



Painted by J. H. P. & Co. 1864

"THE WELL"
Looking towards the Station.



ARCHÆOLOGIA ÆLIANA.

DESCRIPTION OF ROMAN REMAINS DISCOVERED NEAR TO PROCOLITIA, A STATION ON THE WALL OF HADRIAN.

READ 2ND DECEMBER, 1876, BY JOHN CLAYTON, ESQ.

THE discovery in the month of October last, on the line of the Roman Wall not far from Chollerford, of an underground structure, containing an enormous quantity of Roman copper coins, twenty-four Roman altars, a massive votive tablet, with vases, rings, beads, brooches, and other objects, has excited much interest in the neighbourhood.

The inscriptions are numerous, but some of them much worn and obliterated. The writer, with the efficient aid of Prof. Hübner of Berlin, and Dr. Bruce, and with the benefit of the friendly suggestions of Mr. Charles Roach Smith and Mr. Carr-Ellison, is now able to give a satisfactory reading of these inscriptions, so far as they are legible, and to lay before this Society a statement, which is made somewhat in detail, from a conviction that, since the publication of the "*Lapidarium Septentrionale*," the antiquaries throughout the world rely on this Society for an authentic record of the Roman remains discovered in the four northern counties of England.

The traveller from Chollerford, seeking the site of the discovery, will proceed westward along the Military Road (so called from its having been made for military purposes after the rebellion of 1745) and, leaving the station of Cilurnum on the left, will, at the foot of the first ascent, come upon the Roman Wall, on the site of which the Road has been made; the foundation stones of the Wall are seen in the bed of the road, which is continued westward for several miles, either on the site of the Wall, or on the Vallum, which runs parallel with it. Passing Walwick and proceeding westward for about a mile, the

traveller reaches the summit of the hill beyond Tower-Tay, from which a striking view of the Roman works ahead is obtained. On the right the traveller will observe some portions of the Roman Wall standing to the height of six or seven feet, and the remains of one of the turrets, which it is said were placed along the Wall at the distance of 300 yards from each other, and which, with this exception, have been annihilated through the whole length of the Wall. Within the distance of a mile from the Tower-Tay Hill is reached the summit of the Limestone Bank, on which will be found the remains of gigantic Roman works, and from which there open two most magnificent views, one on the right hand looking upon the valley of the North Tyne, and closed on the north-east by the Cheviot Hills, and the other on the left hand looking upon the valley of the South Tyne, and closed on the south-west by Cross Fell and the mountains of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Yorkshire. From this point the Military Road is on the site of the Roman Wall, and in about a mile passes the station of Procolitia, of which the Roman Wall formed the northern rampart; and, in the lowest part of the valley, about 150 yards distant from the western rampart of Procolitia, and about 100 yards within (on the south side of) the Roman Wall, is the site of the recent discovery.

The structure, which has been now explored, did not escape the attention of that sagacious and diligent Northumbrian, John Horsley, who in his great standard work, the "*Britannia Romana*," published in 1732, after referring to the remains of buildings to the west of Procolitia, adds the following passage :—"About a year ago they discovered a well; it is a good spring, and the receptacle for the water is about seven feet square within, and built on all sides with hewn stones. The depth could not be ascertained, because, when I saw it, it was almost filled with rubbish. There had also been a wall about it, or a house built over it, and some of the great stones belonging to it were yet lying there. The people called it a cold bath, and rightly judged it to be Roman."¹

The Rev. John Hodgson, the able historian of Northumberland, in the part of his book published in 1840, after quoting the passage from Horsley, describes as then existing on the west side of Procolitia "a small stream, and by the side of it a very copious spring of pure water,"

¹ See Horsley's "*Britannia Romana*," p. 145.

and adds, "in the year 1817 the shaft of a column was lying near the spring, but some years before that time most of the works about it had been removed for building purposes by the tenants of the lands."

Dr. Bruce, in his complete and exhaustive work on the Roman Wall (the third edition of which was published in 1867), after referring to the passage in Horsley, tells us that no remains of the bath or well then existed.

From oral testimony it appears that subsequent to the year 1817, and within the last forty years, those parts of the walls of the surrounding buildings mentioned by Horsley which remained undisturbed by being underground, were partly dug up and used by the tenant of the lands. The copious spring of pure water mentioned by the historians was the source of a brook which flowed down the valley towards the river South Tyne; and the well minutely described by Horsley being filled to its brim with solid substances, formed part of the bed of the stream, until a very recent period, when the spring and the rivulet flowing from it suddenly disappeared, and the disappearance was ascribed to underground operations in a lead mine nearly two miles distant.

In the course of last summer, attention was drawn to this spot, which had always been looked upon as the site of a Roman bath; and in the month of October the excavation was commenced, which has disclosed an underground structure of massive masonry, measuring in the inside 8 feet 6 inches by 7 feet 9 inches, and a little exceeding 7 feet in depth, and within it a most miscellaneous collection of objects. Within a foot of the surface the excavator in digging down came upon a mass of copper coins, many of them of the debased metal of the lower Empire, and a human skull, the concave part upwards, filled with coins. He then began to meet with altars, and fragments of bowls of Samian ware, and glass, and bones of animals, and at the depth of about three feet found two elaborate vases of earthenware, both bearing inscriptions, and a sculptured stone representing three Naiads, or water-nymphs. He had then come upon copper coins, of superior metal, of the higher Empire, which continued, with an admixture of the inferior coins of the lower Empire, to the bottom. He met with the head of a statue, represented at the end of this paper, and with other vases without inscriptions, and with brooches, rings, beads, dice, and other objects; some of these,

viz. three bronze heads, one of a female and two of males, apparently representing Mirth and Melancholy, an ivory stylus, with a female head carved at its top, three brooches, and a dice, are shown on the adjoining Plate. Going still lower, the excavator continued to find altars, and nearly at the bottom he met with a massive votive tablet, dedicated to the goddess Coventina, by Titus Domitius Cosconianus, a Roman military Prefect, in command of the First Cohort of Batavian Auxiliaries. The lettering of this tablet is of the best character, and Professor Hübner, who from his learning and experience is entitled to decide, whilst others hesitate, pronounces this tablet to be of the date of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 140.

It is possible, and indeed probable, that the First Batavian Cohort should have been at Procolitia in the reign of Antoninus Pius. This cohort was doubtless one of the three Batavian cohorts, which, with two Tungrian cohorts, under Julius Agricola, fought and won the battle of the Grampian Hills, A.D. 84.¹ We next hear of this cohort as one of the cohorts in the army of Aulus Platorius Nepos (the general employed in building the wall), to which Hadrian, in the fourth year of his reign, A.D. 124, granted the right of Roman citizenship and liberty to marry.² It is probable that the First Batavian cohort was placed about this period in garrison at Procolitia; and experience of the Roman practice in other stations has shown us that the Romans treated the troops at the stations on the Wall as the basis of military colonies; and we find, from an inscription found within the walls of Procolitia, that the First Cohort of Batavians was there in the reign of Maximinus, A.D. 233,³ and that the same cohort was in the same place at the date of the Notitia Imperii, A.D. 400.

This tablet is inscribed to a goddess whose name is unrecorded on the roll of Roman divinities. On it the goddess is represented as floating on the leaf of a gigantic water lily, and waving in her right hand a branch of palm or of some other tree. On one of the altars, described below, she is called Dea Nympha, and it is therefore clear that this goddess was a water deity, which is confirmed by the representation of her attendants on the sculpture here shown of the three Naiads, each of them raising in one hand a goblet, and in the other hand

¹ See Tacitus' "Life of Agricola," cap. xxxvi.

² See "Lapidarium Septentrionale," p. 7.

³ See "Lapidarium Septentrionale," No. 157.



1



2



4



3



5



7



6



8



holding a flagon from which is poured a stream of water, and by the existence of a well or reservoir for water within the walls of her temple. Whether the goddess Coventina was a British goddess, or a goddess



imported by the Roman soldier, is a question not easily decided, nor can any satisfactory derivation be found for her name. She was probably a local deity to whose name a Roman termination has been given, as in the case of the god of the Brigantes Cocidius, for whose name we do not attempt to find a derivation. It has been suggested, from a quarter entitled to weight, that the name of the goddess

Coventina may be derived from Convenæ, a people of Aquitania, inhabiting a country of springs, and addicted to the worship of water deities. A cohort of Aquitani has left a record of its presence at Procolitia, in the reign of Hadrian.¹

Some antiquarians are of opinion that, at least to some extent, the coins have been thrown into the well as offerings to the goddess, but this theory is open to the objection that an accumulation of copper, in so limited a space, must have spoiled the water; moreover, it does not seem to be within the range of probability that the votive tablet, bearing the image and superscription of the goddess, and the altars dedicated to her should have been thrown into the well in compliment to her, and least of all the ugly head, broken off from the bust, which forms the tail-piece on page 19. The position in which the several objects were found does not seem to throw any light on the order of deposit, the heavy votive tablet and two of the very small altars were found at the bottom of the well.

Another theory is that the Romans, weary of the new goddess, and convinced that her worship was a superstition derogatory to their ancient gods—

“*Vana superstitio, veterumque ignara Deorum,*”²

shut off the water, and applied to utilitarian purposes the reservoir which had contained it. The position of this structure outside the walls of the Fortress of Procolitia, the accumulation of coins of an early period, as well as those of later dates of Roman occupation, would seem to be inconsistent with this theory, unless it can be accounted for by the state of inquietude in which the garrison of this line of fortification must have lived, attended with occasional abandonment of their quarters, and occasional concealment of valuables which could not be easily removed.

Of this vast collection of copper, or in the language of numismatists, brass coins, a few dozens have lain in clay and been preserved; many of the rest are so much worn or corroded as to render it very difficult to identify them. Amongst those of the earlier period the coins of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and of the wives of the two latter emperors greatly preponderate, and there is an unusual number of

¹ See “*Lapidarium Septentrionale*,” No. 138, p. 83.

² See “*Virgil Æneid*,” Lib. VIII., 187.

the coins of Antoninus Pius, which have Britannia on the reverse. The coins of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius are chiefly of first and second brass; the building of the Walls of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius would necessarily occasion a large influx of such coins into Britain. The earliest coin which has been as yet identified is of the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41, and it is expected that the series will end, as has happened in the stations of Cilurnum and Borcovicus, with Gratian, A.D. 383, though in the vast quantity as yet undeciphered there may be found both earlier and later coins. Four gold coins and some silver coins have been met with, which can scarcely have been part of the deposit; they have probably been accidentally lost by the curators of the copper treasury.

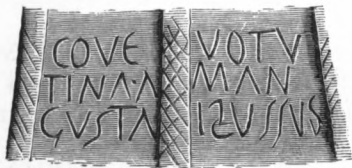
Let us now proceed to the examination of the inscriptions, which indicate various degrees of skill and education in the sculptors.¹

We will begin with the inscriptions on two very curious vases or cups of earthenware, which appear to have been offerings of Saturninus Gabinius to the goddess Coventina. The letters are distributed over the panels of each vase. From the letters on one of them (No. 1) we collect the following words:—

COVETINA AGVSTA VOTV
MANIBVS SVIS SATVRNINVS
FECIT GABINIVS.



Expanded reading.—Coven-
tinæ Augustæ votum manibus
suis Saturninus fecit Gabinius.



¹ In the original paper the readings of the inscriptions are not in general expanded. It is now thought desirable, acting on the precedent of the "Lapidarium Septentrionale," to add an expanded reading of each inscription. Engravings of each of the objects are also now given.—ED.

It would appear from this inscription that the dedicator made the vase with his own hands. Whatever may be thought of the skill of Saturninus Gabinus as a manufacturer, his orthography is palpably defective. He gives to the goddess the title of Augusta, for which several precedents exist in the Nympheum, or Temple of the Water Deities at Nismes, the goddess addressed being styled *Nympha Augusta*.

The inscription on the vase No. 2 is a barbarous abbreviation of the inscription on vase No. 1; and, as Professor Hübner observes, the dedicator, Saturninus Gabinus, must have been content to explain his intentions by the inscription on vase No. 1, or he must have placed unlimited faith in the intelligence of the goddess; and at any rate if No. 1 had been destroyed, No. 2 would have been utterly unintelligible.

The letters in the several compartments seem to be the following :—



CV? | GST?

SA	TV	R	N	GA	IV
			I	BIN	S

giving us the name of Saturninus Gabinus,¹ preceded by

the principal characters in the words C[O]V[ENTINA] [AV]G[V]ST[A]. The last (or first?) compartment of the inscription seems to be occupied with the letter "v" or a leaf stop, and the reading may be—

VOTUM COVENTINÆ AUGUSTÆ
SATURNINUS GABINIUS.

¹ The "B" makes an approach in both the inscriptions on the vases (to use the language of printers) to the lower case "b."—ED.

The lettering and the expanded reading of the votive tablet and of the several altars bearing inscriptions, so far as they are legible, remain to be dealt with. More than one-half of the whole number of twenty-four altars found have either had no inscription, or the inscriptions have been wholly worn out, and some of these are unfinished as if in a course of preparation for an inscription.

The votive tablet on which the goddess is represented as floating on the leaf of a water lily, and holding a branch, has the following inscription :—

DEAE
COVVENTINAE
T · D · COSCONIA
NVS · PR · COH.
I · BAT · L · M ·

Expanded reading.—Deæ
Coventinæ Titus Domitius
Cosconianus Præfectus Co-
hortis primæ Batavorum
libens merito.



The lettering is perfect. The use of a double “v” in the name of Coventina is a peculiarity, and may be accidental, or an example of the practice of doubling the consonant, in order to give greater emphasis to the syllable; this peculiarity also occurs on the altar No. 10.

ALTAR No. 1.

This is the largest altar of the group. Its base is adorned with a couple of dolphins—symbols of a water deity.



On this altar alone is the epithet *Sanctæ*, applied to the goddess, and the letter “o” is used in the second syllable of her name.

DEAE SANCT
COVONTINE
VINCENTIVS
PRO SALVTE SVA
V·L·L·M·D

Expanded reading.—Deæ Sanctæ Coventinæ Vincentius pro salute sua votum libens lætus merito dicavit.

This is the only example of the use of “o” as the vowel in the second syllable of *Coventina*. The use of “e” instead of “æ” in the dative case of the name of the goddess, which we find on this altar, frequently occurs in all these inscriptions.

ALTAR No. 2.

DEAE NIM
 FAE COVEN
 TINE MA · D
 VHVS · GERM ·
 POS · PRO · SE ET SV
 V · S · L · M

Expanded reading. — Deæ
 Nymphæ Coventinæ Manlius
 Duhus Germanus posuit pro se
 et suis votum solvens libens
 merito.



The spelling of the sculptor of this altar is barbarous. The addition of *nympha* to the title of goddess is evidence of her aquatic attributes.

ALTAR No. 3.

DIE COVE
 NTINAE A
 VRELIVS
 GROTVS
 GERMAN

Expanded reading. — Deæ Co-
 ventinæ Aurelius Grotus Ger-
 manus.

The use of “I” in place of “E,”
 and of “E” instead of “Æ” in the
 word Deæ is a barbarism.



These two altars are dedicated by recruits to the Batavian Cohort
 from the adjoining country of Germania.

ALTAR No. 4.

This altar is plain in its general character, and the name of the goddess is spelt *Conventinae*.

The dedicator is probably a recruit who takes, or makes, for himself a Roman name of warlike sound.



DIIAII
CONVENTI
NAE BELLICVS
V · S · L · M · P

Expanded reading.—

Deæ
Coventi-
næ Bellicus
votum solvens libens merito
posuit.

The letters "E" in the word *Deae* on this altar are each represented by two down strokes or letters (II), a singularity which sometimes occurs in Roman inscriptions, and on this altar and also on No. 7 the goddess is called *Conventina*, a peculiarity which is probably due to the ignorance of the sculptor.

ALTAR No. 5.

This altar brings under our notice a cohort not previously met with on Hadrian's Wall.

DEAE CO
VENTINE
COH I CVBE
RNORVM
AVR CAMP
EST ER (?)
V

Expanded reading. — Deæ
Coventinæ Cohors prima Cuber-
norum Aurelius Campestris (?)

The lettering of the first four
lines of this inscription is good;
that of the three last confused.



The First Cohort of the Cugerni, or Cuberni, a people of Belgic Gaul, was one of the auxiliary cohorts serving in Britain in the Roman army. It was in Britain in the times of Trajan and Hadrian, and is included in the diplomas of citizenship granted by these emperors; it was in Scotland at the time of the building of the Antonine wall there, as appears from an inscription given by Horsley (Scot., XXV.); in all these instances it is called *Cugerni*. Tacitus, speaking of this people (Hist., V., 16, 18), calls them *Gugerni*; Pliny, in his Natural History (IV., 31), denominates them *Guberni*. There are some more letters on the altar, bearing probably the rank of the commanding officer of the cohort, but the letters are too indistinct to admit of a satisfactory reading.



ALTAR No. 6.

DAE COVEN
VI? · NOMATI
VS V·S·L·M

Expanded reading. — Deae
Coventinae ... Nomatius votum
solvit libens merito.

This altar has on its front a female face, and also the peculiarity of a square focus, a peculiarity which is not confined to this altar. The face is without doubt meant to represent the features of the goddess.



ALTAR No. 7.

DE CONVE
NT
· · · · ·
OPTIO CH
GERMAN?

The letters on this altar are very much defaced, and nothing can be collected from them except that it was dedicated to the goddess Coventina by an officer of the rank of optio, or lieutenant; the name of the goddess appears to have the letter "N" in the first syllable, as on altar No. 4.

ALTAR No. 8.

The focus of this altar is more than usually elaborate; the stone has been discoloured by contact with copper.

DEAE CO
VETNE GR
OTVS VTIB
ES S L V PRO
SA

Expanded reading. — Deae
Coventinae Grotus Utibes solvit
libens votum pro salute.¹



The letters on this altar have been very unskilfully executed by the sculptor, and there must be considerable uncertainty as to the reading of the inscription.

There are two more inscribed altars dedicated to the goddess Coventina, but they are so much defaced that the inscriptions, beyond

¹ This expansion of the inscription was given in the original paper as uncertain. In the first place it is not clear whether the name of the dedicator is Grotus or Crotus; the six letters which follow are distinct, but their meaning is not clear. The dedicator was doubtless a recruit from one of the barbarous nations, and, probably, the letters which follow Grotus or Crotus may indicate his connection with the Utus, a river which falls into the Danube; or the town of Utum, situate upon that river. It has also been suggested that the first letter of Utibes may be "v," the initial letter of Votum, one of the words of dedication with which inscriptions on altars generally conclude, but we find that letter in the last line, which is its proper place.

the name of the goddess, cannot be satisfactorily read. They are represented in the next two wood cuts, from a desire that every object on which there are the slightest remains of an inscription should be brought before the Society.

ALTAR No. 9.



DEAE COVEN

TINE

NVS

.

. . . VOTVM

.

This altar is unusually ornate. It bears on the face of its capital a series of pointed arches. On one of its sides is sculptured a branch, and on the other a genius having a cornucopiæ in the left hand and a coronal wreath in the other.

ALTAR No. 10.

This altar has the peculiarity noticed on the votive tablet, viz., the use of a double “v” in the name of the goddess. The title of Dea is not given to her; probably the title Augusta followed the name and has been obliterated.

COVVEN

 V · S · L · M



This altar, like an altar to Fortune found at Procolitia some time since, has an iron ring fastened into its focus by means of lead. This has probably been for the purpose of carrying or suspending the altar. Most of the remaining altars appear to have never had any inscription, and some of them are only partly finished in workmanship.

The only remaining inscribed altar found in this reservoir is a small altar dedicated to Minerva, by a Roman soldier, bearing the

name of Venico; the lettering of which is evidently not the work of a man of letters.

ALTAR No. 11.



DIE M
NER
VE VE
NICO
PR S
POS S V

Expanded reading. — Deæ
Minervæ Venico pro salute posuit
solvens votum.

An altar to Minerva could not have been placed in the well in compliment to Coventina, whatever may have been the object of placing in the well the altars dedicated to Coventina herself.

This seems to be a fit opportunity for bringing before this Society another altar dedicated to Minerva, which, since the publication of the "Lapidarium Septentrionale," has been found in the Station of Procolitia. It is a large well-shaped altar, and the lettering is good. The letters are—MINERVAE Q VNIA S PR COH. CI VSLM. The following reading is suggested for consideration—Minervæ Quintus Unias Præfectus Cohortis Civium votum solvit libens merito.

The auxiliary cohorts in the Roman service frequently add to their title that of Cives Romani, having received from the Emperor the grant of citizenship; but there is no example found in Britain of a

cohort styled Cohors Civium Romanorum. Several examples have been found on the continent. In the present case we have, apparently, a cohort styled simply Cohors Civium. Perhaps this may be regarded as an example of the cohorts Urbana holding an intermediate position between regular troops and an armed police.

The writer has thus laid before the Society an inadequate description of this extraordinary deposit of Roman objects. To examine effectually many thousand coins, nearly all more or less defaced, is a work of years rather than of days. The great variety of the objects deposited, and their singular intermixture, seem to defy any certainty of conjecture as to the past history or use of the well or reservoir in which they were found. We find coins, extending over more than three hundred years, twenty-four altars uninjured (except by wear), many unbroken vases, and a vast quantity of fragments of Samian ware of ornate character; we find enamelled brooches, and gilded beads, and mixed with these the tusks of wild boars, the horns of deer, and the bones of oxen and sheep. All that is attempted at present is to submit the facts to the consideration of antiquaries.

