

## II.—EARLY NORTHUMBRIAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE ALTARS TO THE 'DI VETERES.'

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The subject which I wish to treat briefly in the following paper is the history of Christianity during the Romano-British period in northern England. It is a subject which involves such questions as the various evidences for the spread of the religion in the Mural region during the Roman age, and the traces (I fear, only few) which survive of it. The further matter of post-Roman developments in the same region in early English days, I do not propose to consider: it is not, indeed, a question with which I can claim any special acquaintance. But I believe that more can be said about the Roman period than has yet been said.

The subject, too, seems appropriate to the present time. Christianity began in an age when the ancient world had just passed through the unhappiest years which it ever seems to have experienced, a period embracing—as the historian Tacitus observed—20 continuous years of downright anarchy, which he sums up in one of his brief mordant sayings—*continua per viginti annos discordia; non mos, non ius* (*Annals*, 3, 28) 'For twenty years (B.C. 48-28) ceaseless strife reigned; no social order existed, nor any observance of law.' Amongst men who had lived through that terrible time, the earliest Christianity began to grow. It has since had to face other long wars, notably the 20 years of the Napoleonic struggle (1793-1815), in which the grandfathers of many men now alive (my own grandfather, for one), took active part. To-day, we are engaged in an even greater fight, which we hope will not last 20 years,—though I cannot

forget the sinister forecast of a wise Oxford colleague, who in August, 1914, was on his deathbed (he died soon after), and who foretold a war of 18 years. If for a little, we can let our thoughts wander from the present contest, we may turn back to the distant days when our religion first made its way through northern England.

Christianity, as is well-known, penetrated far into Roman Britain before the Roman age ended. Dates and details are, indeed, imperfectly recorded, but it seems that, in and even earlier than the third century A.D., individual Christians on individual and mostly casual errands, had begun to reach our island, many, no doubt, from Northern Gaul,<sup>1</sup> some perhaps from the Rhine valley,<sup>2</sup> which then formed the eastern border of Gaul, and some may-be from other parts of the Empire. These men probably did not come as formal missionaries, but they served as such in spreading their faith. Thus it was that Christian congregations began to grow in Britain, and (no doubt with aid from Gaul) bishoprics arose. But even this statement, brief as it is and very rudimentary, must be recognised as containing uncertainties; Christianity in Britain sprang from sources which cannot now be fully traced. Like the first Christianity in Rome, its beginnings are dimly known.

In any case, it presently reached full development. By the opening of the fourth century A.D. the British church was grown up. There were Christians here, whom the Diocletianic persecution of A.D. 304 affected sharply. That gave Britain her earliest recorded martyrs. Again, British bishops attended some

<sup>1</sup> In Roman times there was considerable intercourse between Britain and the predecessors of our present allies in France; Gaulish immigrants appear at Bath (doubtless in search of health), and also at Cirencester and at Caerwent (*Eph. epigr.*, ix, 995, 1009, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> There was also intercourse between the estuary of the Rhine and the port (as it then was) at Colchester, as several objects in the Colchester Museum show (*Eph. epigr.*, ix, 1356)

of the great Councils in the fourth century, distant as they were. In 314, three bishops—one each from Colchester (or London), York, and (probably) Lincoln—with a British priest and deacon, appeared at the Council of Arles, in south-eastern France; British bishops also seem to have attended the far-off eastern Council of Nicaea (325), and that of Sardica (343), in what is now Bulgaria, and, more certainly, the nearer Council of Ariminum (Rimini, in North Italy) in 349.<sup>3</sup> Clearly there was in Britain during the earlier part of the fourth century an organised episcopal church, with at least three dioceses and diocesan bishops. By or soon after A.D. 400, this church produced men like Pelagius the heretic, and one Faustus, who about 460 became bishop of Riez in southern Gaul, and played some part in the general politics of his day (410-495). Early in the fifth century the island was visited by eminent continental Christians, such as Lupus and S. Germanus of Auxerre—on ecclesiastical errands connected with the Pelagian heresy—and perhaps about the same time Fastidius Priscus, sometimes called *Britannorum episcopus*, wrote a tract 'de vita Christiana,' which at one time was attributed to S. Augustine.<sup>4</sup> By about 420, Christianity had plainly made great progress in various parts of Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Of all this, clear archaeological traces survive in many places. At Chedworth, near Cirencester in south-east Gloucestershire; at Clanville, near Andover, in Hants; at Frampton and at Fifehead Neville, in Dorsetshire; at London; at Brancaster in Norfolk; at York; and on other sites, the Christian 'Chirho'

<sup>3</sup> Haddan and Stubbs, *Ecclesiastical Documents*, i, pp. 7, foll. See also my paper in the *English Historical Review*, July, 1896, and the later volume *Christianity in early Britain*, by H. Williams (Oxford, 1 gn.).

<sup>4</sup> There is some doubt whether Fastidius was a Briton of Britain, or, as others think, belonged to Brittany. His views appear to have been somewhat Pelagian. (Several admirers and disciples of Augustine were infected with some sort of semi-Pelagianism).

<sup>5</sup> For other evidence see my paper cited in note (3).

monogram or some Christian symbol or formula occurs, cut or scratched on rings and other easily portable objects or worked into mosaic floors of Roman date, etc. Last, but not least, besides such small vestiges, a little church of the 'basilican' type was in 1892 unearthed at Silchester, which, I believe, is the only Christian church of Roman date yet detected in Britain,<sup>6</sup> and almost the only one in western Europe.

One or two inscriptions can also be quoted, which, though not strictly Christian inscriptions, nevertheless imply the presence of Christianity. An altar found at Cirencester in 1891 seems a clear case: it records how L. Septimius . . ., *praeses* (governor) of Britannia Prima, restored a column in honour of Jupiter, which column had been erected by former pious hands (*prisca religione*). This altar is certainly not earlier than A.D. 300 and belongs to the fourth century A.D. and perhaps to the middle of that century. The restoration recorded on it indicates some revival of paganism, which can hardly be other than the pagan revival under Julian the Apostate (A.D. 360-363).<sup>7</sup>

It will be noticed that these examples come from the south or the middle of Britain. There is, however, no lack of Christian remains of the Roman age in northern England. In Scotland, such evidences are naturally wanting. The Romans withdrew about A.D. 180 from the whole region north of Cheviot, and Christianity can hardly have advanced so far as the limits of Caledonia by that year. There are, of course, traces of St. Ninian on the Galloway coast at Whithern, and two curious

<sup>6</sup> I do not believe that St. Martin's, Canterbury, contains Roman work *in situ*, though its walls contain many Roman tiles. Nor does it seem possible to assign dates within the Roman period—i.e. before about A.D. 410—to the church on the 'Eastern Heights,' close to the Roman Pharos, at Dover, or to the churches at Lyminge (Kent), Reculver (Kent), and Brixworth (Northants). See the late J. T. Mickethwaite's articles, *Archaeological Journal*, 53 (1896), pp. 293, 315; 55, pp. 340-349, and Comm. Rivoira's *Lombardic Architecture*, (London, 1900,) ii, 125, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Eph. epigr.*, ix, 997; *Archaeological Journal*, 50, 1893, pp. 284, 308.

tombstones of Christian bishops with latin names have been found near the same coast in the extreme south-west corner of Wigtonshire, at Kirkmadrine<sup>8</sup> (fig. 1). But these remains belong at earliest to the fifth century A.D.

However, in northern England, the remains are fairly numerous. Indeed, a map compiled by the late Dr. Hübner about 1875,<sup>9</sup> to shew the sites where Christian inscriptions of Roman and post-Roman date have been found in our island, indicates that they occur chiefly in Wales, in Devon and Cornwall, in north-east Yorkshire, Durham, and in the Mural region. The south of England and the Midlands yield far fewer examples. This is in one way surprising. For, throughout the Roman Empire, Christianity spread first and fastest in towns and cities, while the town-sites of Roman Britain belong mainly to the midlands and the south-east. It is there that we should expect Christian evidences, not in the forts or posts of the army. And indeed, in Britain, as in most other provinces, we have little sign of Christianity in the army. In the legionary fortresses *Isca* and *Deva* (Caerleon and Chester) the presence of the Christian religion is almost imperceptible, while the traces of Christianity detected at York probably belong as much to the municipality as to the legionary fortress of Eburacum. Such was the case throughout

<sup>8</sup> *Proceedings Soc. Ant. Scot.*, 1897-98, p. 248, and 1916-7, pp. 199-207; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit. Christ.* 205-206. The inscriptions seem to be:—(i) *A et — Hic iacent s[an]c[t]i et praecipui sacerdotes, id es[t] Viventius et Maiorius* (or *Mavorius*); (ii) . . . *s et Florentius*; that is in English: (i) 'Alpha and Omega; here lie the holy bishops, that is, Viventius and Maiorius or Mavorius; and (ii) 'here lie . . . and Florentius.'

<sup>9</sup> In his *Inscr. Brit. Christ.* (Berlin and London, 1876). This work was not very satisfactory at the time when it was done, and it is now out-of-date, and imperfect in innumerable ways. It is, however, the only existing collection, and as such must be quoted. It is a matter of regret for antiquaries that the Christian as well as the classical inscriptions of early Britain (CIL. vii) have been so badly edited by the Berlin scholar to whose care they were entrusted. Britain has in this respect fared very far worse than any other Roman province, except Spain. I hope, though the war forbids prophecies, that it may presently be possible to repair the deficiencies.

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TWO CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS, KIRKMADRINE (p. 26).

1. Hic iacent *sancti* et praecipui sacerdotes, id est, Viventius et Maiorius.
2. . . . s et Florentius.

the Empire. The later imperial army, recruited mainly from peasants and barbarians, consisted of *pagani* (country folk), and normally contained few Christians.<sup>10</sup> The emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284-305, no friend of the Christians), was able to exclude them from military service, without lessening appreciably his man-power. Sixty years later, Julian (A.D. 360-3), observes with satisfaction, that 'the mass of his troops worshipped the gods.' Some of this survival of the old religion is visible not only in the rank and file of the army, but in the officers and official class generally. Thus, we know the names of few fourth-century officials in Britain, yet perhaps it is not an accident that one of whom we do hear, Septimius . . . , the *praeses* of Britannia Prima mentioned above (p.—), appears at Cirencester as specially worshipping Jupiter, and that the emperor Magnus Maximus, who, before he became emperor, held high command in Britain (368-383), was not a Christian till 382. His conversion cannot have much affected Britain, for in 383 he struck a blow for empire, and took across the Channel a large part of the garrison of the island, to help him to win a throne: neither he nor they ever returned. For the next 20 or 30 years, the Roman government in Britain was weak and intermittent. Soon after 400, it was by degrees altogether given up. At a date which cannot be fixed precisely, but which pretty certainly fell soon after 400, the Romans 'left Britain'; that is, it does not seem that they literally left in a body, but that the central government ceased

<sup>10</sup> See for instance, O. Seeck, *Untergang der antiken Welt*, i, 57. Domaszewski (*Religion des römischen Heeres*, pp. 63, 67, etc.) points out that even in Valentinian's reign the frontier forces were largely heathen. That Christians served is proved by such evidence as the first paragraphs of Tertullian's *de Corona*, the story of the 'thundering legion,' and the legends of soldier martyrs, but heathen soldiers were certainly the rule. In the fourth century army, both legions and auxiliaries, were largely recruited from sources which can hardly have been Christian, and Christian soldiers (except in one or two provinces) were probably rarer than in 200 A.D.



to send out from Rome reliefs of officers and of troops to administer and to garrison the distant island.

I proceed to notice a few remains found in the Mural district which imply the presence of Christians:—

(i) A fragmentary sepulchral inscription (fig. 2), now in the Blackgate Museum at Newcastle, *Catal.* no. 95; *CIL*, VII, 1021; *Lap. Sept.* 623; *Arch. Ael.* 1857, (2nd ser., I, 257, no. 121), seems to be fairly certainly Christian, though those who have examined the stone before me have not hit on that idea. When and exactly where it was found seems not to have been fully recorded, beyond that it comes from Risingham, and (according to Dr. Hübner, who no doubt learnt this from Dr. Bruce), was given to our society by the late Mr. Richard Shanks. He, in or just after 1840, gave us many stones from the Roman fort there; and he (or rather his father), bought the site of the fort in 1822, and died in 1898.<sup>11</sup>

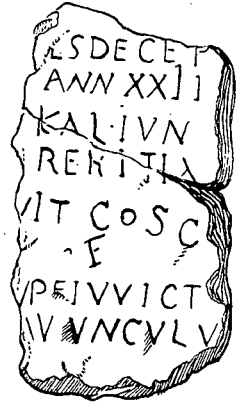


FIG. 2.

The lettering on the stone seems fairly certain, and, though it is imperfect, I doubt if much is lost, save a word or two here and there; it is plainly defective at the beginning, and at least one letter must be supplied at the end; it is damaged also across the middle. As I read it, line 1 begins with . . . ES ('e' imperfect), the end of the dead man's name. There follows DECEP . . . *decep[tus]*, that is, 'cut off' or 'dead'—unless the dead man had two names and *decep* . . . begins the second. Line 2 gives

<sup>11</sup> See *Arch. Ael.*, 1 ser. vol. III (1844), pp. 150 foll.; 3 ser. x, p. 211, not, I think, a quite accurate account. Even the account of the find spot in *Arch. Ael.* I (1857), p. 257, is meagre.

his age, *ann(orum)* xxii: he died aged 22. Line 3 added the day of the month, *kal. Iun.* 'he died on or (as one or two letters may have dropped out) a few days before June 1.' Line 4 contains a verb which I do not understand, and which is not absolutely clear on the stone, *rehitiavit*; it must be equivalent to *requievit* "he fell asleep." Line 5 adds a date by a year COS (*consule*) C.F., a consulship which I cannot identify<sup>12</sup>. Perhaps an emperor is in question, as a part of his title fills line 7—P F IŪVICT, *p(ius) f(elix) invict(us)*, probably in the ablative. Lastly, line 8 stated that the dead man's uncle, *avunculus*, set up the tombstone; we may supply *p.* or *posuit*, or the like, in a lost line 9. Though the emperor's names cannot be fixed in lines 4 and 5, both lettering and phrasing point to the fourth century; the phrasing suggests Christianity, and we may refer the stone to the earlier part of that century (say A.D. 300-350).

(ii) A more striking and less puzzling example was detected in 1889 at Chesterholm, by our late vice-president, Dr. Bruce, and our secretary, Mr. R. Blair, who is happily still with us (*Arch. Ael.* 1889, 2nd ser., XIII, 368); it has from the first been recognised as Christian, and is now in the Chesters museum. It is a flattish irregular-shaped slab, bearing across it letters in three lines (fig. 3, p. 30), that is, 'Brigomaglus lies buried here: . .' (In the first line the sixth letter is an inverted M. The third line is broken; an imperfect letter before *vs* looks as if it were *c*, as to which see below).

It is perhaps worthy of note, though it has not been noticed, that a Christian 'confessor and bishop' with a nearly identical name, Briomaglus, also called Briocus, was sent over to Gaul from Britain to join St. Germanus in the fifth century, or perhaps

<sup>12</sup> Prof. A. von Domaszewski, a high authority, once suggested to me that C stood for Carausius (A.D. 287-293). I do not think that any letters are here missing. The surface of the stone does not suggest it.

in the latest part of the fourth century. He appears to have been companion at one moment of two more famous men, Patrick the Apostle of Ireland, and Hel-tutus or Illtud, who was famous among early Welsh Christians. It would be pleasant to think that the Chesterholm monument indicated the presence in Northumberland of

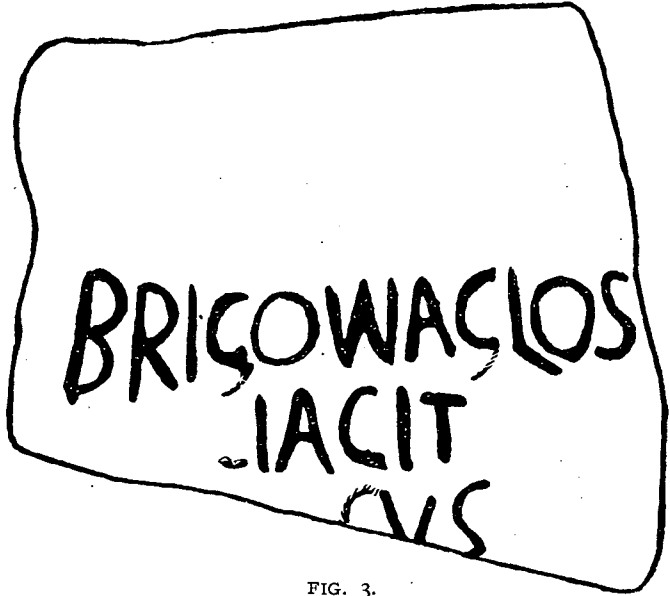


FIG. 3.

a friend of these two great men, and I do not think that the difference in spelling between Brigomaglus and Briomaglus—for which indeed parallels can be cited<sup>18</sup>—makes such a hypothesis absurd. We might, indeed, complete the fourth line above: [*qui et Brioc*]cus, 'who was also called Briocus.'

<sup>18</sup> Many Celtic names beginning with Brig seem to have lost the G before a following vowel. The place-name 'Brige' in France has become 'Brie' in several cases (Holder, *Sprachschatz*, I, 540 foll.) and a Breconshire inscription gives the name 'Brigomaglus' in the form of 'Briamail.' A life of Briocus (*Analecta Bollandiana*, II, 163), speaks of *sanctus Briomaglus, Coriticianae regionis indigena* (from Cardiganshire; not from Kerry, as the Bollandist editor conjectures). He seems to have gone to Brittany and to have died there, perhaps about A.D. 515, at the great age which such men often reached.

(iii) Besides these stones, a few small objects bearing the Christian monogram have been found in southern Northumberland. The famous Corbridge Lanx, which, according to my Oxford colleague, Professor Percy Gardner, represents a late version of the Judgment of Paris (made in the third or fourth century, perhaps by silversmiths of Ephesus,<sup>14</sup> bears no Christian mark; its subject is, indeed, too pagan for that. But a silver bowl, found under circumstances which suggest that it and the lanx belong to the same service of Roman silver-plate, bears six Christian monograms amidst the ornament on its rim.<sup>15</sup> I see no cause to call this service 'church-plate,' but one piece at any rate must have been a while in Christian hands, and has been decorated for Christian use. The whole

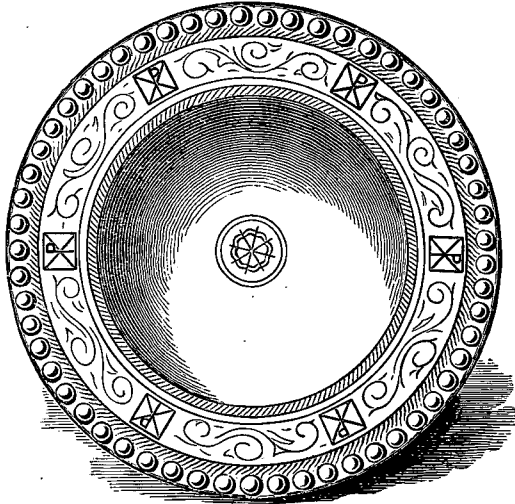


FIG. 4.

service was probably lost by some high Roman official travelling through Tyneside, who crossed the river by either the Roman bridge at Corstopitum, or by boat near the present bridge at Corbridge, which dates from medieval times. The lanx was found in the river bank near the water's edge, a few

<sup>14</sup> *Hellenic Journal*, 1915, xxxv, 66-75.

<sup>15</sup> *Lap. Sep.* 653 with Fig. 5. See also *Journal of Roman Studies*, iv (1914), pp. 6-12, figs. 1-2; new *History of Northumberland*, x, 516-520.

yards lower down stream than this later bridge; the other pieces of the service were fished out of the Tyne not very far off; presumably, when the official crossed, whether by bridge or boat, some of his luggage fell into the water, and the silver pieces were washed out of it and then up and down the stream in various river-floods.

(iv) Another stone which here concerns us was found in 1892 in an outskirt of Carlisle (fig. 5). It is the tombstone of Flavius



FIG. 4. TOMBSTONE FROM CARLISLE.

Antigonus Papias, a man of 'Greek' birth (that is, from the eastern Mediterranean), who died at the age of 60, and whose memorial was set up by his wife. Though its inscription begins with the (strictly speaking) heathen formula *D.M. dis manibus*, its phrasing seems to indicate a Christian, not a pagan origin.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Trans. Cumb. and West. Arch. Soc.*, 1st ser., XII, 370; XIII, 165; *PSAN.*, v, 231; *Eph. epigr.*, IX, 1222, p. 607. The date of the stone has been disputed, but the *nomen* Flavius, the lettering and the general style agree with the fourth century A.D.

It must, of course, often be doubtful whether a particular inscription is or is not Christian. The formula *dis manibus* (D.M.), used on the Carlisle tombstone, has sometimes been regarded as mark of pagan work. Now, it is quite true that a man who thought clearly what he was doing, would not use D.M. when he wanted to cut a Christian inscription. But how few of us think out clearly what we are doing! It would, too, be rash to assert about any religious formula that all those who use it are always consciously aware of its exact bearing. When the British Government first set up letter-boxes in India, certain natives took these to be meant as receptacles for pious offerings to queen Victoria; so they poured in through the openings molasses, ghee and other sticky stuffs; they meant well, but their acts were hardly quite what they supposed. Besides, conventional formulae, etc., tend to lose their meaning, and to become mere customs; indeed, many Christian tombstones are headed by the formula *dis manibus*, and yet are demonstrably Christian.<sup>17</sup> A good example of the doubt which may prevail when we have to guess the creed of those who set up inscriptions from the formulae or names in them is supplied by the altars to the 'Di Veteres' found plentifully along the Wall, and in northern England, but rare in southern England, and (be it noted), equally unknown in Scotland. All antiquaries know these altars. About 40 (list p. 38) have been recorded from northern England; the most southern example is at York, the most northerly at Netherby, 11 miles north of Carlisle. They are small altars; 16 inches is the greatest recorded dimension. They are badly lettered, as if belonging to a late date, and are often hard to decipher. The dedicators, with one or two exceptions, are men (no. 10 is a woman); several

<sup>17</sup> See my note *Arch. Journal*, I, 314, note 2. The use of D.M. on Christian inscriptions does not seem, in this country, to have outlived the end of the Roman period, or to occur, unless by rare chance, on our Christian inscriptions of the fifth or sixth centuries.

clearly were soldiers; if one may judge by their names, they were common folk or common soldiers. That agrees with the rudeness of the lettering and with certain odd (grammatical, etc.) blunders.<sup>18</sup> Only one (no. 18) had military or other rank; he stood no higher than ensign in an auxiliary cohort. Again, no dedicator bears the proper 'tria nomina' of the Roman. In only two or three cases, indeed, is a man named with two, *cognomen* and *nomen* (17, 18, 26, 38). No definitely German names occur; only a few, perhaps half a dozen, seem to be Celtic:—Andiatis (no. 37); Aspuanis (no. 33); which recalls the town-name Aspuna, in the far-off Celtic land of Asiatic Galatia (Holder, *Sprachschatz*, I, 248); Buccus (if that be the right reading in 6); Dada (no. 17), unless this be Teutonic; Duihno (no. 28), which recalls the ancient name of a Gaulish river, Duina, near Verdun; and Senaculus (no. 8). Most of the names are such as might belong to ordinary provincial soldiers in an auxiliary regiment of the later empire. The god (or gods) worshipped is (are) a masculine deity (or deities), *deo veteri*,<sup>19</sup> or *dibus veteribus*<sup>20</sup>; the singular is a good deal the commoner (28 singulars, 11 plurals, 2 others doubtful). The spelling of the epithet varies; about half the examples shew an *i* instead of one or of both of the 'e's. Few of the altars bear ornament, and it is rudely cut. No. 1 has the conventional emblems of sacrifice—jug, basin, knife and axe—no. 2, a rabbit (?); no. 13, a boar and a snake (*or* worm);

<sup>18</sup> See for example two altars from Housesteads (32, 33), on one of which the singular 'deo' is joined to the plural 'veteribus,' while on the other 'pro-et suis' is written for 'pro[se]let suis.' These are perhaps the worst examples.

<sup>19</sup> In some cases (below, nos. 19, 20, 21), a lettering occurs which has been interpreted as providing a name 'veterinus' or 'viterinus,' as a variety of the name of the god worshipped. Some have even connected this with the 'Veteranehae,' goddesses worshipped on the lower Rhine, but this seems an error. 'Veterino' is merely a dedication to 'deo veteri,' set up by a man whose name began with No . . . or, in some cases, perhaps with Ne . . . misread.

<sup>20</sup> Once (below, no. 27, *deabus viteribus*) the feminine seems to occur, but the reading is doubtful.

no. 21 an ox (?); and no. 30, a bird (or toad) and boar. All these are in low relief; nothing, I think, can be argued from them—they are neither specially pagan nor Christian.

The inscriptions furnish little evidence of date, save that the bad lettering would ill accord with an early period. Perhaps, however, the distribution of the altars gives a clue. I have said that (p. 33) they are not found in Scotland. Now the region north of Cheviot was annexed by the Romans about A.D. 140 and was definitely lost about 180; as these altars do not occur in Scotland, one would think that they were not being set up in those forty years, i.e. the cult was then neglected, and, as it is not very likely that they belong to the period before 140, we may suppose that they are later; i.e. they belong to the third century A.D. The only two items which seem to indicate any date at all agree with this (26, 38). If on 38, 'Aelius Secundus' be the right reading, that altar can hardly be earlier, though it may easily be later, than the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). On 26, on the other hand, the name 'Aurelius Mucianus' is not likely to be earlier than the later part of the second century; indeed, a praetorian soldier with that exact name appears in Italy in the early third century. The general phrasing of the inscriptions is too brief to indicate a date; it does not pointedly suggest either a late or any particular age. I conclude that the third century was most probably the time when these ill-cut stones began to be set up. How long the cult lasted, there is no evidence whatever, save the seeming lateness of the lettering.

What, then, is the meaning of the dedication *deo veteri* (or *dibus veteribus*)? It has been thought that *veteri* is dative of the latin adjective *vetus*, 'old,' and that the altars were set up 'to the Old God (or Gods),' that is, to the pagan gods, contrasted with a new rising Christianity. That explanation, which I once advocated myself, seems at first sight a reasonable one. But in the last



half-dozen years, two items have come to light, which seem to upset this view. (i) One is an altar found by Mr. F. G. Simpson in 1910, at Housesteads, bearing the letters DEO HVETERI SVPERSTES [et] REGVLV [s] VSL [m]. This inscription is far better cut than are most altars of this cult. I had formerly inclined to suppose that the intrusive H, which, if VETERI were really connected with the Latin adjective, 'vetus,' would have no meaning, and which occurs on four altars, might be an N mis-written. There is a late Latin form of N which approximates to H; in it the cross-bar runs nearly horizontally, not diagonally as in an ordinary modern N (H, not N). This explanation would, in itself, be satisfactory, since an initial N might stand for *n(umen)*, and DEO HVETERI would then simply mean *deo n(umini) veteri*, 'to the Old God.' However, the Housesteads altar is too well-cut to make it at all probable that the initial H on it is a mis-shaped N. (ii) Moreover, I came across some time ago, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, some papers of the antiquary Camden (MS. Smith, 84, f. 8*d*; compare 86 f. 40), which contain an unpublished inscription sent to him by 'the L(ord) William Howard; neare Catterick, 1622.' Camden died in 1623, and no doubt had no opportunity of publishing this inscription himself; while, as these Bodleian papers do not seem to have been overhauled by any epigraphist since his death, the inscription has naturally remained unnoticed.<sup>21</sup> This inscription begins DEO SANCTO VHETERI. We have thus the alternative spellings, *hweteri* and *vheteri*. This suggests that the name of the god cannot be the Latin adjective, *vetus*, but belongs to some Teutonic stem, in which, as in modern Northumbrian, *-wh-* and *-hw-* are more or less interchangeable. I refer to the sound with which, when properly pronounced, the word 'whether' begins—a sound which seems (to a southerner) to be either *wh* or *hw*. This means that *veteri* is not Latin—for

<sup>21</sup> *Eph. Epigr.*, IX, 1122; no. 26 in the list at end of this article.

to that language such a *-wh-* or *-hw-* sound is quite strange—but is Teutonic, and probably German. Deities with German names abound on the altars of the mural region ; many German-born soldiers served in the auxiliary regiments stationed on the Wall, and these men brought over with them and worshipped here the gods of their fatherland. That this is so, seems supported by the fact that altars to the *Di Veteres* occur mainly in the north and north-east of Britain, the district in which the Romans kept troops quartered. Along the Wall, as the list below will show, the cult of these gods is common. South of the Humber, not an example is to be found (p. 33).

I conclude then, that the old explanation of *deo veteri, dis veteribus* is really wrong, and that we must adopt the idea that the adjective is not Latin, but a German word. This is, after all, the more natural idea, since most of the epithets to the names of gods which we meet along the Wall seem to be taken from some dialect of provincials serving in the Roman ranks. If that be so, we must cease using the inscriptions on these altars as proofs of the presence of a new cult that was growing up beside old established pagan worships.

It may be asked what, if Teutonic, the name (or epithet) '*veteri*' would mean. Here a difficulty arises. The Teutonic scholars whom I have consulted seem at variance on the matter. The difficulty arises from a fact which seems at first sight almost incredible, that old German is supposed to have possessed no letter 'e.' Plain men may wonder how 'German' could be spelt, if the language had no 'e.' I do not presume to decide a question of ancient Teutonic philology. All that I can do is to note that Teutonic scholars in Oxford, for instance one of such admitted authority in his own subject as the late professor A. S. Napier, and another no less competent, Mr. W. H. Stevenson (happily still with us), on being consulted, agreed that they could

not accept '*vetus*' as a word of Teutonic origin. On the other hand, certain German authorities, such as professor Max Roediger of Berlin, have, I understand, pronounced that such a word can be easily accepted as German. With this difference of doctors, I leave the question.

But it may be well to add that, if *veteri* and *veteribus* in the dedications on the altars in question are not the Latin adjective *vetus*, one may still believe that some German name resembling either *vitis* or *vetus* may have been confused with and assimilated to the Latin word. This consideration does not affect the historical meaning of these dedications; whether it in any way lessens the philological difficulties, I must leave others to decide.

#### APPENDIX.

The following condensed list contains in brief all the inscriptions of the *di veteres* known to me. They number just 40, of which all but two belong to the mural region, that is, to the region dealt with in Dr. Bruce's *Lapidarium*. The two come from Catterick Bridge and York (26 and 40).

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#### APPENDIX TO EARLY NORTHUMBRIAN CHRISTIANITY AND ALTARS OF THE DI VETERES.

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Abbreviations:—

- L. = *Lapidarium*, edited by Dr. Bruce (Newcastle, 1875).  
 C. = CIL. vii British volume (vii) of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (E. Hübner, Berlin, 1873).  
 E. volumes of *Ephemeris epigraphica*, with addenda to C. by Dr. Hübner and by the present writer.  
 D. = Dessau, *Inscr. selectae*, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin (1892-1917).  
 AA. *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Newcastle Soc. of Antiquaries (1822-1917).  
 The ref. below are all to the Second Series.  
 PSAN *Proceedings of the Newcastle Antiquaries* (1822-1917).

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[The find-spots are arranged in alphabetical order].



No. 1



No. 2



No. 3



No. 8



No. 7



No. 13



No. 13

Find-spot.	Inscriptions, etc.	Size (inches)	References.
1. Benwell.	deo vetri sant (for <i>sancto</i> ). On sides—jug, patera; knife, axe ..	11½ by 5½	L. 24; C. 511. (Bruce, <i>Rom. Wall</i> , 398).
2. „	vitirbus (for <i>vitiribus</i> ). On face—rabbit (?) .. .. .	9 by 4½	L. 25; C. 512.
3. Chesters.	dibus veteribus .. .. .	9 by 6	L. 109; C. 582.
4. „	deo sancto vitir(i) Tertulus v.s. l.m. ( <i>not Terivius</i> ) .. .. .	12 by 6	L. 110; C. 581. E. ix, p. 585.
5. „	[di]bus veteribus .. .. .	6 high	E. vii, 1018.
6. Carrawburgh.	deo. vete. rivo tum. uccusvl. m (or <i>svi</i> ) i.e. <i>deo veteri votum</i> . [?B] -uccus v.l. m .. .. .	....	L. 155; C. 619.
7. Chesterholm.	veteri . . . tin . . s .. .. .	5½ by 4½	L. 254; C. 709.
8. „	veteribus pos(uit) Senaculus ( <i>noi</i> , I think, <i>Pos(tumius) Senaculus</i> ; see n. 10) .. .. .	8 by 4½	L. 253; C. 711.
9. „	. . . vitri. votum. s.l.m. .. .. .	....	C. 710.
10. Great Chesters.	dib[us] veteribus posuit Romana	5 by 10	L. 277; C. 728.
11. „	dibus veteribus. .. .. .	5½ by 5	L. 276; C. 729.
12. „	deo. veteri. v. . . .. .	12 by 6	L. 278; C. 727.
13. Carvoran.	dibus vitiribus Deccius v.s.l.m on sides—boar and snake (or worm) .. .. .	9 by 5	L. 311; C. 767; D. 4735.
14. „ (?)	n. vitiribus votum .. .. .	9 by 6½	L. 312; C. 502a.
15. „ (near)	veteres (? for <i>veteris(acrum)</i> ) .. .. .	....	L. 313; C. 768.
16. „	deo viteri Aulus et Aurides v.s.ll.m. .. .. .	13 by 9	L. 314; C. 765.
17. „	deo vitiri meni dada v.s.l.m (dedicated by Meni(us) Dada. Holder ( <i>Nachträge</i> 412) reads Menidada. But Menius (Maenius) is a well-attested <i>nomen</i> .. .. .	9 by 5	L. 315; C. 764; AA. xii, 69.
18. „ (near)	deo. sanct(o) veteri. iul. pastor imag. coh. ii. delma[t]. v.s.l.m (set up by ensign of cohort ii of Dalmatians) .. .. .	14 by 9	L. 316; C. 760.
19. „	deo viteri no . . . ( <i>No</i> . . began the dedicator's name) .. .. .	....	L. 317; C. 766.
20. „	deo <i>vitiri ne(ca)limeo</i> rov.p.l.m. Perhaps at end read, <i>ro.v.s.l.m.</i> ( <i>s</i> misread into <i>p</i> ?). Compare 21-22 from same site .. .. .	....	L. 318; C. 763.



No. 10



No. 28



No. 16



No. 22



No. 29

Find-spot.	Inscriptions, etc.	Size (inches)	References.
21. Carvoran.	deo veteri. nec. . . alamil . . . v.s.l.m On right side—an ox (?)	.....	L. 319; C. 762.
22. „	deo veteri nec. a. iames v.s.l. (20, 21, 22 were probably set up by same man, Necalames (?) )	11 by 7	L. 320; C. 761; AA. xii, 70.
23. „	dibus vite . . . vs.l.m . . .	....	E. vii, 1056; AA. xii, p. 286.
24. „	dibus viitiiribus vtm (=veteri- bus v(o)t(u)m) . . . . .	9 by 6	E. vii, 1057.
25. „	deo vetiri v . . . (=v(otum 1)	....	? C. 727; E. vii, 1064.
26. Catterick. (N. Yorkshire).	deo. sancto. vheteri pro sal(ute) aur(eli). muciani. v.s.l.m.o. (o is misreading for a leaf-stop) . . .	....	E. ix, 1122, from MS. note in Bodleian Library.
27. Chester-le- street.	deabs vitbus, vias. vadri = <i>deab</i> ( <i>u</i> )s <i>vit(eri)bus</i> Vadri may be connected with Vedra, the old name of the Wear, which flows by Chester-le-Street. (Reading, however, doubtful) . . . . .	14 by 7	L. 542; C. 454. A.A. xii, (1887) 69.
28. „	deo vitiri Duihno v.s. (opinions differ whether Duihno is dative or nominative) . . . . .	....	E. vii, 985. AA. xii (1887) 292.
29. Corbridge.	deo vitiri . . . . .	12 by 8	L. 638.
30. Ebchester.	deo vitiri maximus vs. (on sides —bird (or toad) and boar . . .	16 by 8	L. 666; C. 459; D. 4734.
31. „	deo vitir . . . . .	13 by 9	L. 668; E. iv, 677; PSAN. iii (1887) 55.
32. Housesteads.	deo veteribus votum ( <i>sic</i> ) . . .	7 by 4	E. ix, 1181; AA. xxv, 278.
33. „	deo hvitri Aspuanis pro (se) et suis vot( <i>um</i> ) sol( <i>vit</i> ) . . . . .	13 by 8	E. ix, 1182; AA. xxv, 278.
34. „	deo hveteri Superstes [ <i>el</i> ] Regulu[s] v.s.l.[ <i>m</i> ] . . . . .	12 by 7	(1910) E. ix, 1183.
35. Lanchester.	deo vit. . . . .	12 by 6	L. 688; C. 442.
36. „	deo vitir[ <i>i</i> ] viii, vv . . . The last six letters must have been dedi- cator's name; the whole hard to read . . . . .	16 by 7	L. 691; C. 444; E. ix, 1134.

Find.spot.	Inscriptions, etc.	Size (inches)	References,
37. Netherby.	deo veteri. sancto. Andiatis v.s.l.	11 by 7	L. 766; C. 960; D. 4732.
38. „	deo mogonti vitire <i>san(cto)</i> <i>Ae(lius?)</i> Secund(us) vslm. (Text not certain) .. ..	....	C. 958; D. 4733.
39. „	deo h. vetiri. Found in 1882 <sup>22</sup>	....	E. vii, 1087.
40. York.	deo veteri Primulus vol. m <sup>23</sup> ..	11 by 4	E. vii, 929.

<sup>22</sup> Communicated to me soon after by Dr. Bruce.

<sup>23</sup> A medieval addition, *M[ariae]*, perhaps.