

John Storey, Del. et Lith.

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NORTH EASTERN GATEWAY, AMBOGLANNA

XVI.—*AMBOGLANNA*: Read at a Meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Dec. 1852. By H. GLASFORD POTTER, F.L.S., F.G.S., Cor. Mem. Royal Academy of Turin, etc.

IN the month of February of the present year (1852) I received a note from Mr. James Boustead, farmer, at Birdoswald, stating that, during his search for draining and walling stones, on the east side of the camp, he had “fallen in with another gateway” fifty-five yards north of the one described in a former paper, as the *Porta Principalis Dextra*.

I lost no time in proceeding to Birdoswald, and found two piers of a gate exposed; but fearing that mischief might be done unless some one was present who could give the proper directions for further excavations, I desired Mr. Boustead to discontinue his operations at this part of the camp until my return to Gilsland.

In the month of September, on the arrival of my brother from London, we recommenced the excavations and succeeded in laying bare a double gateway, far surpassing, in style of architecture, and finish those previously exposed.

The very accurate drawings of my friend Mr. J. Storey, Jun., will shew the result of our labours.

One of the gates has been walled up with large stones, and must have been so barred at a time long after the Romans had left Britain.

That I am correct in my opinion on this point, is proved by the difference of level between the floor of the Roman gate and that on which the barrier now stands.

Many circumstances, while pursuing our researches at Birdoswald, have led me to believe that this camp was occupied as a town, long after the departure of the Romans.

We find, for instance, that the floors of some of the houses are about four feet above the flagged Roman foot-path, inside the wall of the camp; and I have followed, to this height, a drain which rested upon the ruins of a former edifice. Now to suit this altered and higher level, it was found necessary to raise the floor of the gateway; and we accordingly find the level of the gateway I am describing is raised one foot above the Roman floor; and that stones, with large pivot-holes, are placed upon those used by the Romans. This higher level increases as we enter the gate, and continues to do so, until it reaches the new level of this part of the camp.

The ruins of former, and I believe of Roman structures now form the foundations of later buildings; and these again, in their turn, have been destroyed or suffered to go to ruin, over which, earth, some feet in thickness, has gradually accumulated.

Gildas and Bede tell us in what manner the Picts and Scots conquered the Britains, after the last Roman legion had left the island; and how they ravaged the country, drove the inhabitants from the Wall and cities, and made their habitations like the abodes of wild beasts.

AMBOGLANNA would of course suffer like the rest, or perhaps even more; for tradition informs us that very near this camp, at a place called "The Gap," the Picts first broke through the Wall; and, within four miles, we have Thirlwall, a name which is evidently derived from a breach having been there effected.

What became of AMBOGLANNA, after the incursions of the Picts and Scots, we know not; history is silent, and tradition does not assist us. There is, however, a name very like AMBOGLANNA, in the *Anonymi Ra-*

vennatis Britanniae Chorographia, which is supposed to be the work of Gallio, of Ravenna, the last Roman in Britain with a command.^a Mr. Salmon, as quoted by Horsley, goes on to say that—"Gallio would doubtless inform himself of the state of the country; and had a rationary and maps with him. The names are corrupted and barbarous. And if we consider the confusion in which Britain had been, the inroads and devastations of the Picts, who razed Roman towns so as to carry off a part of their name, we need not wonder at the change."

Horsley does not attempt to give the time at which the anonymous Ravenna's was written; but we find the following note in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*:—"Seculo septimo floruisse putatur scriptor."

The name I refer to is BABAGLANDA, or as it is sometimes written, GABAGLANDA. MAGNIS (*Magna, Cærvoran*) BABAGLANDA (*Amboglanna?*) and VINDOLANDE (*Vindolana, Little Chesters*), are placed together in the *Ravenna's Chorography*. On the Rudge Cup, found in Wiltshire, CAMBOGLANS and BANNA, which is supposed to be PETRIANA (*Cambeckfort*), occur together.

Few can doubt that Gallio meant any other place than AMBOGLANNA, when he placed BABAGLANDA next to MAGNIS or MAGNA, for these camps are nearest each other. Then again, CAMBOGLANS is evidently AMBOGLANNA, and is placed near BANNA or PETRIANA, which is the next station going west.

AMBOGLANNA, under whatever name it might be known, was without doubt reduced to ruins, and most probably remained so for many years. The higher level of the camp, and the remains of former structures, too much destroyed to admit of repair, but only fit to form foundations for other edifices, clearly shew to what amount of destruction and neglect this camp must have been subjected.

As the country became again more settled, the commanding situation of this station, with the advantage of the Maiden-way passing through it, may have induced some Saxon chief, of the name of Oswald, to repair the

^a See Horsley, 488.

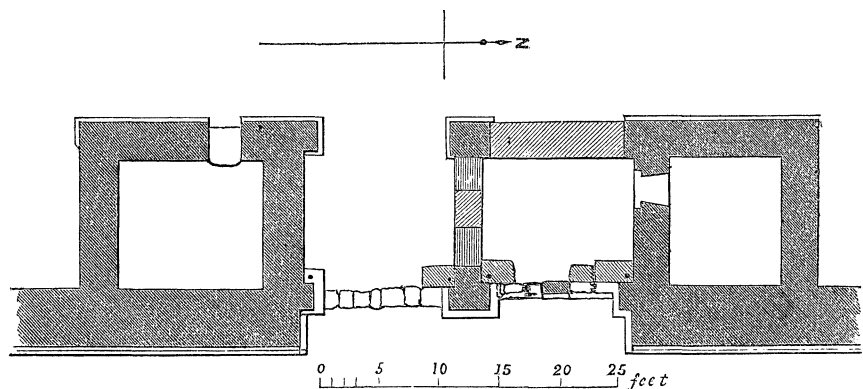
walls and gates, and build a town within. The town would thus become the Burgh of Oswald, or Burgh Oswald, which in time would be corrupted to Burdoswald, Birdoswald, or, as it is now sometimes called, Bridüssel.

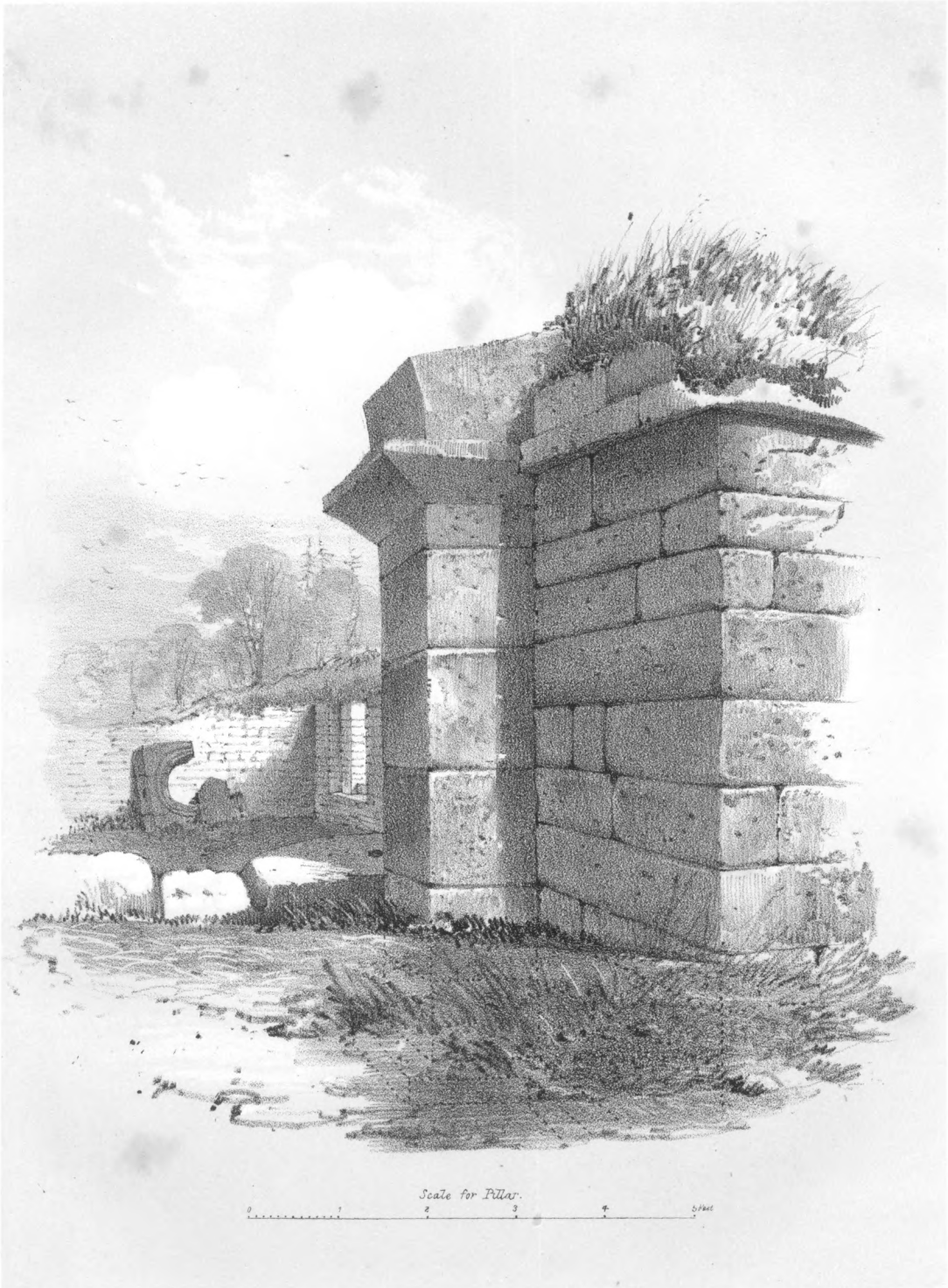
In later times, some Dane must have taken up his abode in this vicinity; for we find, near a tumulus, a little to the north-east of Birdoswald, some masonry, which Mr. Nicholson informs me, is the remains of a structure which formerly stood here, and was called Harrow's or Harold's Castle. The stones of this stronghold were removed some years ago, to build Hill Head House.

I will now again direct attention to the drawings, and more especially to that representing the north pier. Every stone is here most accurately delineated, and there is a scale at the foot, by which the exact size of each stone may be ascertained. This pier is $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet high; it has the impost and the first stone of the arch *in situ*. The voussoir is 15 inches thick at the broad end, and $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the narrow part. It is 2 feet long.

Some of the stones of the wall, at the gate, are of considerable size; and the masonry is very superior to any that I have observed in other parts of the camp.

We carried our excavations along the outside of the wall, to the extent of 54 feet, from the gate towards the north, and there exposed twelve courses of stone. The height of the wall varies from six to eight feet. This gate was defended by two towers, having guard-rooms. The size of these rooms is shewn on the ground plan, together with the breadth and depth of the gateways.

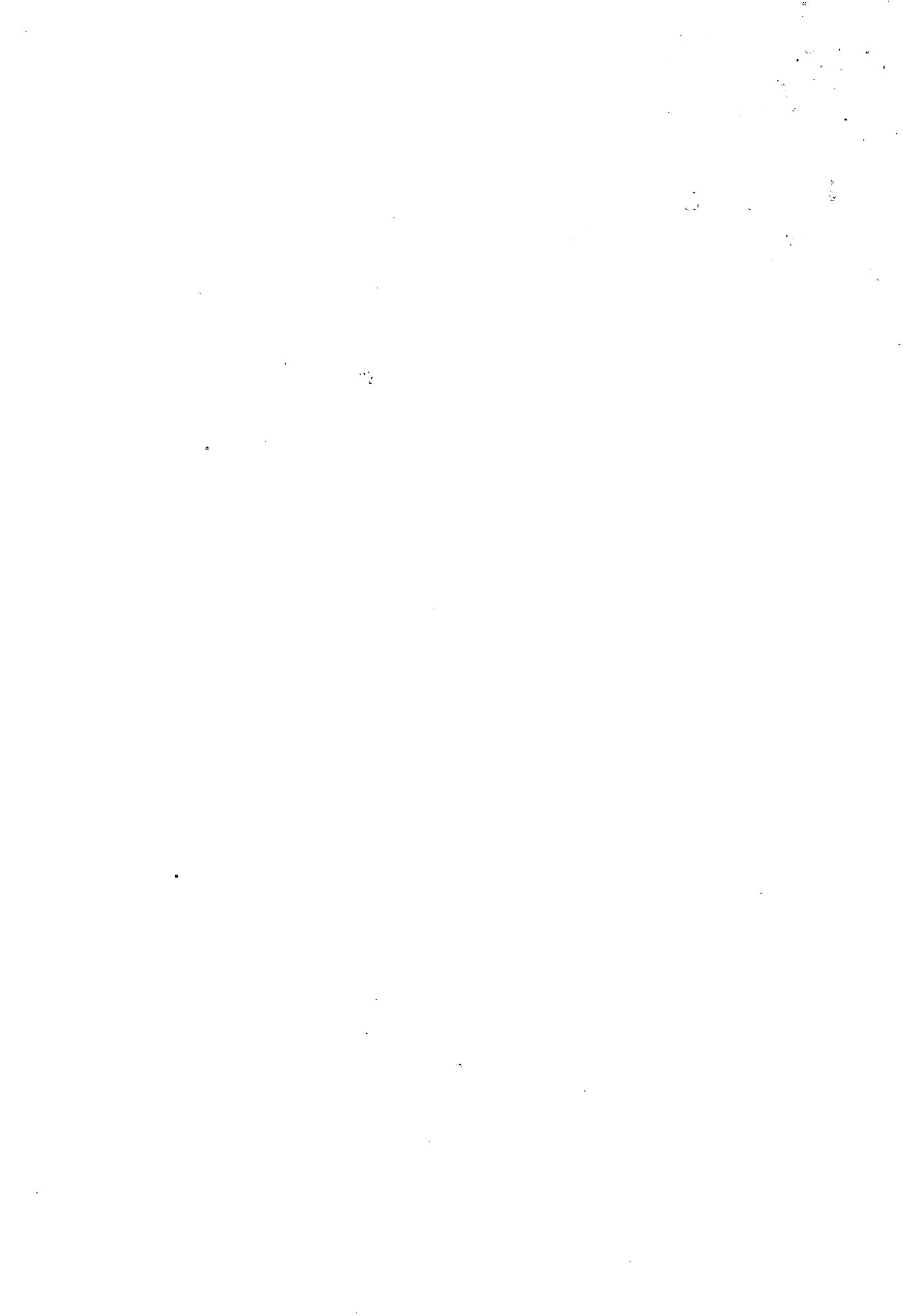




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PIER OF NORTH-EASTERN GATEWAY, AMBOGLANNA.



It will be remarked that we have here, in the northern gateway, a large stone, against which the leaves of the gate closed ; this is the only instance of the kind yet discovered at Birdoswald, though, as is well known, these centre stones are found in the gateways at BORCOVICUS. This stone does not belong to the Roman epoch ; it is placed on, or more correctly speaking, in the new level of the gateway.

The wall dividing the two gateways, is of the same age. This gateway appears to have been converted into a chamber, by blocking it up at each end. A strong barrier has, in the first place, been built across the inner entrance, and, at some later period, the other end has been closed by a wall of rubble-work. This chamber was entered by a door in the wall between the gates ; and communicated with the north guard, by a door at the side.

The arrangement and form of the doors of the guard-chambers are peculiar, and deserve notice. On looking at the ground plan, it will be noticed that the entrance to the south guard-room is from the camp, while that of the north room is from the gateway itself. This peculiar position of these doors has led me to suppose that, during the Roman times, the south gate has been used for going out of the camp, and the north gate for those who entered. No one could thus pass out, without being seen by persons in the south chamber ; nor could any one come in without being seen by those in the north chamber.

The doorway into the north guard-room, widens as it enters, and has no doubt been covered with one of these odd-shaped arched stones which we found in the gateway. I have placed one of these stones over the door, which fits it exactly, though it is not the one which had been previously used for that purpose. The diameter of the arch, on one side of the stone, is twenty-six inches ; while that of the other side is twenty-eight and a half inches. The stone is seventeen inches thick, and twenty-seven inches high.

The gate, I have now described, led out to the Suburbium, the ruins of which are still easily traced, though covered with soil and grass.

It is very likely that we shall be able to find another gate opposite to

the one just mentioned. There are inequalities on the surface of the ground, which seem to point out its position. Should this supposition be correct, we shall then have six gates to this camp; four of them I have already described to the Society, the fifth I suppose to be yet covered up, and the sixth, the Prætorian gate, was destroyed many years ago, to build a barn, leaving only the pivot-stones *in situ*. Through this, the Porta Prætoria, the Maiden-way passed to the north.

On the outside of the wall of the south tower we found a broken slab bearing an inscription.



This inscription I read as follows:—

SUBLIMO DIO JULIO
 LEGATO AUGUSTALI PROPRAETORI
 COHORS PRIMA AELIA DACORUM
 CUI PRAEEST MARCUS
 CLAUDIUS MENANDER
 TRIBUNUS

If this reading be correct, there is reason to suppose that the Julius here mentioned was Julius Severus, who, in the time of Hadrian, was proprætor of Britain, and who, Xiphiline tells us, was sent from Britain against the Jews.

Since this Paper was read to the Society of Antiquaries, a question has arisen whether or not *Sub Modio Julio* was the right reading of the inscription. I have consequently carefully examined various works to ascertain if Modius is ever used as a prænomen; and as the Modii family is little mentioned by ancient writers, I will give the result of my labours.

Varro de Re Rust. ii. 7, mentions a “Q. MODIUS *vir fortissimus*.”

M. Tullius Cicero, in Verrem. Act ii. Lib. ii. Cap. 48. speaks of “*Cn. Sertium*, M. MODIUM *equites Romanos*.”

In Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 130, we find—

“*Ne prior Albinam et MODIAM collega salutet?*”

Reinesius, in his *Nova Reperta Inscriptionum*, gives two inscriptions with the name of Modius. One of them notices four of the Modii family. It is taken from a broken slab on which were inscribed the names *hominum corporis religiosi cultorum Herculis Somnialis*, amongst whom are—

M. MODIUS MASCULUS
M. MODIUS FUSCUS
M. MODIUS ALIPUS
M. MODIUS PARIS.^b

The other inscription is as follows:—

C MODIUS S. C. F.
PR VERRONA
ANN XX^c

In Gruter, *Pag.* ccc. *Fasti Magistratum*, we find a Q. MODIUS CLAMYS in the consulship of Torquatus and Atticus A.U.C. 896, A.D. 144; again, in the same author, iv. 12, M. MODIUS AGATHO occurs.

I have now, with one exception, given all that I have been able to discover relative to the Modii family, and it will be seen that Modius never occurs without a prænomen.

^b Reinesius, 599.

^c Ibid. 429.

In the inscription I shall next notice, we shall find the prænomen in one part omitted ; though I think it evidently is understood.—

C MODIVS. FELIX
 ET. C MODIO. FELI
 CI. FIL. ET COCCEIO
 SILVINO. FIL. NA
 TVR. ET MODIO
 RENATO. LIB. ET
 SATTIAE. SILVIAE
 VXORI. V. V. S. S. F^d

Here, in two cases, the prænomen C occurs, and it may either have been omitted before MODIO RENATO, by the mason who cut the slab, or Gruter may not have got a correct copy of the inscription. I freely admit that *Sublimo Dio Julio* is a forced reading of SVBMODIO IVLIO ; but we must at the same time acknowledge, that *Sub Modio Julio* is not less objectionable.

We find similar titles occurring in other inscriptions ; as for example—

NOBILISSIMO CÆSARI
 DOMINO NOSTRO, etc.

and again

PIISSIMÆ AC VENERABILI
 D. N. HELENÆ, etc.^e

and Xiphiline, when speaking of Julius Severus, says he was the chief (*πρωτος*) of Hadrian's most courageous generals, so that *Sublimo Dio* does not appear to be undeserved.

On the other hand, we find a name written in the reverse order, not JULIO MODIO, but MODIO JULIO, which is contrary to what has been hitherto discovered.

Should *Sub Modio Julio* be adjudged the correct reading of the inscription, this slab will record the name of a Proprætor of Britain, not hitherto known.

^d Gruter, pag. DCXCVI. 9.

^e See Reinesius.

At one side of the inscription is a rude representation of a palm branch, probably intended as an emblem of victory. On the other side, is a well executed sword, cut in a bold style, and no doubt intended as an emblem of war.

The sword is a curved one, and is like those described by Quintus Curtius Rufus, *lib. viii. cap. 14*, "*Copidas vocant gladios leviter curvatos, falcibus similes.*"

Montfaucon gives a drawing of a sword very like that on the slab, and remarks—"Nous mettons encore ici une épée des Daces courbée comme une faucille : elle paroît avoir un pied et demi de long, en prenant la longueur en ligne droit, depuis le commencement de la lame jusqu'à la pointe." ^f

H. GLASFORD POTTER.

^f L'Antiquité Expliquée, *Tome Quatrième, Liv. ii. 62.*