

XII.—*PONS ÆLII: An attempt to indicate the Site of the Roman Station at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the Course of the Wall through that town.*  
By G. BOUCHIER RICHARDSON.

IN a former part of the Transactions of this Society I communicated an account of the discovery of two Roman altars among the rubble foundations of White-Friar-Tower, one of the medieval fortifications of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which occupied a commanding position on the summit of the steep eminence overlooking the Close, just at the spot where the hill begins to lessen its elevation and descend rapidly westward to the Skinners'-burn, at its conflux with the Tyne. These relics, along with several fragments of pottery and other Roman *débris*, had helped to form an artificial bed whereon the masonry of the tower had been placed. I cannot help thinking that the Roman remains then used up must have formed a part of the western suburbs of PONS ÆLII, lying about the waste ground in this quarter even till the Edwardian era. Nor is it improbable that the monastic institutions of the town—one of which, the White-Friary, stood close by; the churches; the defensive wall of the town itself; and, to go even further back—the Castle, with its extensive outworks—were all largely indebted for materials to the wide-spread ruins of PONS ÆLII. Brand was of opinion ‘that the inscriptions belonging to the station are all built up in the old Keep of the Castle, and that a rich treasure of this kind will some time or other be discovered lurking in its almost impregnable walls;’—long and vainly may the Roman antiquary sigh for relics of that ancient

people, if they are only to be obtained by the destruction of the finest Norman castle in our land! But since the days of Horsley and Brand, PONS ÆLIÏ has vouchsafed traces of her olden occupants, which, though so few as only to whet the appetite of the antiquary, are neither so sparing in number, or unimportant in their character, as not to be of service in strengthening the position taken in the following remarks.

The course of the Roman Wall through Newcastle-upon-Tyne has long exercised the patience and attention of the antiquary. Horsley was the first who attempted to define its course, and the relative position of the station of PONS ÆLIÏ; and Brand, not having the advantage of the discoveries of a later day, adopted the views of his learned predecessor, laying down on his plan of the town, the lines which Horsley has so particularly indicated in his work; its course, however, as thereon marked, is at variance with many of Brand's own evidences, as it certainly is with the discoveries of 1810. I will reserve my views upon the site of the station until I have attempted to indicate an amended line for the Wall. Commencing from the east I may mention that the fragment of the Wall to which Brand alludes, at Byker-hill,<sup>a</sup> was removed to the foundations for the purpose of repairing the Shields road about 1800.<sup>b</sup> Until this time the site of the Wall with the hollow of the fosse from the mill to a smiths' shop, near the first mile-stone, were clearly discernible. At the head of the bank, overlooking the Ouseburn, was a castellum or exploratory tower, out of the foundations of which Brand saw many Roman stones taken, a few years before he wrote, to build an adjoining house. He describes the fosse to have been very distinct and deep, 'and forming what is here called a little gill,' on the north side of a hedge descending thence towards the stream below. Here he conceives the Wall must have formed a small angle at the arch by which it has crossed the Ouseburn.<sup>c</sup> About the year 1800, in digging the foundations of Mr. Beckinton's steam-mill, on the west side of the Ouseburn, the workmen came upon the Wall, and an old mason, with a creditable feeling, built three Roman ashlar-stones into the quay immediately opposite, so as

<sup>a</sup> Brand, i. 138.

<sup>b</sup> Monthly Mag.

<sup>c</sup> Brand, i. 138.

to indicate the course of the barrier.<sup>d</sup> There was also found built up in a structure on the west bank of the burn, the two rude sculptured stones which lie together on the head of the entrance stairs of the castle, next the great doorway of the hall. Mr. Bruce is of opinion that they had formed part of the entrance gateway of the mile-castle just mentioned. They were conveyed to Mr. Yellowley's garden, at the Flint-mill in the Ouseburn, above Busy-cottage,<sup>e</sup> thence to Heaton-hall, and were presented to the Society by Mr. Turner. Hodgson, ignorant of the place of their discovery, describes one of them, which bears an unintelligible inscription, under Wallsend.<sup>f</sup> On the rise of the hill, between the stream and the Red-barns, Brand found, 3 April 1783, many squared stones which had evidently been the plunder of the Wall. About Red-barns, the garden-ground, even in Brand's time, had destroyed every vestige both of Wall and fosse. This place, which occupies the crest of the western bank of the Ouseburn, was not improbably the site of another exploratory tower, as will afterwards be shewn. 'When we are past the gardens,' says Brand, 'the remains of the Wall seem again to appear, and having crossed the field, proceed in a straight line behind the Keelmen's Hospital to the Sally-port,' one of the gates of the Town-wall. He describes there having been a rope-walk upon the foundation of the Wall not many years before he wrote. The ground here alluded to is now occupied with numerous streets, which have long obliterated all traces of the Wall, while the small portion of the vacant ground north of the Keelmen's Hospital, as yet un-occupied with houses, has nevertheless been so cut up with the requirements of brick-works, that hardly an inch of the old surface can be said to exist. Up to the building of Gibson-street, however, some portion of the Wall might I believe, still be traced, and upon the evidence of Mr. George Belt, of this town, who formerly had a garden upon the ground now occupied by the head of that street, two separate portions of the military-way were exposed about six feet below the surface, just in front of the houses on the south side of Buxton-street, as it forms the northern side of the building called the Victoria Bazaar. He describes it having been paved with irregularly shaped stones, having the appearance of the paving of the smaller streets

<sup>d</sup> Mackenzie, 115.<sup>e</sup> Bailey 146.<sup>f</sup> Hodgson, II. iij. 280.

of Newcastle in our own day. Mr. Belt also mentioned to me that a little to the east of this, *i. e.* at a spot now approachable from an archway at the head of the east side of Gibson-street, was a mound of earth and stonework, which was popularly reported to have been the remains of a Roman tower, and there is little doubt the idea was correct. The stones had often been dug out for various purposes, and when Gibson-street was erected it was entirely removed, and a wall adjoining, constructed of its stones. Brand very properly disregarded<sup>s</sup> the assertion of Bourne, that the Sally-port was of Roman origin, and failed to observe that this 'was very visible before the taking down of the upper part of it'<sup>h</sup>—for it was hardly likely that a structure, the base of which yet remains, and exhibits the architectural features of the middle ages, should bear a superstructure of Roman work. The old tower of Rutchester, to which Bourne likens this gate as being 'of the same size, model, and stone,' and which he states 'was undoubtedly one of the Roman towers by the Picts' Wall,' was in fact a border fortalice of the middle ages, in all probability constructed out of the remains of the Roman station of VINDOBALA—the seat of the Rutherfords, and which yet remains, converted into a farm-house. Brand states however, that a turret or castellum stood near the Sally-port, and it must be this to which Grey alludes when he speaks, in one place, of 'an ancient building called the Wall Knowle, a part of the Picts' Wall,' and in another, of 'a Roman tower lately decayed.'<sup>i</sup> Bourne also states, that when he wrote (1732), there was to that 'very day a part of [a] turret in being, above Pandon-gate, which [is] different from the rest in fashion and masonry, and undoubtedly carries along with it very great age.' From the vicinity of the Sally-port then, the Wall passed over the crest of the hill still called *The Wall Knoll*, bearing to the north of the present Sally-port. This was rendered certain by the discovery of its foundations in digging for the building of a coach-house for ald. Sowerby, about the middle of the last century, 'when many curious gentlemen came to view' the remains.<sup>j</sup> Upon enquiry, I found the spot whereon the coach-house stood lies many yards further to the south than the course indicated for the Wall on Brand's map. Further researches will be required here, I fear,

<sup>s</sup> Brand, 17.<sup>h</sup> Bourne, 3.<sup>i</sup> Grey.<sup>j</sup> Brand, i. 138-9.

before the matter can be satisfactorily determined. I may mention that Pandon-gate, in the wall of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, is commonly reported to have been of Roman origin: and that 'As old as Pandon-gate' is a common proverb there. Grey, who wrote in 1649, has three notices of a Roman tower in the Picts' Wall in Pandon, and the third thus, 'one of these towers [of the Roman Wall] remaineth in the Town Wall of Newcastle, in Pampendon, older than the rest of the towers, and of another fashion, standing out of the Wall.'<sup>k</sup> This, however, is clearly a mistake, for the Roman Wall evidently proceeded in a direction nearer the river, and Grey, who is the first to record the traditional age of Pandon, refers the saying to the town and not the gate. 'It is also,' as Hodgson observes, 'very improbable that the Romans would weaken the murus with a gate so far east of the station of PONS ÆLII as the site of Pandon-gate,'<sup>l</sup> which, for all that can be learnt respecting it, was in no wise different in its masonry from the other towers and gates of the town, which were chiefly of the Edwardian era. Leland takes no notice of any such tradition, though he mentions the gate repeatedly; and Horsley himself, in a letter to Robert Cay, 1728, states that 'the line of the Wall appeared clearly to [him to] pass over the east or south side of Pandon-gate.'<sup>m</sup> But this question has again been vexed by Mackenzie, who, upon the authority of a mason named Thomas Robson, who had come upon foundations in building some cottages on Mount Pleasant, in that locality, positively asserted in his work, that the old opinion, that Pandon-gate was of Roman origin was 'confirmed beyond doubt,' from the circumstance of 'the breadth and style' of the masonry in question 'exactly resembling the fragments of this celebrated barrier which are still standing,' being 'in no way similar to the works of more modern times.'<sup>n</sup> I have ferretted out the son of the man in question, who showed me the so-called fragment of the Wall, still standing just east of Pandon-gate. Upon close examination, I find no difference between it and any other part of the Town-Wall, of which it most certainly forms a part. It is eight feet thick, and the facing stones are much larger than those used in the Roman Wall.

<sup>k</sup> Grey.    <sup>l</sup> Hodgson, II. iij. 280.    <sup>m</sup> Hodgson's Memoirs of Horsley and others, 116.

<sup>n</sup> Mackenzie, 115.

Reverting to the line of the Murus we trace its presumed course to Pandon-dean, which it must have crossed by an arch near Stock-bridge, as it is said to have been the ancient boundary and defence of the royal mansion of Pandon-hall on the north,—in the words of Grey, speaking of Pandon-hall, ‘a safe bulwark, having the Picts’ Wall on the north side, and the river Tyne on the south.’ We may therefore with a tolerable share of certainty suppose its course across this triangular area to have been effected upon the site of the houses extending from the foot of Pandon-bank to the foot of Manor-chare. Thence the Wall, crossing the Arick-burn, by an arch would ascend the steep hill to the north of Silver-street and All Saints’ church :—the north side of the crypt of the old church had plainly been built of stones plundered from the adjacent Wall.<sup>o</sup> The testimony of William Robson, the writer of the MS. history quoted by Bourne as the Milbank MS., next comes in stead to shew that the Wall ascended here by ‘Mr. Leonard Carr’s house,’ which, says Bourne, was on the east side of Pilgrim-street, a little above Silver-street.<sup>p</sup> Hence I conceive the course of the Murus is indicated by the line of the present narrow street called the Low-bridge.

Until a comparatively recent period, the site of Dean-street formed the unenclosed bed of the Lort-burn, and was spanned by an arch called the Low-bridge. At the point where this medieval viaduct stood, its Roman predecessor carried the Wall, with its attendant military-way, across the gully. Grey, in 1649, tells us that the ‘Picts’ Wall came over Nether-Dean Bridge, and so along into Pandon.’<sup>q</sup> The arch here, removed in 1788, to which Grey refers, was of the Edwardian era, and in all probability was made to replace the ruinous Roman bridge at the outset of the fourteenth century, shortly before which Pandon was united to Newcastle, and first included within her girdle of defences. Brand, writing from London 24 Mar. 1788, to Beilby the engraver, who had his offices in St. Nicholas’ church-yard, says, ‘Mr. Saint has informed me that the workmen *below you* [*i. e.* clearly in Dean-street, or St. Nicholas’-steps] have lately struck upon the Roman Wall. As an old hunter upon

<sup>o</sup> Brand, i. 139.

<sup>p</sup> Bourne, 4.

<sup>q</sup> Grey, 9.

that scent, I hope you would not fail to be present upon the *finding* of such rare game, and that you will not think it too much trouble to give me a full account of the chase.<sup>r</sup> There has been a constant and well-supported tradition that the church of S. Nicholas stands partly upon the course of the Murus, and that this has prevailed anciently we learn from Leland, who says, ‘S. Nicholas, the chief parochie church of Newcastle, standithe on the very Picte Waulle’—and in another place adds, ‘Doctor Davell [of the Hosp. B. V. M.] told me that S. Nicholas chirche in Newcastell stonidith on the Picth Waulle.’<sup>s</sup> Leland wrote in Henry the Eighth’s time. To advance a step further—Brand tells us that the north wall of a stable in the Spread Eagle Inn, near Denton-chare [in other words, upon the site of the present Collingwood-street], was evidently composed of Roman stones; <sup>t</sup> and Horsley heard that ‘in laying the foundation of a building in the Groat-market [about the year 1713], the masons struck upon the Roman Wall at each of [its] side walls, so that the building stands across the Roman Wall.’<sup>u</sup> Unfortunately, Horsley is not sufficiently definite as to the situation of this house; but further evidence was in store. In 1810, while the workmen were employed in digging for foundations for the houses on the north side of Collingwood-street, Hodgson saw ‘strong remains of the Roman Wall exposed,’<sup>v</sup> and also on the south side of the same street, in digging for a sewer to Mr. John Arnett’s house. The Wall then was found to run obliquely across the street, about two feet north of Mr. Arnett’s shop-door, and yielded from fifty to sixty carts of stones, which were led away. There was also a well, discovered on the south side of the Wall, which, with a portion of the core of the Wall, still exist in the cellar beneath the foot-way, on the south side of Collingwood-street. The well was found to be about fifteen feet deep, and three feet in diameter. Upon this occasion there was also found a stone hollowed out like a mortar, containing some bones, and ashes or red earth. This, it seems, was found inverted on a thin stone, and formed part of the face of the Wall.

The Wall now seeks to attain the higher grounds, and to this end has taken a slight angle so as to pass north of St. John’s Church, and through

<sup>r</sup> Brand’s letters, 24.    <sup>s</sup> Lel. Itin. vii. 51.    <sup>t</sup> Brand, i. 139.    <sup>u</sup> Horsley.    <sup>v</sup> Hodgs. II. iij. 280.

the gardens formerly at the back of the Vicarage-house. Dr. Ellison, vicar from 1694 to 1721, who resided in it, expressly speaks of its existence there in his time—‘The Pict Wall goes through the Vicarage-garden of Newcastle’;—and Horsley had ‘a pretty certain account of the Roman Wall’s being discovered in the Vicarage-gardens, which lie a little to the north of St. John’s Church.’ ‘The garden belonging to this house,’ says Bourne, ‘tho’ beneath some others in this street [Westgate-street] for art and curiosity, and beauty of flowers; yet in this it glories above all the others, that the Roman Wall, which was undoubtedly one of the great works of the Roman Emperors, is said to have passed through the middle of it.’<sup>w</sup> In laying the foundations of the Assembly-rooms the workmen are said to have discovered the foss of the Wall—but Mr. George Anderson, master-builder, was of a contrary opinion.<sup>x</sup> This, however, must surely have been correct, and seems to accord with Mackenzie’s statement, who remarks that Mr. Thomas Gee, the town-surveyor, discovered the foundations of the Wall a few yards south of the palisades of this building.<sup>y</sup> Should this be correct, the stated course of the Wall through the gardens of the Vicarage seems to lie too far north. Hornby particularly describes that the workmen at the presumed ditch, met with ashes to a considerable depth in one part which gradually sloped upwards to near the surface, which was strong clay for two or three feet above the ashes.<sup>z</sup> The Wall proceeding westward would, as it were, intersect the Town-wall between the West-gate and Durham-tower. Thence it would pass through the grounds of George Thomas Dunn, esq., and in its exit from the town, westward, no doubt occupied the elevation whereon are built the houses of Cumberland-row. We learn that the deeds for the ground on which a house stands, just without the site of the West-gate, call the spot ‘Pics Wall, or Hole’—and that in a deed dated 14 Febr. 40 Eliz. wherein ‘Eleynor Swynborne demised to Robert Heslop, armorer, and others, her stone-quarries in the territories of Elswick,’ they are described as ‘boundering upon an old wast quarrye theare in the east parte, upon a corn field theare upon the west parte, upon the Quenes majesties high waie theare on the north parte, and upon an *old Wall*

<sup>w</sup> Bourne, 22.<sup>x</sup> Brand i. 139.<sup>y</sup> Mackenzie, i. 116.<sup>z</sup> Hornby, ii. 97.



*theare called the Wall* on the south parte, by the right meetes, etc.<sup>a</sup> The track of the Murus however has been entirely destroyed by the erection of numerous houses, and the formation of gardens, together with the sinking of enormous quarries at the crest of the hill.

Some portions of the Vallum were remaining in Horsley's time, and probably much later, just without the West-gate. Traces of it still exist behind a row of houses appropriately called Adrianople, at the crest of the hill, but an adjacent quarry threatens daily to encroach upon them.

Besides the Station of PONS ÆLII standing the next in order to SEGEDUNUM in the Notitia, its name, 'THE BRIDGE OF ÆLIUS,' fixes it at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 'for,' says Hodgson, 'Hadrian belonged to the Ælian family, and not only his Wall commenced here, but we know that Jerusalem was called after him *Ælia Capitolina*, and the games at Pincum, in Mæsia, *Ælia Pincensia*; and there are two medals of his reign, one bearing a bridge of five arches, and the other of seven: and the Pons Ælii at Rome had five, and the bridge of Newcastle seven. We also find the Ælian cohort of Dacians at AMBOGLANNA, the first cohort of Marines called *Ælia* at TUNNOCELLUM, and the Sabinian wing (perhaps so styled from Sabina, Hadrian's wife,) at HUNNUM; and all these three are placed in the Notitia as stations per Lineam Valli. Brand, too, had a coin of Trajan, and has engraved one of Hadrian found in taking down the piers of Newcastle bridge. Pennant also mentions coins of Faustina the elder; Antoninus Pius, and Lucius Verus, as found in them; and the late S. Huthwaite, esq., of Gateshead, showed me coins of Gordian and Magnentius, found in the second or third southern pier; all probably deposited in repairs and alterations, done after Hadrian's time."<sup>b</sup> The medallion with the Pont Ælius, quoted by the early numismatic writers, has since been pronounced a fabrication.<sup>c</sup>

That a bridge, then, was erected here by Hadrian, seemed certain. That it occupied the site of the present bridge, spanning the river from the Sandhill to the opposite shore in Gateshead—a site well adapted for an effective defence from above, appeared also highly probable; but the anti-

<sup>a</sup> Brand, i. 142.

<sup>b</sup> Hodgson, II. iij. 173.

<sup>c</sup> Akerman, 239.

quaries of the last century were hardly prepared to find, on the removal of the piers of the old house-beset bridge after the devastating flood of 1771, that the old stones themselves distilled incontestible evidence of their Roman origin—that the Roman bridge itself may be said to have existed up to that very moment. Roman bridges of size appear to have been mere masses of masonry built on piles, bearing a strong roadway of timber, a plan which would enable that people readily enough to construct oblique bridges, as we cannot suppose them acquainted with the principles of the skew arch. Indeed we have evidence to shew that for many centuries after the Roman occupation, the roadway of the bridge of Newcastle was of the same material. Many of the old rents and benefactions for the sustentation of the bridge mention planks of wood yearly to be rendered. But in 1348 a grievous fire occurring in the wooden dwellings in the lower part of the town, and extending to and consuming the roadway of the bridge, the inhabitants of Newcastle and the bishoprick of Durham agreed jointly to throw stone arches from pier to pier, probably for the very first time.

“PONS ÆLII,” remarks Hodgson, “was governed by the tribune of the cohort of the Cornovii, a people whose name is unnoticed by all the ancient geographers I have access to. Could they,” he asks, “be from either family of the Cornavii of Britain? It was not according to the Roman policy to garrison a country with detachments of its own inhabitants.”

That the station of Pons Ælii stood on the bank of the Tyne, opposite the bridge, (proceeds our reverend author) recent discoveries have abundantly proved. The castle has been built within its area. In digging for foundations for the Northumberland County Court-house, in 1810, a well was found finely cased with Roman masonry. It still remains below the centre part of the present court-house. It had originally been a spring, or sunk low down on the river bank, and its circular wall raised within another strong wall in the form of a trapezium to the height of the area of the station, and the space between them traversed with strong connecting beams of oak, both horizontally and perpendicularly, and then tightly packed up with pure blue clay. Some beams of this timber were taken up and formed into the judges' seats and chairs for the grand jury room, now in use. Two of the perpendicular beams had very large stags' horns at their lower end, apparently to assist in steadying them till clay sufficient was put around them to keep them upright. On the original slope of the bank next the outer wall there was a thick layer of ferns, grasses, brambles, and twigs of birch and oak, closely matted together, and evidently showing that before these works were constructed, man had not tenanted the spot. Here also were exposed large remains of the foundations of other very thick and strong

walls, one of which rose into the eastern wall of the Old Moot-hall, which was of exactly the same breath, bearing, and style of building, and doubtless of the same date as the Roman foundations, of which it was a continuance. There was also a low, half-round, arched doorway in it, walled up; but which on being re-opened and its jambs taken down, appeared plainly to have been cut out of the wall, and its sides constructed with very different mortar to that of the wall itself—the mortar of which was there a sort of grouting made of slacked lime, mixed with brick, fossil coal, and limestone, broken into small pieces, and all poured in a fluid state among a rouble-work of unhewn stone carelessly thrown together, between two faces of ashlar work. This wall, as it goes to join the Black Gate, has many courses of stone still standing in their original state on each side of the stairs leading into the Side; and is, I have no doubt, a part of the original wall of Pons Ælii.

The whole site of the Court-house for several feet above the original surface of the earth was strewn with a chaos of Roman ruins. I was frequently on the spot while the excavations were carrying on, and saw dug up large quantities of Roman pottery, two bronze coins of Antoninus Pius, parts of the shaft of a Corinthian pillar, fluted, and of the finest workmanship; besides many mill-stones, and two altars, one bearing an illegible inscription, and the other quite plain. The altars were found near the north-east corner of the Court-house, and near them a small axe, and a concave stone which bore marks of fire, was split, and had thin flakes of lead in its fissures. The broad foundation walls were firm and impenetrable as the hardest rock. On Aug. 11, 1812, when the foundations of the north portico were sinking, a Roman coin was found (of what Emperor I have no minute), and the original surface of the ground was covered with a thick stratum of small wood, some parts of which were wattled together in the form of crates, or the corfs of collieries, but in a decayed state, and cut as easily with the workmen's spades as the brushwood found in peat mosses does. As there was much horse or mule's dung near them, and some mule's shoes amongst it, I thought they had been fixed there as crates or racks to eat fodder out of.

Most of the conjectures that have been hazarded respecting the exact site and size of the station, seem to be extremely vague and unsatisfactory. "That the Castle-garth," continues our author, "was either a part of it, or some work or suburb to it, is past all doubt."<sup>d</sup>

Thus it will be seen, that Hodgson inclines to the idea of the station's having occupied a position reaching to the brink of the hill overlooking the river and bridge; and though he somewhat qualifies his decision as to the import of the works upon this commanding steep, yet I think the discoveries of his own and a later day, argue for other than mere military works. Where the Romans could bring such a natural defence into their line, they were not slow to avail themselves of it; and the probability

<sup>d</sup> Hodgson, II. iij., 173-4.

seems to be, that the Normans but refortified in part what the Romans had set them the example in, some eight hundred years before. The Castle which gave name to the present *Newcastle*, was undoubtedly so named from its being built within the bounds and out of the materials of the *old* Roman Castle or Chester of *PONS ÆLII*, which, as Hodgson remarks, “is unquestionably the most appropriate Latin name of the place from the Roman to the Norman era.”

In assigning shape and limit to the station, Horsley made use of the following slender facts:—1. The course of the Wall westward, which he no doubt properly conceives to have been the northern boundary; 2. The direction of the Vallum then remaining without Westgate; and 3. ‘A traditional account of the Wall having passed through St. George’s Porch, near the north-west corner of St. Nicholas’ church.’ As this porch lies somewhat to the south of *his* line for the Wall itself, he conceived that this traditional Wall must have been the eastern boundary of the station, and draws it upon his plan accordingly. Horsley’s traditional account, however, must have been derived from the same source as Leland’s; and therefore may indicate, not the station wall, but the great Wall itself. This conclusion is the more likely, since the discoveries made in Collingwood-street have proved that the Wall must have passed over the site of the church from end to end, and not to the north of it. The line of the Vallum, at a distance of six chains from the Wall, formed Horsley’s southern rampart; and, prepossessed with the necessity of assigning to his camp a quadrangle figure, readily draws a line six chains from its eastern boundary, at right angles with the northern, enclosing a space of little more than three acres—thus altogether avoiding the enceinte of the Norman fortress, and the advantageous position which it holds.

Brand, adopting Horsley’s theory, as not having any other to offer, has laid down the ramparts of both the Station, Vallum, and Wall on his plan of Newcastle.

After the very interesting account of the exhumations within the area of walls of the Norman castle, from the pen of Hodgson, it only rests for me to say that subsequent discovery and investigation have but tended to confirm his opinion, that the Castle-garth has formed a portion of the Roman

station. The two altars, and the fragments of pottery found beneath the foundations of White-Friar-tower, and the discovery of the beautiful figure of Mercury upon the very brink of the hill, just south of the castle, where the High-level-bridge makes its first spring from the Bank-side,—and the disinterment of a number of Roman coins from the soil adjacent to White-Friar-tower, all tend further to strengthen the opinion. In 1787, when Sir John Turner pulled down the front part of the Half-moon-battery, which occupied a position at the corner of the Castle-works, and exactly faced the roadway of the bridge beneath, we have the testimony of Alderman Hornby that ‘it was found to be of an octagonal figure’ and that ‘it presented an appearance essentially Roman, as regarded its masonry.’ ‘The wall’ he says, ‘was about three feet thick, and the facing stones and rubble strikingly resembled Roman. In some parts adjoining, there were loose stones scattered about, and made use of by the inhabitants for various purposes—of the exact size and form of those in the Roman Wall.’<sup>e</sup> William Robson, whom we have before quoted, and who wrote from personal experience, tell us that at the great siege of the town in 1644, ‘the *round tower* under the Moot-hall, toward the Sandhill, called the Half-moon, which was the *old castle* of Monkchester, was by Sir John Marlay made use of to secure the the river and Keyside against the Scots.’<sup>f</sup> Taking these two evidences into consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the Half-moon in question, has been no other than one of the circular corners of the Roman station, a feature which I believe is very generally adopted in these structures. When the Normans came, they would not fail to include so important a post in their new works, though they might find it expedient entirely to re-construct the rest of their lines, and remove the greater portion of the works of their predecessors. Though I cannot agree with Mr. Hodgson in assigning a Roman origin to the masonry leading thence to the Dog-leap-stairs, which I conceive to be



<sup>e</sup> Hornby, i. 10.

<sup>f</sup> Milbank MS., in Bourne.

Norman, I do not doubt but that the *foundations* are of the age indicated. My views of the Roman station, then, are, that its eastern wall would occupy the site of the present Norman wall as far as the Black-gate, whence it would proceed to join the Murus as it passed across the site of St. Nicholas. In like manner the southern wall would stretch along the brow of the hill overlooking the Close, as far as the Long-stairs, which is the limit of the outer wall of the Norman Castle. Thence, if I do not overrate the size of the station, I presume it may have been continued to the site of White-Friar-tower, where might occur another (the south-west) rounded corner. I bring along the Wall to this spot because it is the extreme point of the hill westward, which retains the greater elevation, the ground immediately west of that receding rapidly to the Skinners'-burn.

What the medieval engineers saw to be a good site, would hardly escape the certainly not less experienced eyes of those of Rome. From this spot the Wall might proceed northward to form the western boundary, and fall in with the Murus somewhere in the Westgate, enclosing a space of sixteen acres and upwards.

Thus, as at Rochester, the Wall along two of the sides of the station has accommodated itself to the irregularities of the hill-side, for the sake of a superior defensive position, while the western boundary would probably be carried to the Murus in a straight line, and in consequence of the barrier taking a course up Westgate-hill, not in the least parallel with the southern wall, would be of much greater length than any of the rest. If my evidences and arguments have any force, it cannot be necessary for me again to mention that the peculiarities of the site, and the necessities of what must even at this early day have been a place of trade, would surely justify the engineer in holding at defiance the rules generally adopted in the construction of Roman fortresses, and that local necessities and requirements would induce him to make many modifications of his plans. Vegetius informs us in express terms that the Romans did allow, and very reasonably too, a variation from the ordinary rule of castrametation, when the circumstances of their position required it. '*Interdum autem quadrata, interdum trigona, interdum semirotunda, prout loci qualitas aut necessitas postulaverit, castra facienda sunt.*' It would be absurd to imagine that

those politic tacticians would tie themselves down by a rule, the exception to which would strengthen their position. No; sometimes the branches of their camps would follow the line of the eminence on which they were placed, and where the natural ground was so precipitous as to be inaccessible, the trench would be omitted altogether, whereas it would be doubled or trebled where, from the circumstances of the spot, a vulnerable point of attack might be laid open to the enemy.'<sup>8</sup>

In order to gain for PONS ÆLIU the quadrate figure of its fortress, it has been suggested that as instances do occur on the line of the Wall where the barrier does not fall in with the station at all, but leaves it far to the south, so in this case might the station stand on the brink of the hill, as is proposed, and the Wall pursue its course at some distance to the north. A glance at the map of the town however, will be sufficient to shew that the engineer has, to some extent, in passing the country west of the Ouseburn, undertaken unnecessary difficulties, evidently for the sole purpose of bringing the line so close to the station as to make the barrier itself form its northern boundary. That this has been his object, is I think rendered evident, when we observe that immediately after this object seems to have been effected, he takes a somewhat abrupt movement with the Murus so as at once to gain the high ground of Westgate-hill and Benwell. If, on the other hand, it had been a matter of indifference how distant the Wall ran from the station, the engineer would clearly have carried his line considerably farther north, in a straighter line from Byker to Benwell, and thus not only have met with less of engineering difficulty, but thereby have enclosed to the south of the Wall, a much larger space of valuable ground for the uses of the population lying between it and the Tyne. Besides, where camps are found detached from the Murus, some physical difficulty or superior advantage to be gained may always be traced as the cause of such disregard of the usual plans, as at Caervoran, for instance, where a swamp lies between the two works. Though the Roman fortresses were usually square or oblong, yet we have seen they never scrupled to sacrifice regularity when they gained some additional strength or convenience by deviating from a rule.

<sup>8</sup> Gent. Mag., ciiij. 522.

My views on this last, and on former parts of my subject, have been very considerably strengthened upon the perusal of Beale Poste's judicious remarks on the walls of Rochester on the Medway.<sup>h</sup> Here we have a parallel instance of the Norman castle erected within the site of a Roman station—the parallel of the area of its castle occupying a corner of that of the station; in both cases overlooking the river, and also in both deviating from the recognised rule of castrametation.

Neither Agricola nor Hadrian were likely to fortify a position that offered no military advantages; and Hadrian would undoubtedly select his post at this place, so as to protect his bridge, overlook the Tyne, and cover the western flank of the Vallum, which Horsley makes to commence somewhere about the eastern extremity of Bailey-gate, but which, if my theory be admitted, more probably had its origin about the head of Orchard-street, or possibly somewhat nearer the river. The station which Horsley and Brand lay down, totally deprived of a view of the Tyne, and of all opportunity for observation,<sup>i</sup> might as well have lain much further north, and is in my opinion, when I consider the evident importance of the place, of much too small size, if even we suppose that the stations were all confined to mere military purposes.

Mr. Hodgson Hinde, in a letter to me on this subject, entertains the opinion, that though I may not be wrong in considering PONS ÆLIU to have been a place of greater importance than the other stations on the Wall, it is not a necessary consequence that the camp itself (in other cases applied to solely military purposes) should have been either of larger size or of different shape than usual; and though not indisposed to agree with me, in attributing to PONS ÆLIU an extended site, and a population surpassing that of other places on the line, he contends that both would meet with sufficient accommodation in suburban buildings to the east and west

<sup>h</sup> Journal of British Archæological Association, iv. 30.

<sup>i</sup> It must be admitted that Horsley has by no mean overlooked the likelihood of the bridge being commanded from the high ground above, for he supposes that one of the extremities of the Vallum was on the bank of the Tyne, beyond the castle, perhaps near the Half-moon-battery, where, says he, there may have been a circular turret in the time of the Romans to command the pass of the bridge.



of the station itself. This consideration, however, can only affect my assumed western boundary of the camp, by bringing that wall further east, as I conceive that the identity of the Half-moon-battery of the Castle with the south-eastern corner of the Roman station, and the view that the Wall itself must have formed the northern boundary, are positions which have been pretty well made out.

Mr. Hinde concurs with me in thinking the Side coincides with the ancient thoroughfare from the river, and I may further state, that I consider the Black-gate of the Castle, or its immediate vicinity, in like manner to be the more modern representative of the eastern portal of the Roman station.

The *Suburbs* of PONS ÆLII would doubtless be very extensive, and we can hardly be wrong in asserting that all the eminences south of the Wall, and extending from the Skinners'-burn on the west, to the Ouseburn on the east, would be clothed with the dwellings, gardens, and fields of the Roman citizens and Romanized Britons. Not many traces it is true, have been turned up to indicate this, but the position hardly requires such confirmation. A hint has been conveyed to me, that a Roman well was discovered on the summit of the hill whereon stands the present church of All Saints, when the old church was removed in 1785. The adjoining town of Pandon, or 'Pampeden, alias Pantheon,' Grey tells us, 'hath retained its name, without much alteration, since the Romans recided in it. After the departure of the Romans,' he proceeds, 'the kings of Northumberland kept their residence in it, and had their house now called Pandon-hall. It was a safe bulwark, having the Picts' Wall on the north side, and the river of Tine on the south. This place of Pandon is of such antiquitie, that if a man would expresse any ancient thing, it is a common proverb, As old as Pandon.' In another part of his work, Grey is plainly of opinion, that the name of *Pandon* is derived from a Roman *Pantheon*, and that the church of All Hallowes, or All Saints, as it is indifferently called, may in a similar manner have had its dedication to All the Saints, suggested by that of a temple to All the Gods—which may perchance have oecupied

the very site of the present church. Brand treats this notion of Grey's with undue asperity, saying 'this conjecture of Grey appears too ridiculous to deserve either to be considered or confuted.' Bailey, viewing with greater favour the view of the earliest historian of our town, remarks that this unqualified censure appears not only to be severe, but also ill-founded. For in the structure of the Greek word Pantheon, the delta might easily slip into the inscription on the temple for the theta, thus making the word Pandeon, instead of Pantheon, the name of that part of the town in which All Saints' church was originally built. It is well known, proceeds this author, that the early Christians adopted several of the names and customs of the Heathens, both to allure new converts, and not too severely to pain the feelings of such as had but recently adopted the Christian system.<sup>1</sup>

Certainly the latest, and I cannot help thinking the best derivation, yet advanced, is contained in a communication with which I have been favoured by Mr. Hodgson Hinde. In this he supports a view which, to a certain extent, had occurred to Brand: Mr. Hinde would assign the *AD MURUM* of Bede, where, in 753, were baptized Pæda the son of Penda, king of Mercia, and Sigebert, king of the East Angles, to Pandon, a royal villa of Oswy, king of Northumberland; upon the ground of correspondence as to its distance from the sea, as mentioned by Bede; its having constant and well supported traditions of Saxon royal occupation; and above all, the name of the place, in the earliest records written *Pampedene*, corresponding so nearly with the form in which that of the first convert is found to have been written—*Pantha*. *Panthadene* would hardly be distinguishable in pronunciation from *Pampedene*, and it is surely no improbable hypothesis that so important an event, leading to the ultimate conversion of the whole people of Mercia, should give name to the Dene in which the immersion took place, whilst the eminence behind has preserved the original title of the villa, *Ad Murum*, in its English equivalent *Wall-Knoll*.

Formerly, the Tyne flowed up to the foot of the present Dean-street, and washed the bases of the two hills whereon the greater part of ancient Newcastle stands. That this creek was the ancient wharf of the town, be-

<sup>1</sup> Bailey, 261-2.

fore the building of the key along the river side, is perfectly certain. That part of the hill called the *Painter-heugh* is supposed to have derived its name from being the place to which the boats' *painters* or ropes would be attached. Grey attests the navigation of boats up the *Lort-burn* to above the arch of the *Low-bridge*. A portion of the old key, I believe, still exists, surrounding the base of the *Painter-heugh*, just north of the arch over the *Side*; and a few yards further towards the river, another portion of the key, I have heard was fallen in with by the workmen, in constructing a large drain there, a few years ago. The stream was only covered-in for the first time in 1696, previous to which it ran open to the street. That this creek was also used by the Romans, I think can need no formal proof.

Their boat-ladings would no doubt be carried up the slack of the *Side*, and the sandy base of the hill whereon stood the station, would be the way—the only way—from the bridge to the higher ground where the fortress and city stood.

The beautiful slope extending westward from what I have assumed as the boundary of the station in that direction, to the *Skinners'-burn*, was, before the building of the numerous busy manufactories and dwellings, which now occupy the ground, entirely laid out as fields and garden grounds. It was anciently called the *Hoga*. No doubt this also was a suburb of the station, as also the ground lying further north to the *Wall* itself, including the spot where now stands the great Central Railway Station, and the *Forth*, whose glories, though but as of yesterday, have as entirely departed as those of *Pons Ælii* itself.

The ruin which has overtaken the Roman city and fortress, the features of which we have been considering—its walls, its ramparts, its gates, streets, temples, its public buildings, its domestic dwellings, aye even the most trifling matters indicative of Roman occupation, is *complete*;—the successive indwelling of Saxon, Dane, and Norman, would speedily modify the features of the place—while long centuries of advancing civilization, during which a town arose upon its ruins at least three times its extent, and now,

in our own day, not less than twenty times, have tended not only further to smooth down its knolls, excavate its ruins for the sake of the materials, and destroy its architectural features, but have, by the deposition of vast quantities of rubbish and soil, buried far beneath the present surface the great bulk of Roman Newcastle. A rich treasure yet lurks beneath the soil south of Collingwood and Mosley streets, for the future antiquary of Pons Ælii to ponder over.

But the remains which have been exhumed, few though they be, are some of them of such a class as to indicate PONS ÆLIÆ to have been a city of the first order and consideration. Does not the site seem to point itself out as the fit seat of a principal city?—Would not the numerous hills which rise so steeply and majestically from the deep waters of the Tyne remind the Roman general of his own loved Tiber, and fill him with longings to crown its eminences with his fortresses, his temples, and places of public luxury and resort?—Did he not see these these hills laved by the waters of a noble river, far broader, and deeper than his own?—Did he not thus early discern that this must needs be then and after the great northern place of shipping, of trade, and import?—And that, at this place, before all others, must the river be spanned by the great northern highway?

G. BOUCHIER RICHARDSON.