

XIII.—REMARKS UPON GROUPS OF ROMAN MILESTONES.

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AT the meeting of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries, on the 29th of August, 1883, the Rev. Dr. Bruce described a milestone of Septimius Severus and his sons, found in North Wales, only a few feet distant from the spot where a milestone of the reign of Hadrian had been discovered some five months previously. At the conclusion of the paper the Rev. Canon Greenwell asked Dr. Bruce if it was not singular that two Roman milestones should be found so close together, and the latter replied that it was.

The object of these remarks is to show that far from being singular, it is on the other hand still more strange, that these milestones are not oftener found in groups, and bearing the names of a succession of emperors.

Out of numerous Continental examples of discoveries of this nature I will only select two, which occurred within a few miles of each other. In 1877, no less than eight Roman league stones were found at Heidelberg, each stone marking four Gallic leagues, or six Roman miles from *Lopodunum* (Ladenburg), A. LOP. L. IIII. They were of the reigns of Elagabalus, Alexander Severus, Maximinus and his son Maximus, Gordian, Philip, Decius, Herennius Etruscus, and the joint emperors Valerian and Gallienus. It will thus be seen that every emperor from the year A.D. 218 to 259 is commemorated, with the exception of Gallus (with his son Volusianus) and Aemilianus, who filled up the interval

between Decius and Valerianus (251-253). But as Aemilianus only reigned four months there may not have been time to erect a stone bearing his name, and it is more than probable, that one to Gallus and Volusianus may yet be found.

In 1883, in *Lopodunum* itself five other league stones were found, of the reigns of Gordian, Philip, Decius, Herennius Etruscus, and Valerianus and Gallienus. No distance was marked upon them (except in one instance), as from the point where they were set up the mileage was probably counted. The exception was in the case of the stone of the reign of Gordian, the inscription on which ended with the abbreviation L.I. As its base was wanting, it is conjectured to have been brought into the *vicus*, from the point (the first league) where it was originally set up. It is said that a number of large stone slabs over two metres in length, and 30 centimetres in thickness, and a large square stone, are still lying in the ground adjacent to where these league stones were found, at a depth of about three metres, so that probably further excavation would complete the series, which seems to be the same as at Heidelberg.

Now let us look at Britain, and see if there are any parallel instances. Besides the Carnarvonshire find, Mr. Blair at the before-mentioned meeting referred to the two milestones found at Cawfields (of Hadrian and Alexander Severus). At each of these places further excavation would probably reveal several other stones, for there is a considerable *hiatus* between the dates in each case.

The nearest approach to the Continental discoveries is at Bittern (*Clausentum*), where no fewer than seven milestones have been discovered. Except in one instance no distance is marked upon them, and we may therefore assume that they had been, as at Heidelberg, set up in the station, and the mileage had been counted from that spot. The earliest of these stones is probably of Caracalla, but the emperor's name is lost, though P.T. XVIII remains. The others are, one of Gordian, one of Gallus and Volusianus, three of Tetricus, and one of Aurelian. These stones are all engraved in the volume of *Proceedings at the Winchester Congress of the British Archæological Association*. Two milestones (of Philip and of Decius) were found in close proximity to each other near Lancaster. Two also (of Constantine the Great and one of his sons) occurred at Chesterton near Cambridge, and two

appear to have been found together at Bowness on the Solway. Fragments of three have been found within the walls of Wroxeter, and two adjoining each other, upon their bases, and *in situ*, were found in draining Moston Pool in Shropshire (A.D. 1812), but, unfortunately, the greater portion of their inscriptions were obliterated. (*Archæological Journal*, Vol. XXXIII., p. 266). It is believed also that two have been found at Ribchester.

From these remarks it will be seen that it was a common custom to renew these milliary columns, in the reigns of successive emperors, and I would suggest search being made upon the site of each recorded discovery, with the view of ascertaining whether any more similar stones are not still buried in the immediate vicinity.