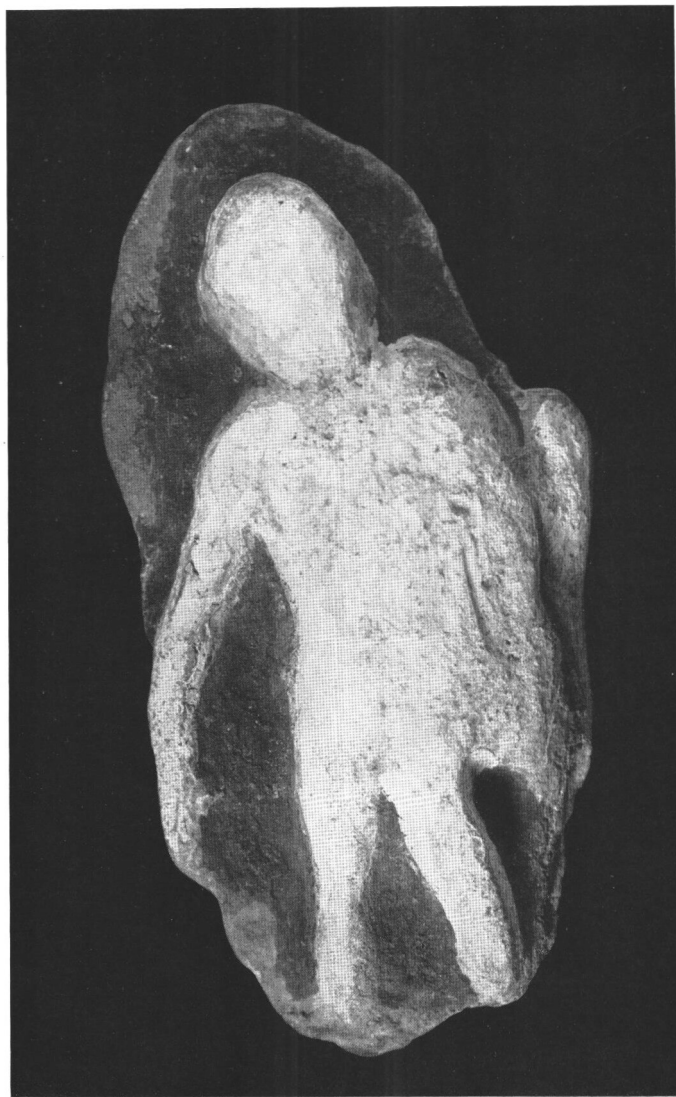


PLATE I.



LEAD CASTING OF A ROMAN SOLDIER.

Melandra Castle.

I.—EXCAVATIONS, 1908-1911.

By REV. HENRY LAWRENCE, M.A.

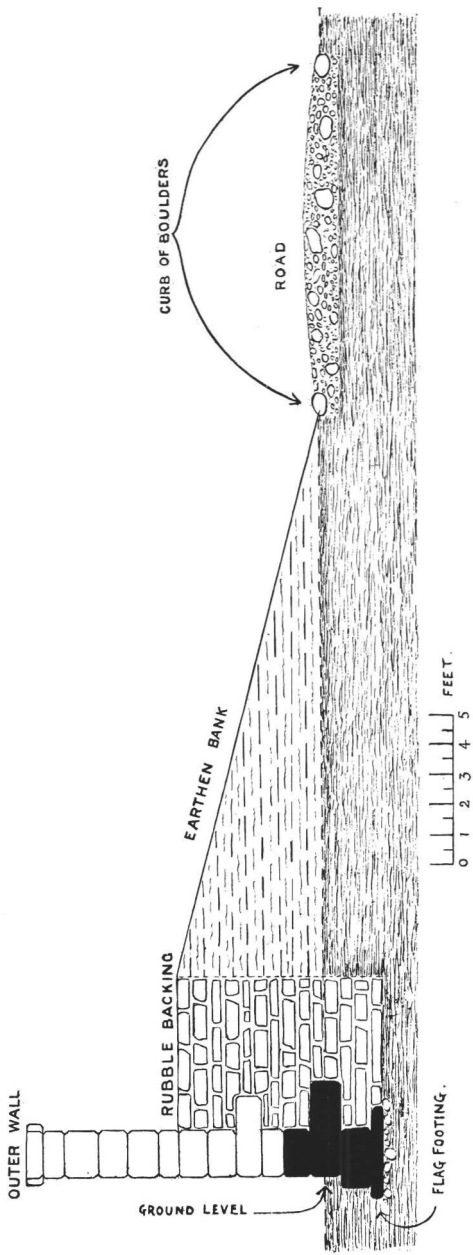


SINCE the publication of the last report in vol. xxx. of the *Journal*, extensive excavations have not been attempted. In the first place, no funds have been forthcoming to warrant the commencement of operations on a large scale, though what has been done confirms the opinion, already expressed, that a thorough investigation of the site would show results which would amply repay the labour involved. In the second place, those who know the ground will readily understand that the wet summers of 1909 and 1910 made work impossible during the greater part of those years. The local committee, owing to lack of financial support, have been compelled to rely, for the most part, on the labours of voluntary excavators, who have directed their attention to the somewhat tedious work of attempting to recover the ground-plan of the fort. It will be remembered that the map which accompanied vol. xxix. of the *Journal*, left the plan, except in its general arrangements, largely a matter of conjecture. The block-plan, vol. xxx., p. 321, completed the details of the central building. Recent investigations have shown that the road which led from this building to the northern gate is twelve feet in width, and aligns exactly with the entrance to the "Praetorium." Before reaching the gateway it sweeps round a curve to the right and left, and so continues completely round the fort inside the rampart. The road from the north

gate to the north-east corner has been uncovered, and is well paved with small stones, worn smooth by constant traffic. This is also twelve feet wide, and shows little or no slope to the sides. The uncovering of this road makes it possible for the first time to obtain exact measurements of the ramparts, and to see clearly the method of their construction.

The rampart consisted of a wall of dressed stone, about eighteen inches thick, on a flag foundation, backed inside by a rubble wall of about five feet. Inside this again was a bank of earth, sloping gradually to the road, which was apparently edged with larger stones on each side. The original height of the outer wall and of the earthen bank must remain more or less a matter of conjecture. It does not appear that the outer facing could have been much more than twelve feet in height, which would allow five feet for the height of the wall above the embankment, five feet for the height of the embankment itself, and two feet for the sinking of the foundations. From the outer face of the wall to the edge of the road, the rampart measures twenty-seven feet.

Investigations at the north-east corner of the fort have shown that the camp was undoubtedly of two dates. That is to say, there have been two camps on the same site, and these not apparently, as is generally the case, of widely different areas, but on different levels. Before the camp, as we now know it, was built, the ground underwent a process of levelling. The ground-level on the northern side of the camp has been raised considerably; the extent to which it has been raised is shown by the difference in level between the two roads passing through the north gate, the later of them being rather more than a foot above the earlier. It seems probable that the alteration in the level took place at the time when the fort was first encircled by the present stone walls, which most likely replaced an earthen bank, surmounted by a wooden palisade. Mention has been made, in vol. xxx. of this *Journal*, page 320, of the remains of massive oak posts at the north gate, which may have formed part of the original wooden gateway. In cutting through the rampart during last summer, part of an oak pale,



SECTION THROUGH NORTH RAMPART.

three and a quarter inches square, was found several feet below the surface, apparently belonging to these earlier defences, and at the same level was found the silver denarius of Vespasian, which will be described later. The somewhat unexpected discovery of these objects so far beneath the surface is unmistakable evidence of the existence of an earlier camp. It is worthy of note that the coins hitherto found divide themselves into two well-marked periods—A.D. 68-100 and A.D. 286-388. It is perhaps unwise to lay too much stress on the evidence of such a small number of coins, but, coupled with the evidence provided by the two levels of the roads, they seem to point to two separate occupations, the earlier in the first, and the later towards the close of the third century in our era.

In addition to the roads already named, which add considerably to our knowledge of the interior of the camp, a cross-road has been uncovered, running parallel to the north side of the camp, sixty feet from the inner edge of the road on that side. This is also twelve feet wide. It passes along the south side of the paved area, marked "millstones" in vol. xxix. of the *Journal*. This paved, open space, whether roofed in or not, was evidently the place where the corn was ground, as a number of querns were found here, and in several instances the lower stone was found *in situ*, firmly fixed in the ground. It is evident that the cross-road was used for bringing corn to the mills.

Since the labours of the committee have been entirely directed towards the discovery of the width and direction of the roads within the camp, the miscellaneous finds have been inconsiderable. A quantity of glass and pottery has been turned up from time to time, but it includes little of an exceptional nature. In the angle between the road leading from the "Praetorium" and the road along the north rampart on the east side were found the greater part of a mortarium in yellow ware, several bowls of *Terra Sigillata*, one almost complete, with fragments of all the commoner varieties of black, grey, yellow, and red ware.

Mention should also be made of an earthenware strainer, the bottom of which is fluted and pierced with sixteen holes, and the iron "shoes," or ferrules, of the south gate, which were found in the stone sockets of the gateway. These finds, though made previous to the publication of the last report, have not been chronicled.

In September, 1910, Mr. S. Mellor was fortunate enough to find a denarius of Vespasian. The coin bears, on the obverse, the head of the Emperor Vespasian, with the legend, "IMP . CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG.;" and, on the reverse, a female seated figure holding a branch, with a legend, which may probably be read, "PON . MAX . TR . P . COS . VI."¹ Only one other coin has been found since the publication of the list in "Melandra Castle," p. 96. This is a much worn bronze, of which all that can be said is that it bears the head of one of the earlier emperors, possibly Nerva.

Large numbers of round boulders of convenient size have been found in different parts of the camp, which were probably used for throwing from the ballista. Last year one of these stones was found which had been shaped artificially, and seems to show the way in which the supply of natural boulders was supplemented by mechanical means. The stone in question is from Cown Edge, where the quarries from which the walls of Melandra were built may still be seen.

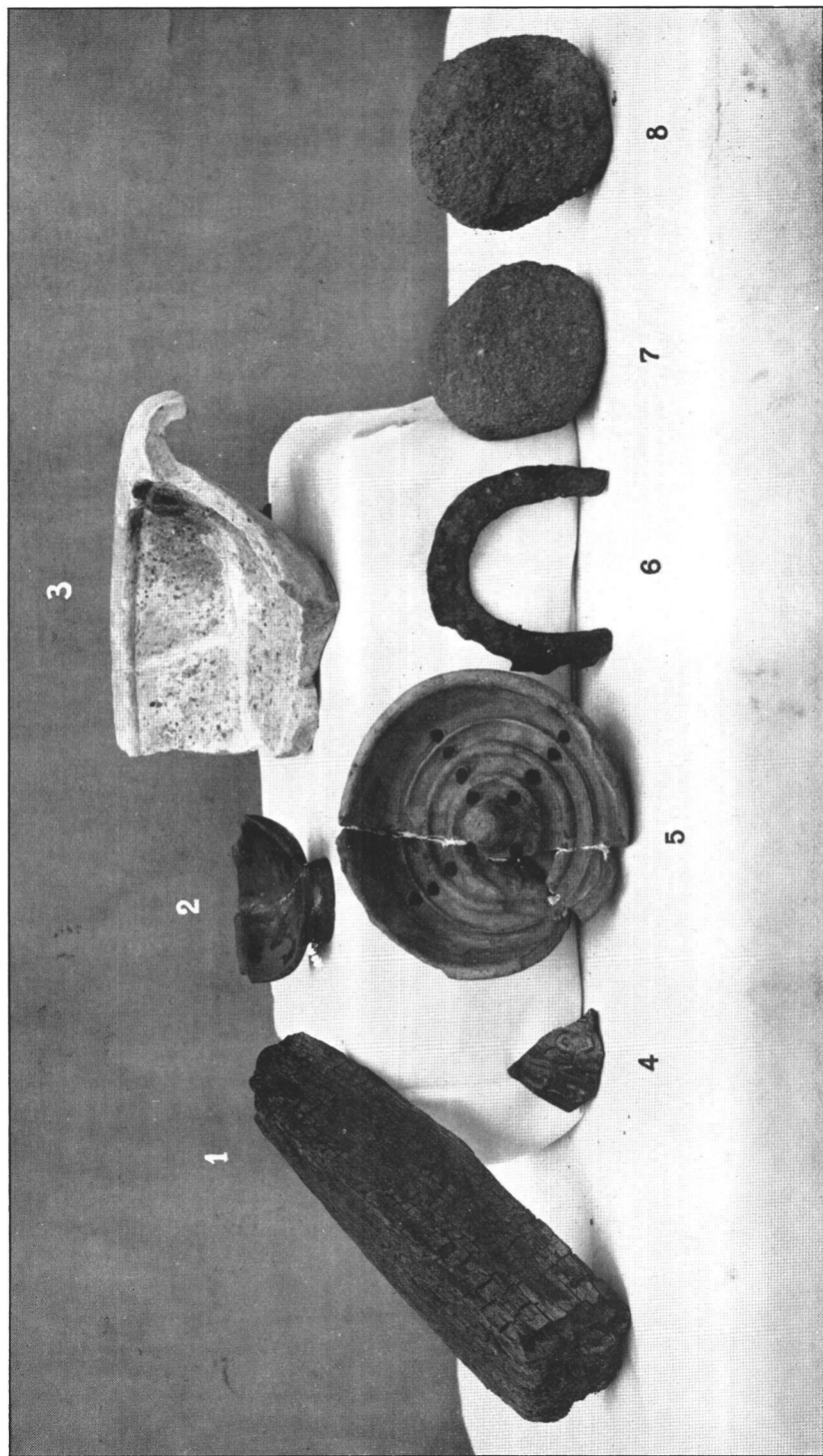
The most recent discovery is a piece of lead, weighing one pound five ounces, which has been roughly cast into the shape of a Roman soldier, with a sword in his right hand and a shield upon his left shoulder; or the figure may possibly be meant to represent Hercules with club and lion's skin.²

The above report seems to show little result for four years' work, but it must be remembered that the actual time spent on excavation has not been great, and that the recovery of the plan of roads and buildings is slow and laborious work. It is hoped that the readers of the *Journal* will realise that

¹ *Cohen*, i., 395. No. 366.

² Found in Section 122 by Mr. J. J. Booth, October, 1911.

PLATE II.



the local committee is doing such work as the limited funds at its disposal permit carefully and under adequate supervision, being content to report slow progress rather than that the ground-plan of the fort should be irretrievably lost by ill-directed excavation.

PLATE II.

MISCELLANEOUS FINDS.

(See opposite.)

1—Part of oak pale. 2 and 4—Fragments of Samian ware. 3—Part of a mortarium. 5—Perforated strainer. 6—Horseshoe on the Roman road at Doctor's Gate. 7—Natural boulder. 8—Worked stone for ballista.

ROMAN COINS.



VESPASIAN. A.D. 75.



NERVA? A.D. 96-98.