

XII.—ON SOME NEWLY DISCOVERED INSCRIPTIONS OF THE ROMAN PERIOD.

1.—AN INSCRIPTION AT CLIBURN, WESTMORLAND; by Professor Emil Hübner, Hon. Member; (read on the 28th September, 1887).

IN the beginning of August, 1886, I received, through the kindness of Dr. Bruce and Mr. Robert Blair, an excellent photograph of the newly discovered Cliburn inscription, of which the first notice is given in the *Proceedings* of this Society, (Vol. III., p. 251). I saw instantly that it was the fragment of one of those large slabs which used to be placed over the entrance of public buildings, baths, &c., as, for instance, the similar inscriptions from ISCA SILVRVM (*C.I.L.* VII., 107), LONGOVICIVM (*C.I.L.* VII., 287), Lanchester (445, 446), AESICA (732), Netherby (965), BREMENIVM (1043, 1045, 1046), and others. As the fragment is only 15 inches in length, and 8 to 16 in height, and its full size may easily have been 2, 4, even 10 to 12 feet in length (and the height corresponding), it is impossible to supplement it with even approximate certainty. I thought it therefore most convenient not to risk any rash interpretation, but to wait patiently in case another piece of the slab were found, and meanwhile add it to the supplement which I am preparing for the British epigraphical collection (*C.I.L.* VII.).

Mr. W. Thompson Watkin, who, from Liverpool, watches diligently over the epigraphical finds in Roman Britain, and publishes them instantly, separate or collected, in different periodicals, has in the meantime, edited a reading and an interpretation of the Cliburn inscription, which I cannot consider as satisfactory (see *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Vol. XII., p. 290). But I would have let it pass over, until in due time and place the correct text might appear, had not even Professor Mommsen been misled by it. For in an occasional communication to the *Korrespondenzblatt der Westdeutschen Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst* for this year (Vol. VI., No. 7, July, p. 161), he has repro-

duced Mr. Watkin's text of the Cliburn inscription, adding some observations about the *ala Petriana* and the Roman station of PETRIANAE.¹ Of course he disapproves of Mr. Watkin's CONDLABSVN, which is a grammatical monstrosity not for a moment to be seriously thought of. In the same way he refuted, with conclusive arguments, Mr. Watkin's *ala Sebusiana*, which by no means can have its place at the side of the *ala Petriana*, if this in fact is recorded in the text.

Under these circumstances it seemed to me proper to yield to the repeated injunctions of my English friends and to publish, not a full expansion and due interpretation of the fragment, but only that reading of it which I consider to be correct. I use for it beyond the photograph already mentioned, which is nearly as good as the original, the copy of Mr. Rich. S. Ferguson (published in the same part of the *Archaeologia Aeliana* as Mr. Watkin's note, p. 289, with a woodcut), and a rubbing sent to me by the same excellent antiquary, through the kind intervention of Mr. Blair. It will appear at once that Mr. Ferguson's reading is quite correct, so far as he has read nothing wrong ; only he did not succeed, in his first attempt, in reading all that can be read.



It would be desirable to have a woodcut of the text on a little larger scale than that hitherto published, in order to show all the ligatures of letters which the short text presents. I repeat it, only for clearness's sake, and append short notes to every line. The palaeographical character of the lettering is evidently that of the beginning or middle of the third century,—

about the time of Severus Alexander. It resembles closely that of such public monuments as those of Netherby (*C.I.L.* VII., 765, A.D. 222), Lanchester (*C.I.L.* VII., 446, from A.D. 238 to A.D. 244), and Papcastle (*C.I.L.* VII., 415, A.D. 242). Specimens of their writing are given in my *Exempla Scripturae Latinae Epigraphicae*

¹ In the same German periodical I have just given my reading of the Cliburn inscription, with some short notes, Vol. VI., 1887, No. 9, September, p. 206.

(1886), Numbers 649, 650, 651. There are no dots between the single words; which is not infrequent in inscriptions of that late epoch.

The text, then, of the Cliburn inscription is this:

The *first line* offers no difficulty whatever. At the beginning of the *second*, two letters have evidently been cancelled on purpose, and so successfully that scarcely anything of them can be made out with full certainty. Still it seems to me highly probable, as others observed before, that these were the two letters, N and A; only I think to discover, in the very fullest sunlight given to the photograph, at the right hand side of the A, the remains of an E joined to an A. We must read, therefore, NÆ. The two following words are most certainly VETERI (the I formed by a prolongation of the perpendicular stroke of the R), and OPERI; the P of the last word turned to the left, because an E was joined to it: Æ. The whole word can scarcely have been any other than OÆRE, or OPERI. For I take *veteri operi* for ablatives. In *veteri* the formation in *i*, not in *e*, is the correct one, in *operi* it is by no means uncommon.

In the *third line* there can be no doubt that the first two letters are combined from NI and DI, by prolongations of the perpendicular strokes of the N and of the D respectively. The word DILABSUM is just what we expect in an inscription like this, erected evidently to commemorate the restoration of an old building.

By far the most difficult of all is the following, the *fourth line*. The upper part of the first letter, all that remains of it, may have been a P, or a B, or an R. But if it were a B or an R, it is at least not improbable that, when the stone was broken, something of the lower part of these two letters would have been preserved. As there is not a perceptible shadow of such part of the letter, I think it most probable that it was a simple P. What follows in the second place was clearly an L; only one may doubt if it was a simple L, or an L combined with an I, LI. The fact is, that it seems to be the latter combination. But it only seems so. A closer inspection of the photograph (and, I am sure, of the original too, the rubbing being not sufficiently distinct) shows, that what seems to be the head of the I joined to the L, is only an involuntary prolongation of the right foot of the N of the line above. We have, therefore, after the simple P a simple L. The two letters following are also simply, and without any doubt, IS. The reading PLIS, thus

obtained, excludes a guess of Mr. Watkin's, to which there cannot be denied the epithet of ingenious. Under the supposition that the name of the *ala Petriana* followed, he imagines that this *ala* might have been styled sometimes [*no*] *bilis*. For this epithet, certainly not yet known by any example, he might have quoted, as a similar instance, the *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata* of the well known inscriptions of Old Carlisle. But if I am right in reading not B and IL, but only P and L, the ingenious supposition has no foundation. The . . . *plis* must have been part of a word like *exemplis*, or *duplis*, or *amplis*.

The second word of the same line is clearly ER. Only in the third element lies the difficulty. It seems, in fact, to be a combination of T and R. And if so, Mr. Watkin's supposition, on which his reading and interpretation of the whole text is based, viz., that this was the place where the name of a military corps was mentioned, gains a high degree of probability. But here, also, I cannot follow him. It is true the R has a stroke on the left hand side of its top far too long, and it was my first impression too, that *petr* or *pert* was meant. But a further consideration of the place in the text where the name of that *ala* was to be supposed, made me give it up quickly. The stonemason had put his R a little too far to the right; he restored the symmetry of the spacing between the single letters by making the left angle of the top of the R a little broader than necessary. But he meant nothing but a simple R. So Mr. Ferguson read it. Let us take it for granted that there is only *per* in the text.

What follows, in the same line, if considered under the impression of being an epithet to the foregoing name of a cohort or an *ala*, could be taken for something like C. R. (*civium Romanorum*), or C. L. (*civium Latinorum*). But looking at it without any prejudice, I see most distinctly on the photograph, after the C, the combination of an E and an L, in that way EL, the E being turned to the left. The two last letters existing of line four, LA, are distinct. I read the whole line PLISTERCELLA.²

Of the next or fifth line, the last legible, in which Mr. Watkin had the unfortunate idea to suppose the *Ala Sebusiana* (which was always *Sebosiana*), the beginning is clearly as Mr. Ferguson sees it, ALB. Only between the L and the B the photograph shows distinctly

² Mr. Ferguson gives BLISTERCELLA nearly in the right way.

something like a lengthy dot; or as the protracted tail of the L (L). But I think it is only an I, of smaller size, and adjoined, in a quite common way, to spare some space, to the L, in that way: L̄. The two letters following B, vs, though omitted like the rest by Mr. Ferguson, are certain. I see behind them, on the right hand side, almost distinctly on the photograph, the three elements æLV, *et lu*.—Only the æ is not perfectly clear. It might be taken also for æL, *el*; but I cannot find any sense in *el*, whilst *et* combines easily with the rest.

Of the last line of the text it is impossible to determine a single letter out of the remaining tops of three or four. The first may have been a c; but it is of no use to enter a discussion about the meaning of those *apices litterarum*.

What I read of the whole text, is, to resume my analysis, as follows. I add some few expansions, for the sake of clearness, in brackets, supposing that at least two-thirds of the whole tablet are missing.

BALNEVM [*cohortis illius Severianae Antoninia-*]
 NAE VETERI OPE[*ri divi Hadria-*]
 NI DILABSVM [. *fistulis am-*]
 PLIS PER CELLA[*m ductis item*]
 [*can*] ALIBUS ET LV[*minibus*]
 [*restituit ille sub imperatore illo &c.*].

I am far from ascribing to my expansions more than a very remote probability. But one sees that this inscription contained a quantity of interesting particulars about the repairs of the single parts of the public bath of a military corps, stationed at that place. It is to be hoped, but scarcely to be expected, that more fragments of the text may turn up, and if so they will very likely destroy most of my guesses. But, at any rate, even the fragment put to its just reading, contains information of antiquarian interest which we shall not underrate.

2.—REMARKS ON SOME INSCRIPTIONS FOUND ON THE ROMAN WALL ;
by W. Thompson Watkin ; (read on the 26th October, 1887).

IT has long been a matter of surprise that no tablets recording the erection of the Wall of Hadrian have been found along its track. True, we have the slabs from several mile castles recording their erection in his reign, under Aulus Platorius Nepos, but nothing approaching the large slabs on the Wall of Antoninus Pius, recording a certain amount of work done by the legions and cohorts, &c., on the Wall itself, has occurred. The centurial stones, if they refer to the erection of the Wall, are of a totally different character ; but it is quite possible they mark the quarters occupied by the various *centuriae*.

It is therefore of interest to notice some stones found on the Wall which *seem* to refer to its erection. In December, 1882, the Rev. Dr. Bruce sent to me a copy of a stone discovered a short time previously at CILURNUM. It bears an inscription on its face, and also on its side, thus :—



Dr. Bruce considered the last letter of the first line of the smaller inscription (on the side) as P ; but I advised him to look again, and ascertain if it was not F, and an abbreviation of the words TVRM LAFAN for Turma Lafanii, on the face. He ascertained this was the case. As far as the reading was concerned the matter rested here ; and in the *Archaeological Journal*, Vol. XL., p. 135, I gave the expansion—“T(urmae) Laf(anii) P(ublius) Val(erius) P(edes) CXIII,” considering that the stone marked the boundary of an allotment of private pro-

perty. Centurial stones invariably give us a distance of only from 20 to 30 feet, not only on the Wall, but at Ribchester, Manchester, and Tomen-y-Mur, the only other stations where centurial stones have been found.

Since then it has frequently occurred to me that whether Publius Valerius was a "military tenant" or not, he would scarcely name the troop he belonged to in a *private* boundary stone. This led me to look for a more satisfactory reading, and as the P at the end of the first line turned out to be F, so I suggest that what is taken for P at the beginning of the second line may also turn out to be F. More than this, the second stroke of the A has another stroke diagonally across it, which makes the letter not unlike AL ligulate. If so, the line is F.VALL. succeeded by P.CXIII., and the whole would read "T(urma) Laf(anii), F(ecit) Vall(i) P(edes) CXIII." I prefer *pedes* to *passus*, for the latter would seem a large amount for a *turma* to execute. There does not seem either to be any mark before F (or P) VAL(L), which would indicate that it was the *decuria* commanded by P. Valerius that could have executed it. The only doubt in my mind would be, if my reading is confirmed, concerning the position of *Fecit*. I have written to Mr. Clayton asking him to ascertain whether the letter is F or P, but being unable himself to attend to it, he has left it until the visit of some competent person.*

Should my reading be correct, the inscription may throw light on



42.



139.

Nos. 42 and 139 in the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*. In the former the end of the second line is VPXXX preceded by letters which look like RI. Is not the I an F? If so, we have "F(ecit) V(alli) P(edes) XXX."

* This letter is undoubtedly P and not F.—ED.

In No. 139 we may possibly have a fragment of a tablet similar to those on the Antonine Wall. The extant letters VGI CCCXLIII would lead us to infer that in the first line the (LEG II A)VG, or a vexillation of it, were the erectors. In the second line it is not improbable that, as on the Antonine Wall, MP III, or ∞ ∞ ∞, preceded the extant letters.*

It will be understood that these remarks are merely suggestions. If they be not confirmed, we must look for a solution of the readings in a different quarter.

3.—ON AN INSCRIBED SLAB FOUND AT NEWBURN; by Dr. Bruce, V.P.;
(read on the 28th December, 1887).

I AM always disappointed when we have not a new stone of the Roman era to discuss at each of our meetings. Last month we had one, and now we have another.

Newburn is about five miles west of Newcastle, and stands upon the north bank of the river Tyne. There is a small pele tower here, which forms part of a later house, all now included in the extensive steel works of Messrs. John Spencer & Sons. A short time ago our fellow-member, Mr. Boyle, was examining this pele tower, and on one of the stones forming the window niche of the vaulted chamber on the ground floor he discovered some letters, but as the stone was placed upside down and was covered with thick coats of white-wash he was unable to read the inscription. He called attention, however, to the stone, stating that it was probably of the Roman era, and that it was most desirable that it should be cleaned. Shortly afterwards Mr. Cadwallader J. Bates visited the pele. The stone was now freed from its incrustations and had become perfectly legible, though the reading was difficult from the deficiency of light and the stone being upside down. Mr. Bates made a drawing of it, of which he kindly gave me a copy. The reading of the latter two lines being somewhat difficult, I at once sent the drawing which I had received to the great master of our

* On re-examination I find there appears to be the lower part of a c before the VG, so that instead of the Second Legion, [*coh. I.*] CVGE[*rnorum*] may possibly have erected it. The stones numbered 784 and 789 in Vol. VII. C.I.L., have also been stones commemorating erections of portions of the Wall, and are quite distinct from the ordinary "centurial" stones.

Romano-British inscriptions, Professor Hübner, of Berlin. Mr. Blair and I, however, went to Newburn without any loss of time to examine the stone for ourselves. Mr. Spencer was not able to meet us himself; but he provided us with all needful assistance. Mr. Blair made a drawing of the stone, and we brought away paper impressions of it. As, however, to get a faithful engraving made it seemed necessary that the stone should be photographed, and as this could not be done in the dark chamber in which it was fixed, we left word with Mr. Spencer's obliging representative, Mr. Lewis, that it was very desirable that the stone should be taken out of the wall and eventually placed in some museum. Without a day's delay I received the following communication from Mr. Spencer:—"I am glad you were enabled yesterday to obtain the information you required about the Roman stone, and that it proved so interesting. I have instructed them to take it out of the wall and forward it to the Museum, which will be the best place for its future rest. As you are aware, the building belongs to the Duke; so if his Grace should take so much interest in the stone as to assert his right to it, of course his claim will have to be considered, but probably you can arrange all this. I, on my part, will see that the building is none the worse for the removal."

The stone is one of the centurial kind. It is 13 inches long and 9 inches broad. The face of it has been left untouched by the mediaeval masons except that a small portion of its left-hand margin has been removed to fit it for its place in the pele. A bordering of the cable-pattern, which was so freely afterwards adopted by Saxon and Norman architects, is placed upon its edges. On each side of the inscription a Roman standard is placed. This gives special interest to the stone, as it is of unusual occurrence. The only instances that I remember in which the military standard occurs on the stones of the North of England are in the case of a stone found at Chesters, the Roman CILURNUM (No. 943 of the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*), in which case, however, only the upper portion of it, a banner, remains, on which are inscribed the words VIRTVS | AVGG., and on the face of what was probably the grave stone of a Batavian warrior found at Carrawburgh, the ancient PROCOLITIA (No. 930 of the *Lapidarium*), where we have a fully-armed soldier holding a naked pole in his hand, on the top of which is the figure of a bull. On the boss of a bronze

shield, however, which was found in the estuary of the river Tyne not long ago (forming No. 106 of the *Lapidarium*), we have a representation of two standards which, in form, closely resemble those upon the Newburn stone. Between these two standards is an eagle holding an olive branch in its mouth. In this respect also it resembles our new stone, where we have a bird, doubtless the eagle, occupying the lower part of the centre of the stone. The shield to which I now refer belonged, it would seem, to a centurion of the eighth legion, who was probably shipwrecked, as so many others have been, on entering Shields harbour.

The military standards of the Romans differed in form. Very frequently, as in the case of the one on the right side of the Newburn stone, the pole was decorated by a series of small circular shields of bronze or silver, and sometimes even of gold. On the top of the standard we have not unfrequently the figure of an eagle, the king of birds ; a hand, the emblem of power ; a bull ; the figure of Hercules ; the bust of the emperor, or some similar device. To give a degree of elegance to the whole of the figures a group of foliage, executed no doubt in brass or other metallic substance, crowns the whole.

We have numerous examples of the military standard upon the column of Trajan at Rome, which contains a pictorial representation, as it were, of that emperor's two campaigns against the Dacians. I have laid upon the table an engraved copy of the sculptures on Trajan's column.

Upon the coinage of the empire we have numerous representations of the standard. On the reverse of the coin of Hadrian, inscribed



DISCIPLINA AVG(VSTI), we have the emperor addressing three soldiers holding standards, each, no doubt, representing a legion. I have here

a large brass coin of Hadrian on the reverse of which Hadrian on horseback is shown addressing three soldiers, each holding a standard. The inscription is *EXERCITUS GERMANICUS*.

To come to the standards on the Newburn stone, I may state that the one on the left-hand side of it is chiefly characterised by a square banner near its top bearing the inscription *LEG(10) XX* "The twentieth legion." On minute examination in a good light an eagle (or what appears to be such) is perched upon the edge of the banner. The standard on the right-hand side bears four shields.

The following is the inscription on the stone :—

LEG XX VV

CHO IIII

) *LIB FRO*

) *TERE MAG*

which may be thus expanded :—*Legionis vicissimae valeriae victricis cohortis quartae, centuria Liburnii Frontonis, centuria Terentii Magni*. "The century of Liburnius Fronto and the



century of Terentius Magnus, of the fourth cohort of the twentieth legion, surnamed the Valerian and Victorious, [erected this]." Here we have the troops belonging to two centurions mentioned on one stone. Usually but one centurion is named. The work on which so many men were employed must have been an important one. One of these officers we have met with before. On an altar found at *CONDERCUM*, Benwell (No. 16 of the *Lapidarium*), we find the name of *Marcus Liburnius Fronto*, of the second legion. This is probably the same officer as one of these on the stone, though in the interval between the dedication of the altar and the carving of the centurial stone he had changed from one legion to the other—the second to the twentieth, or *vice versâ*. Newburn is but a short distance from Benwell Hill, so that he had not left the neighbourhood. In fact the post at Newburn was probably dependent upon the station at Benwell Hill.

The discovery of another centurial stone in the mural region bearing the name of the twentieth legion reminds me of a passage in

Horsley's *Britannia Romana*, in which he speaks of the almost entire absence in his day of such memorials. He says :—"One would expect that this legion (the twentieth) bore its part in building Severus's [Hadrian's] wall; but among all the centurial inscriptions upon the face of this wall I remember not one of this legion, or of any cohort said to belong to it. This makes me suspect that this twentieth legion was no way concerned in that work; though I know not for what reason, or how they came to be excused, since it is certain that they continued in Britain long after this." Since Horsley's day many have been found, and here is one added to the number.

In a somewhat historical sense this stone is of importance. For some time it has been suspected that the Romans had a fort here. Newburn is the first place at which the river becomes fordable. It was, therefore, of some importance to have the command of it. It was here, it will be remembered that, in A.D. 1640, the Scotch forces under General Lesley, in spite of the opposition of the king's troops, succeeded in crossing the river. A road now leaves the Roman Wall at West Denton and runs down to Newburn. This road was, no doubt, originally a Roman one, traces of Roman pavement having been visible in it until a recent period. The church at Newburn has been built in a good measure of Roman stones, some of them exhibiting the "diamond broaching" of the Roman masons. The pele itself has in it many stones of Roman character. Besides all this, Mr. Brooks, who was formerly river engineer to the Newcastle Corporation, discovered indications of a stone platform laid across the bed of the river so as to make the ford more reliable and safe. A quantity of black oak was also found at this spot, which had probably been used to fix the stones in their places. All this could only have been done by the Romans. The discovery of the stone which we have now discussed renders the supposition that the Romans had a fort here to command the passage of the river yet more probable.

4.—A CENTURIAL STONE FROM CAERVORAN, &c.; by Dr. Bruce, V.P.;
(read on the 30th November, 1887).

DURING the autumn two Roman stones, previously unknown to us, and belonging to the mural district, have been found.

One of these is a figure of Diana, with a stag at her right side. It is very much weathered. The deity is represented as drawing an arrow out of her bow. The stone was found near to Crowhall, which



is to the south of both Wall and Vallum, and to the south of Crindledikes near to the place where the Roman mile-stones were found which are described by our senior Vice-President, Mr. Clayton, in the ninth volume of the *Archaeologia*. The farm on which the figure was found belongs to the Earl of Strathmore. The stone has been removed for the present to Ridley Hall. Fancying that our Museum in the Black Gate was its most fitting resting place, I addressed a letter to Mr. Bolam, his lordship's agent, expressing my views, and he has kindly undertaken to mention the matter to the Earl.



The other stone to which I have to call the attention of the Society

is one that is built into a wall of the farmhouse at MAGNA, Caervoran. It is a centurial stone 3 feet long. In the middle of it, in a sunk panel, is the inscription :—O FELICIS | P. XX P. *Centuria Felicis per viginti passus*. "The century of Felix (erected) twenty paces (of this)."

For the present, at least, the stone is at Caervoran; eventually it may be removed to the museum at Chesters, Mr. Clayton being the proprietor of Caervoran.



At the same time two fragments of inscriptions were discovered; nothing, however, can be made of them. They are shown in the two woodcuts.

5.—POTTERS' MARKS; by R. S. Ferguson, F.S.A., Chancellor of Carlisle; (read on the 25th January, 1888).

POTTERS' marks from Roman pottery ware found in Carlisle, and now in the collections of Mr. R. Ferguson, F.S.A., Morton, and Mr. Fisher, Bank, and in the Carlisle Museum. Those marked thus (*) are in Mr. Wright's list (*The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, edition of 1875). Those marked (†) have been found recently on the site of the New Markets now being erected at Carlisle :—

On *Samian ware* in the collection of Mr. R. Ferguson, F.S.A., of Morton, Carlisle :—

* ADVOCISI
* ALBVC I
* BRICCI · M
* BVRDO
FORTIS (on lamp)
* MOXIVS
* OF RICIMI
* OF PATRIC
* RVFFI

* SATVRNNI OF
* SENILA
* TAVRICI
* VIIRI
OF FAB
* FVS (on lamp)
* DOHC or DOLIC
DORCEVS F
MAMMI

MASCNIOS
MINAISINNIUS
MOGODII M
OMOIMO?
SCOTNI
VAKEDVKATI
XIIIX
VATICONIS M
(scratched)

On *Roman ware* (other than Samian) in the collection of Mr. R. Ferguson, F.S.A. :—

On amphora— DOM F	On mortarium— DOCIE	On a fragment of white ware—PIRV
----------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------

On *Samian ware* in the collection of Mr. Fisher, Bank Street, Carlisle :—

* CRACVNA · F	* CELTAS · FC	* PANI · L · P
* MACCALI M	* TITVRONIS · O	

On an *amphora* in collection of Mr. Fisher, Bank Street, Carlisle :—

A · R · A

On *Samian ware* in the Museum, Carlisle :—

SAXAMI · M (2)	†* LITTER	† CAMVII /
* CAMPANI · M	†* BIGA · FEC	†* MARCELLIVS
BAECOSHEF ?	†* ADVOCISCI	† / IIANI · M
¶ECKIAR · F	(very large on the side)	† / / II · M
* MAIOR · F	†* CRVCVRO	† / AL FECIT
ANVNI · M	† XIIIIXIII	† GLANCIV · M
* A / V / · M	(scratched on bottom)	† AIAIV ?
(g. same as above)	† CLOSABINIA	†* SECVNDVS · F
MION	† / / / NI · M	†* SILVIIRI · OF
* MANV	(? ANVNI · M · ante)	† / / BI · MA
CAVONI · M	† IOCL · MS	

On *amphorae* in the Museum, Carlisle :—

C · TYC | P · L · R

On *mortaria* in the Museum, Carlisle :—

†	M R I · E M R I · E	†	A V · T M M A
---	------------------------	---	------------------

6.—A ROMAN CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTION FROM PORTUGAL ; by Dr. Bruce, V.P. ; (read on the 28th March, 1888).

THROUGH the kindness of Mr. Thomas Warden of Mertola, Portugal, we have before us for our inspection to-night another Christian inscription of the Roman period, which, like the one we already have in

our possession, was found in a garden near his residence. The stone is a gravestone, having an elaborate cross at its head. Preceding the first line of the inscription is a plain cross. The inscription is as follows:—

✠ BRITTO PRESB
VIXIT ANNOS
LXV REQVIEVIT
IN PACE DNI D
NONAS AGVSTAS
ERA DLXXXIII

And may be thus translated:—"Britto, a presbyter, lived sixty-five years. He rested in the peace of the Lord God in the nones [the 5th] of August, in the 584th year of the era."

I observed on a former occasion that it is not known from what circumstance the Spanish era took

its origin. In early times different nations had different chronological reckonings; thus the era of the Greeks began with the year of the first Olympiad, and that of the Romans with the building of the city of Rome. Both of these methods of measuring time continued in use until long after the birth of Christ. The Christian era, which is now universally adopted throughout Christendom, is said to have been first proposed in the year A.D. 527. We must not be surprised, therefore, that the Spaniards had a different starting point in their chronological reckoning when this tombstone was prepared than that which is now so generally adopted. The year of the Spanish era corresponds with B.C. 38, consequently the year 584 of the Spanish era, when Britto died, corresponds with the year 546 of the Christian era.

