

XIV.—*BREMETENRACUM*: On the site of *Bremetenracum* in the *Notitia* and *Bremetonacum* in the *Itinerary*, and on the bearing of this question on *Horsley's* theory of *Secondary Stations* 'per lineam valli,' with some speculations as to the sites of certain other *Stations* in the *Notitia* and *Itinerary*.

THE portion of the *Notitia* which relates to Britain, is undoubtedly one of the most valuable illustrations which we possess of the condition of the Roman province, containing as it does a list of all the military stations, with the particulars of the troops by which they were severally garrisoned, at a period very little antecedent to the final abandonment of the island.

Of these fortified posts the total number was forty-five,* of which nine were under the command of the Count of the Saxon Shore, and the remainder under an officer called the Duke of Britain (*Dux Britanniarum*).

The military government of the latter seems to have extended from the Trent northwards to the frontier of the province, one of the southern stations being *DANUM*, which was unquestionably *Doncaster*, and the most northern being those on the line of the Wall of Hadrian. In the enumeration of the stations subordinate to the Duke of Britain, the first thirteen

* This is exclusive of the city of York (*EBORACUM*), which is not named in the *Notitia*, although the Sixth Legion is mentioned, whose stated quarters are known to have been there.

are given without any general distinctive title; but before the succeeding twenty-three, occur the words '*Item per lineam Valli.*' In endeavouring to assign sites to the Notitia stations, it was natural, in the first instance, to look for all the twenty-three which follow this title, on the line of the Wall; but it has been long conclusively ascertained, that the number of these has not exceeded seventeen, or at most eighteen. A question thus arises about the disposition of the remaining five or six; whether, having exhausted the number of stations *on* the Wall, we are to consider the title as applicable to them only, or whether we must enlarge the strict meaning of the words, and apply them to other fortresses *in connection with* the Wall, though not immediately adjacent to its site.

On the former supposition, we have an additional number of stations to be sought for indiscriminately throughout the government of the Duke of Britain; on the latter, we are restricted in our search to a limited district in the vicinity of the Wall.

Horsley, a writer of the very highest authority on every subject connected with Roman Britain, adopted the latter view, and having assigned localities *upon* the Wall to eighteen stations, suggested that the remaining five must have been outposts on the five roads leading from the Wall southwards. On each of these roads were traced the remains of stations, in accordance with this theory, at the distance of a moderate stage from the Wall. Thus GLANNIBANTA was assigned to Lanchester, ALIONÆ to Whitley, BREMETENRACUM to Old Penrith, OLENACUM to Old Carlisle, and VIROSIDUM to Ellenborough; while consistency was given to the theory by the existence of an inscription at Whitley, in which mention is made of the third cohort of the Nervii, the very corps which, according to the Notitia, was in garrison at ALIONÆ.

It is remarkable, that whilst the evidence of an inscription, by no means conclusive, has been cited by nearly every antiquary who has approached the subject, from the time of Camden to the present day, as a proof of the position of ALIONÆ at Whitley, the evidence of another inscription has been entirely overlooked, which proves beyond doubt, not only that BREMETENRACUM was not at Old Penrith, or within a stage of the Wall, but that it was upwards of eighty miles to the south of it.

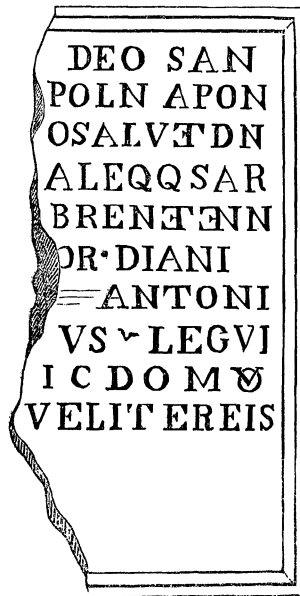
This latter inscription, as well as that found at Whitley, was first noticed by Camden, although it was known to him, and at a more recent period, to Horsley, through the medium of a very faulty transcript, the original stone having been removed from its position at Ribchester, and built up in a wall at Salisbury Hall in such a way as to display the sculpture with which one side was decorated, but entirely to conceal the inscription on the other. Dr. Whitaker, however, a man well skilled in antiquarian pursuits, succeeded in restoring the hidden treasure to light, and in deciphering the still legible characters; but though he devoted much pains to its elucidation, and furnished an interpretation generally satisfactory, he was baffled by a single word, and that one, the key to the identity of BREMETENRACUM with Ribchester.

The following are copies of the faulty transcript furnished to Camden, and of the genuine inscription as deciphered by Dr. Whitaker:—

Camden.

SEOESAM
ROLNASON
OSALVEDN
AL QQ SAR
BREVENM
BEDIANIS
ANTONI
VS MEGVI
IC DOMV
ELITER

Whitaker.



Dr. Whitaker proceeds, "After the most attentive consideration, I think the inscription is to be read as follows.—*Deo Sancto Apolloni Apono pro*

salute Domini Nstri, Ala Equitum Sarmatarum Brennetennorum, Dianius Antonius, Centurio Legionis Sextæ Victricis, Domu Velitris. I suspect the word which follows Sarmatarum to express a subordinate tribe of that widely spread nation, the Sarmatæ Brenetenni; at least I can assign no other meaning to it."

In Dr. Whitaker's transcript we have the word BRENETENNOR followed by a point, which implies an abbreviation. In Camden's copy the fourth letter is V instead of N, either of which letters might be traced in a worn inscription out of the remains of a partially obliterated M. Now the substitution of M for N gives us BREMETENNOR, as the abbreviation of BREMETENNORACI, and we at once identify BREMETENNORACUM and its garrison of Sarmatæ, with BREMETENRACUM of the Notitia and its garrison of Armaturæ.

By supplying the initial S, and a trifling alteration in the latter part of the word, the inscription supplies a valuable emendation of the Notitia. It was difficult to affix a meaning to '*Cuneus Armaturarum.*' Horsley translated it 'a body of men in armour;' but even admitting that the words might without impropriety have been used in this sense, there is nothing in the description which, if applicable at all, is not, as far as we know, equally applicable to every other corps in Britain. Although this is the only inscription which mentions BREMETENRACUM as the name of the station, several have been found at Ribchester, which place it beyond a doubt that the Ala Equitum Sarmatarum were in garrison there.

The discovery of the site of BREMETENRACUM on the line of the great Roman road which led northwards from Manchester, places beyond dispute its identity with BREMETONACUM of the Itinerary, a conclusion which it was difficult to resist, even when supported only by the striking affinity of the names.

The 10th Iter, in which BREMETONACUM is one of the stations, commences at GLANOVENTA, on the northern or north-western frontier of the Roman province, and terminates at MEDIOLANUM, two stages south of MANCUNIAM, which undoubtedly occupied the site of modern Manchester; but it will be convenient for the purpose of our present investigation to commence at the last named station, and reversing the order of the

Iter, to proceed northward to GLANOVENTA. We are thus furnished with the following names and distances:—

MANCUNIAM to COCCIAM,	...	...	...	...	17 miles
BREMETONACUM	...	...	...	20	... 37
GALACUM	...	...	...	27	... 64
ALONE	...	...	...	19	... 83
GALAVA	...	...	...	12	... 95
GLANOVENTA	...	...	...	18	... 113

The position of MANCUNIAM being ascertained beyond dispute, and the military road having been traced from thence to the undoubted site of a station at Ribchester, it would appear easy by a comparison of the Itinerary distances with the actual milage to identify the Roman name of the station, and yet no question has given rise to more discussion than this, whether COCCIAM or BREMETONACUM was on the site of Ribchester, the one being placed in the Itinerary, seventeen, the other thirty-seven miles from Manchester. Camden, without going at all into the question of distances, fluctuated in opinion between the two names, but finally gave a hesitating decision in favour of COCCIAM.

Horsley having accepted the evidence before alluded to, which places ALIONÆ at Whitley, and having assumed the identity of ALONE in the Itinerary, with ALIONÆ in the Notitia, worked his way, station by station, southwards from thence, as a fixed point, rather than northwards from Manchester. Now the Itinerary distance from ALONE to BREMETONACUM is only forty-seven miles, to COCCIAM sixty-seven, whilst the actual mileage from Whitley to Ribchester is considerably greater than either, but corresponds, of course, more nearly with the latter computation. Horsley, therefore, did not hesitate to place COCCIAM at Ribchester, although this left him but seventeen miles as the distance from thence to Manchester. This he admitted to be utterly irreconcilable with fact, and he ascribed the discrepancy to a radical error in his authority. In short, unless we reverse the universal decision, that MANCUNIAM was Manchester, we are driven to one of two conclusions, either ALIONÆ, if identical with ALONE, was not at Whitley, or the mileage of the Itinerary is largely deficient, as

compared with the actual distances. The latter alternative is the less admissible, from the following considerations : First, the distances between the stations in this *Iter* are already unusually great ; secondly, all copies of the *Itinerary* are agreed as to the figures ; and thirdly, the sum of the miles from station to station, corresponds within a unit with the total mileage of the *Iter*. It seems, therefore, that the position of *MANCUNIVM* being indisputable, and the evidence with respect to that of *ALIONÆ* incomplete, we must settle the question before us with reference only to the consideration already set forth, the actual distance from Manchester to Ribchester. This, indeed, is the issue to which Dr. Whitaker, in dealing with this question, professes to apply himself, although the result at which he arrives is strangely at variance with the evidence. He says, ‘ That Ribchester is the *Coccium* of the *Itinerary*, is proved by the distances,’ and yet he is forced to admit, ‘ the figures from one known station to another are extremely inaccurate. Thus from *MANCUNIVM* to *Coccium*, instead of seventeen miles, we must read twenty-seven, and from *Coccium* to *BREMETONACÆ*, instead of twenty, at least thirty miles.’ In short, having altered the figures to suit assumed distances, he cites them, so altered, to prove the very case which in their original form they contradicted. But even the arbitrary extension of seventeen miles to twenty-seven is insufficient for the stage between Manchester and Ribchester. If a straight line be drawn between the two stations, it will pass through the town of Blackburn, the distance of which from Manchester, by the present direct turnpike-road, is twenty-three miles ; from Blackburn to Ribchester, the distance is at least six miles, making in all twenty-nine English, or rather more than thirty-one Roman miles. This measurement is not at all inconsistent with the *Itinerary* distance of thirty-seven miles from *MANCUNIVM* to *BREMETONACVM*, as it by no means follows that *Coccium* lay in a direct line between the two places. On the contrary, the direct line passes through a barren and inhospitable country, as compared either with the lower district to the west, or the valley of the Irwell to the east. Of the actual site of *Coccium* I can say nothing, but in this respect it is in the same position with the two stations in this *Iter* to the south of Manchester, and very many others in the different routes of the *Itinerary*, of the situations of which we have

indeed an approximate knowledge, but can find no vestiges of their actual existence.

I have thus sought by independent evidence to shew, first, that Ribchester is the BREMETENRACUM of the Notitia, and secondly, that it is the BREMETONACUM of the Itinerary, and so to establish the identity of the two names.

There are however, two other stations in the Tenth Iter which have an equally close resemblance to two other stations which immediately precede BREMETENRACUM in the Notitia, and were numbered by Horsley amongst the supporting stations, *per lineam valli*. Indeed Horsley, though he refused to admit the identity of BREMETONACUM with BREMETENRACUM, acknowledges that of GLANNIBANTA and ALIONÆ with GLANOVENTA and ALONE. Having fixed BREMETENRACUM at Ribchester, it is impossible to reconcile with the Itinerary distances the location of ALONE at Whitley, or of GLANOVENTA at Lanchester, and the entire system of subsidiary stations on the Wall must necessarily be abandoned.

The system, indeed, is but an ingenious theory, unsupported by a particle of evidence as regards any other station except ALIONÆ, and even in that case the evidence is only presumptive. In nine of the ascertained stations *per lineam Valli*, inscriptions have been met with mentioning the name of the corps by which the station was garrisoned, and in each case the name corresponds with the statement in the Notitia of the troops quartered there. Now, at Whitley, as has been already noticed, we find an inscription in which mention is made of the third cohort of the Nervii, the same which is placed by the Notitia at ALIONÆ. Hence, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we might reasonably infer that ALIONÆ and Whitley were the same place; but this coincidence must not under any circumstances be received as conclusive proof, and must be abandoned at once when opposed by contradictory testimony. Although we know that many of the frontier garrisons remained for a long series of years settled as military colonies in the same stations, instances are not wanting of a change of troops. Several cases may be noticed where the name of a cohort is mentioned at one station in the Notitia, and at another in inscriptions. Thus we find the first cohort of Spaniards at Ellenborough, and

the second cohort of Lingones at Moresby, according to inscriptions, whilst the Notitia places these troops at AXELODUNUM and CONGAVATA respectively, but it has never been contended, from this circumstance, that AXELODUNUM was at Ellenborough, or CONGAVATA at Moresby, although, if such identity had been otherwise probable, we should here have had strong corroborative testimony.

Being thus compelled to relinquish the presumed discovery of ALIONÆ at Whitley, we have at all events the satisfaction of having established a starting point at Ribchester, proceeding northward from whence, we may be enabled to determine, not only the sites of the Notitia stations of ALIONÆ and GLANNIBANTA, but also the intermediate Itinerary stations of GALACUM and GALAVA. Indeed, a Roman road has been traced from Ribchester to Overborough, near Kirkby Lonsdale, where undoubted remains of a station have been discovered, at a distance which nearly corresponds with the twenty-seven miles which the Itinerary interposes between BREMETONACUM and GALACUM. Camden, Horsley, and Whitaker all agree in making Overborough a station on this Iter, but having fixed COCCIUM at Ribchester, they are compelled to place BREMETONACUM here, although it is necessary to alter the Itinerary distance to suit their views. It is remarkable that Camden had some suspicion of the identity of GALACUM and Overborough, in consequence of the name of the rivulet on which the latter stands, the Lac, being incorporated in the Latin word.

From Overborough northward, no traces of an ancient road have hitherto been discovered. Indeed, the progress of cultivation in the rich valley of the Lune, affords a fair presumption that any such must long since have been obliterated for a considerable distance from the station; but if the Iter pursued the route suggested by Horsley, it must have passed in its onward course an extensive range of high moors, where vestiges of it may probably yet be recovered. Whitaker has pointed attention to some Roman remains at a place called Borough, a little to the left of Horsley's direct line, which in point of distance would answer very well for ALONE, which name, if we were disposed to give ourselves up for a moment to the hazardous guidance of etymology, might be rendered *Ad Lonam*, 'On the Lon or Lune,' whose waters flow past the station.

GALAVA and GLANOVENTA would still have to be provided for, but if we adopt Horsley's route, the latter would find an appropriate site at Whitley, from whence ALONE has been displaced. A Roman road undoubtedly did pass Whitley in this direction, and proceeded northward to the Wall, which may not only be traced to this day, but it is well known in the district under the name of the Maiden-way.

It may seem strange that so obscure and barren a spot as Whitley should be selected as the terminus of an Iter, especially as the road on which it lay, undeniably led further. There are, however, considerations which would go far to obviate these objections: First, Whitley, though in a district, the surface of which is sterile and inhospitable, is conveniently situated as a depôt for the vast mineral treasures of the neighbourhood. Secondly, admitting that the northward progress of the road is evidence that Whitley originally stood on one of the lines of through communication, we may find in the rugged nature of the country through which it passed, which rendered it utterly impracticable for wheeled carriages, sufficient reason for its abandonment as a medium of general traffic, after the opening out of the much more convenient access to the Wall, which was afforded by the road from Yorkshire, through Bowes and Brough, to Carlisle. At the same time, the value of the lead-mines would account for the route being kept open as far as Whitley.

It must be remembered, however, that these suggestions as to the stations to the north of Overborough, are presented for investigation only. We have no proof that this was the course of the Iter, and it remains for further discovery to establish or overturn a theory, which, in its present state, is at the most, merely plausible.

All that I venture to maintain as established, are the following positions:

- 1st. That the BREMETENRACUM of the Notitia, and the BREMETONACUM of the Itinerary, are at Ribchester.
- 2nd. That there is no reason to doubt that GALACUM is Overborough.
- 3rd. That wherever ALIONÆ may be, it is not at Whitley.
- 4th. That the title, *Stations per lineam Valli*, applies only to the seventeen or eighteen stations on the Wall, and that there is no foundation for the theory of secondary or supporting stations.

Having shewn that neither ALIONÆ or BREMETENRACUM are in the vicinity of the Wall, and having abandoned the theory of supporting stations, we are no longer confined in our search for OLENACUM and VIROSIDUM to that neighbourhood. On the contrary, presuming on the order in which the previous stations follow each other in regular succession according to their proximity to each other, we should rather look for OLENACUM at a moderate distance beyond Ribchester. Now it is remarkable that Ptolemy furnishes us with the name of a British city OLICANA, which has a striking resemblance to OLENACUM, and which occupies a position exactly in accordance with the site for which we are in search. OLICANA has by general consent been placed at Ilkley, on the line of a still conspicuous Roman road, which leads from Ribchester to Castleford, and connects the eastern and western lines of through communication from south to north. On the same road, a few miles nearer to Castleford, another station has been discovered, in the parish of Adel, to which no British or Roman name has hitherto been assigned. The existence of this station was first made known by Thoresby, who mentions several inscriptions and other antiquities found there, besides the remains of extensive buildings. Whitaker describes additional discoveries in his own time, the streets of a Roman town to the eastward of the station having been explored, disclosing vestiges of buildings and other remains, amongst which were three altars, one of them inscribed to the local goddess Brigantia. No evidence has yet presented itself to enable us to offer a very decided opinion as to the name of this station, but if we are warranted in placing OLENACUM at Ilkley, it is at least a feasible conjecture that VIROSIDUM was at Adel.

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