

NO. VII.—*Account of Excavations at the Mile Castle of Cawfields, on the Roman Wall.* By JOHN CLAYTON, ESQ.—*Communicated in a Letter to the Secretaries.*

*Chesters, 24th January, 1848.*

SIRS,

THE process of clearing away the debris of the Roman Wall on the top of the Cawfields or Cawgap Crags, and of the Castellum or Mile Castle, near Haltwhistle Burn Head, between the stations of Borcovicus and Æsica, has disclosed some Roman remains of historical interest.

These remains tend to confirm the conjecture of our late lamented friend, and secretary, the Rev. John Hodgson, the Historian of Northumberland, that the Murus, popularly called Severus' Wall, was, to some extent at least, the work of Hadrian; this notion seems to have been entertained in the time of Horsley, but to have been exploded, for the time, on the authority of that learned antiquarian, who, in the Eighth Chapter of the First Book of his *Britannia Romana*, after mentioning such to have been the opinion of some "for whose judgement he had great regard," proceeds with his usual terseness of expression, and sagacity of reasoning, to state the grounds on which he himself had arrived at a contrary conclusion—if the materials for forming a judgment which we now possess had been before him, he would probably have been induced to hold a different opinion, and to side with our late ingenious fellow antiquary, Mr. Hodgson.

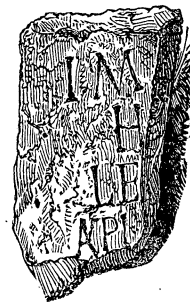
The evidence on which Mr. Hodgson founds his conjecture is detailed in the last published volume of his *History of Northumberland*, and consists of the Inscription preserved in your Collection of Roman Antiquities, found in the foundations of the Castellum, near the Hotbank farm-house, at the opening in the precipice at the foot of the Crag Lake, called the



Milking-gap, between the stations of Borcovicus and Æsica; and of a fragment of a similar inscription preserved in the Collection of Antiquities at Durham, said to have been discovered in the beginning of the last century, in a Mile Castle in the same neighbourhood. This fragment is noticed both by Gordon and Horsley, though neither were able to read it properly, for want of the whole of the letters, since supplied by the discovery, in the year 1831, of the remaining fragment of the stone at Bradley, near to Borcovicus, where it had been built up in the wall of a farm-house.

The Second Legion [*Legio Secunda Augusta*] was employed, without any question, on the work of Hadrian, and these two stones bearing the names of the Second Legion, of the Emperor Hadrian, and of Aulus Platorius Nepos his legate in Britain, and found in two of the Castella or Millitary Turrets, which are evidently contemporaneous with, and form part of the Murus ascribed to Severus, seem to afford strong reason for believing that Hadrian was the author of both.

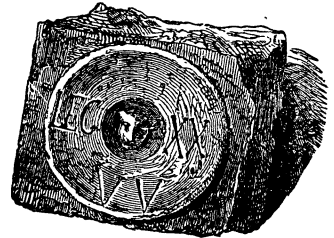
Such is the reasoning of Mr. Hodgson; and I will now proceed to describe to you the recent discoveries which appear to me to justify his reasoning, and support his conclusion. Amongst the debris in the interior of the Mile Castle near Haltwhistle Burn head, to which I have alluded, between the Stations of Borcovicus and Æsica, and about a mile to the east of the latter station, was dug up, during the last summer, the fragment of a stone bearing the same



inscription as the two above described—another effort of the Second Legion to perpetuate its name, and those of Hadrian its Emperor, and Aulus Platorius Nepos his legate.

There is more left of this Mile Castle than of any other on the line of the Wall; the masonry of the Castle and of the Wall (usually styled of Severus) are of the same character, and the Castle and the Wall have evidently been built simultaneously, the Wall forming the northern side of the Castle—and if Hadrian built the Castle, he must necessarily have also built the Wall.

Amongst the stones which have fallen from the Murus on the top of the Cawfields' Crag, about one hundred and fifty yards east of this Mile Castle, there has been taken up a Mural Tablet, which has been in the face of the Wall ascribed to Severus.



The motions and employments of the Twentieth Legion (*Legio vicesima valens victrix*), the historians of the Roman transactions in Britain are agreed, were for the most part the same as those of the *Legio Secunda Augusta*, both those Legions were present with Agricola at the battle with Galgacus and the Caledonians, at the foot of the Grampian Hills, in the year of Christ 84, and they both were concerned in the work of Hadrian; but the Twentieth Legion took no part in the work of Severus, and “among all the Centurial Inscriptions (says Horsley) on the face of that Wall, not one of this Legion, or of any Cohort belonging to it has been found.”

Assuming it to be established that the Twentieth Legion was not employed in Severus' work, whilst it is clear that it bore a part in the work of Hadrian, we have in this Mural Tablet another piece of evidence tending to the conclusion, that this part of the Wall, commonly ascribed to Severus, was originally built by Hadrian. The Murus (the most northern of the defences) is here on the top of a precipice facing to the north, the ground slopes rapidly to the south, and the Vallum usually called Hadrian's Vallum, is at the foot of the descent in the valley below, and three hundred yards at least distant from the Murus; so that there can have been no admixture of the material of the two works.

In addition to these evidences, there has been lately dug up near the eastern gateway of the Station of *Æsica*, from which Hadrian's Vallum is distant upwards of a quarter of a mile, a large Mural Tablet bearing the following inscription :—

IMP. CÆS. TRAIN. HADRIA  
NO AVG. P.P.

The nature of the ground, too, for the whole distance between the stations of *Borcovicus* and *Æsica*, assists materially the proposition for which I have been contending. The Wall between those two stations, a distance of about six miles, is built on the brink of precipices facing to the north; from its position, it must have been composed more of stone than of earth, and have justified the term '*Murus*' applied by the historian Spartian to the work of Hadrian. The Wall (the most northern of the defences), occupies the crest of the hill; the ground slopes down to the south; and the Vallum of Hadrian (usually so called) is at the foot of the slope, and so completely commanded by the rising ground to the north, as to be useless as a position of defence against an invader from the north; it is at a considerable distance from the *Murus*, and has probably (as suggested by Mr. Hodgson) been used as a rampart for the inclosure within lines of defence of lands affording forage for the Roman cavalry.

All this evidence seems to lead irresistibly to the conclusion, that between the Stations of *Borcovicus* and *Æsica* at least, the Wall of Hadrian has been the most northern of the lines of fortification, and has occupied the site of the Wall ascribed to Severus.

If this conclusion be a right one, Severus must, on this part of the line, have been content with repairing the work of Hadrian. The Second Legion and the Sixth (*Legio Sexta Victrix*) were the Legions employed on the work of Severus; of the labours of the Sixth Legion in the same locality, I have myself met with a record. In riding over Haltwhistle Fell, before its enclosure in the summer of 1844, I came upon some workmen employed in re-opening an old quarry; they told me they had met with a 'written stone.' I dismounted from my horse, and climbed the

face of the rock, where I found inscribed in letters very clear and fresh,

LEG. VI. V.

From its position on a wide waste, far removed from any abode of man, but in the immediate vicinity of the Roman Barriers, this quarry could not possibly have been used for any other purpose than for the supply of stones for them, and from the freshness of the letters of the inscription, must have been filled up with earth so soon as the Roman soldiers ceased to use it. The workmen promised to spare the written rock; but the next time I rode that way, it had been shivered to atoms.

Amongst the ruins of the Murus, in the vicinity of the Mile Castle at Haltwhistle Burn head, have been found centurial stones, bearing the following names of Roman officers, but without any addition to denote to what portion of the Roman forces they belonged, viz. RUFUS SABINUS, CÆCILIVS MONVS, and TULLIVS VALERIVS, and within the walls of the Castle, two Sepulchral Stones, (probably removed from the neighbouring burial ground of the Station of Æsica) which, after answering their original purpose of monuments to the dead, have been applied, it would seem by Roman hands, to the objects of the living, in the interior of the building; from one of them the inscription is entirely effaced; on the other the following letters remain legible—

D.	M.
DAGUALD. MIL . . . .	
PAN . VIXIT AN . . .	
PUSINNA . . . . .	
. X. TITUL . . . . .	

from which we collect, that the memory of Dagualdus, a Pannonian soldier, has been thus preserved by the affection of Pusinna his wife. The fourth line evidently concludes with the expression “titulum posuit,” not unusual on monumental stones; the effaced letters on the three preceding lines are obvious. There were also found within the walls of this Castellum a Fibula of Brass, some large Glass Beads of somewhat singular appearance, the Boss of a Shield of Bronze, some Javelin Heads, and two

Silver Coins, the one of Vespasian and the other of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

All the remains which I have described have been safely deposited in the Collection of Roman Antiquities here ; and I will take care that the ruins of this Mile Castle, and of the Murus on the Cawfield Craggs, shall be carefully preserved in their present state.

I am, etc.,

JOHN CLAYTON.

*Note.*—Since the date of the above communication, the remains of the Mile Castle referred to have been completely disinterred, and a massive gateway has been found in the Murus (Severus' Wall), forming the northern wall of the Castellum. This gateway opens on the precipice facing to the north, and yet there is space enough between the gateway and the edge of the precipice to admit of the passage of troops. There is a similar gateway, or entrance, into the Castellum on the south side.

