



Roman Uses of Roman Tombstones

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DISCOVERY has lately been made on the Roman Wall, which has some interest for Chester folk. The Newcastle Society of Antiquaries has lately been engaged in excavating portions of the Roman fort of Aesica, which stands on the Wall, about two miles north of the modern town of Haltwhistle. The excavators last September (1897) were busy near the centre of the fort, in the complex of buildings which one may call the Prætorium, and here they found, side by side, two Roman tombstones and an Imperial dedication (the latter unfortunately illegible), built into a wall of Roman construction, and covering a Roman drain; an illegible Roman altar was found in another part of the same wall. The tombstones, which were found lying face upwards, were inscribed:—

- (i.) *D[is] M[anibus] Aureliæ Caul... , Aur[e]lia
S...illa sorori [ca]rissime . Vixit an[nos] xv,
m[enses] iiii.*
- (ii.) *Dis Manib[us] L. Novell[ius] Lanuccus c[ivis]
R[omanus], an[norum] lx. Novel[ia] Justina
fil[ia] f[aciendum] c[uravit].*

I cannot date them, though I am inclined to suspect that the second may belong to the earliest period of the

occupation of the Wall; that is, to the first half (probably) of the second century. When the stones were taken to be used as building material, I do not know. The second of the two is well-preserved, and has certainly not suffered much from the weather; the first is more worn, but the wear seems to have taken place after it had been used again. But, whatever the dates, we have now a clear parallel to the use of Roman tombstones in the North City Wall of Chester. In both cases Roman soldiers have used Roman tombstones as building material.

