nineteen inches by five and three-quarter inches, is shown in the illustration. On two sides run cylindrical ornaments beautifully carved and terminating in rosettes. Similar ornamentation appears on an altar found in 1883 at Housesteads (Borcovicum), on the Roman wall. The Housesteads altar was dedicated by the Roman citizens Tuihanti of the *cuneus* of the Frisians, and Severianus Alexandrianus. Housesteads shows many striking points of similarity to Melandra, and it is a significant fact that the only portion of an altar found should be similarly ornamented to one discovered in the far-off Northumbrian Fort.

The foundations of the remainder of the north and east walls of the Prætorium (FF) were discovered, and consist of boulders set in tightly-rammed puddled clay.

The entrance (G) was cleared, and shows a passage eight feet six inches wide and eleven feet long, opening into a courtyard forty-two feet six inches by twenty-seven feet, with a gravel floor. The foundations of the walls surrounding this courtyard have been laid bare; those on the eastern side are in a fair state of preservation; on the west, from the entrance, thirteen feet of flag and seven feet nine inches of boulder foundation remain. The western wall of the courtyard has, however, been cut down the centre by a modern drain.

In conclusion, it is satisfactory to be able to report that the recent excavations have settled the vexed question of the method of construction of the ramparts at Melandra. On page 51 of the "Melandra Castle" report this question is asked: "Is there any evidence to show whether the wall was built later than the clay rampart?" with the comment: "Let us end as we began by saying that the mode of construction of the Melandra rampart remains an unsolved problem."



MELANDRA VASE.

Reference has already been made to the existence of an earlier Fort with wooden gateways and buildings. When these were replaced by stone the earthen rampart was cut straight down. Six feet outside this a wall of dressed stone was built on a flag foundation. The intervening space was afterwards filled in with undressed stone and rubbish. This is how it comes about that fragments of British and Roman querns, coins, pottery, and a ring have all been found in the heart of the rampart.

During the summer of 1907 the weather has been very unfavourable for excavation, but it must be acknowledged that the results already achieved justify the committee in continuing the work.

ANCIENT MELANDRA VASE.

THIS illustration represents a jar discovered at Melandra in 1852. A description of it contained in Mr. John Harland's notebook in the Manchester Free Library states that it stood $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches high, and was composed of red clay glazed within and without. It was formerly in the possession of Mr. Lees, of Hollingworth, Cheshire, but was unfortunately broken to pieces some time ago, so that the accompanying illustration from an original drawing of it is the more interesting. The form of moulding hardly appears to be Roman.