

VIII.—A NEW INSCRIPTION FROM HEXHAM.

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[Read on the 25th May, 1921.]

The inscribed stone which is exhibited this afternoon by the kindness of our member, Mr. Henry F. Lockhart of Hexham, has been in the possession of his family for a century or more. I owe my knowledge of it to Lieut. Col. Spain. From information furnished by Mr. Lockhart it appears that about 1800-1820 the stone was an important feature of a spar rockery in an old summer-house in his father's garden. Eventually this was pulled down or fell down through old age, and the stone remained in the garden for forty years, and then was rescued and brought into the house. Dr. Bruce saw it after the publication of the *Lapidarium* and shortly before his death, but neither Colonel Spain nor I have been able to find any mention of it in his writings.

Fragment of a slab of grey sandstone, reddened by fire; height $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches (complete); breadth $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches (both ends missing); thickness $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches to 4 inches. It seems to have been broken with intention, and it may well be that the mason who re-used it cut it into three roughly equal pieces, of which this is the middle. The inscription was enclosed by a bold cable moulding. The slab bore a dedication and was set up in the name of a military cohort by a commanding officer whose name is incomplete, but less so than that of his corps. There is not room for the name and titles of an emperor in the first line. The one letter preserved before AVGVST is P, not as might appear at first sight R. We must look for one of those abstractions, *Victoria*, *Fortuna*,

Virtus and the like which are so often coupled in inscriptions with *Augusta*, *Augusti*, or *Augustorum*.

The dedication may have been *Disci*[P. AVGVST[orum ' to the Discipline of the Emperors,' for which we have a parallel on altars found at Corbridge¹ (*Discipulinae Augustorum*), Birrens² (*Discip. Aug.*), and Castlesteads³ (*Discipulinae Auggg.*, afterwards altered to *Augusti*). Such altars seem to have been set up in the headquarters building. The Birrens altar was found in the well of the *principia*, the Corbridge one on the steps of the strong-room in a building which evidently served a similar purpose. There is yet another instance. Hodgson in describing the stations on the Wall made use of manuscript notes left by bishop Lingard, and at *Aesica*, after describing the strong-room in the centre of the station, Lingard noticed a broken altar bearing the letters DISCP (evidently DISCIP).⁴ Since in two or perhaps three cases out of four the *Disciplina* dedication is associated with the *principia*, we may suppose that our slab was originally set up there; but in what fort? The point must be discussed, for it is material to the reconstruction of the second line. Most of the inscriptions hitherto found at Hexham are thought to have come from Corbridge; some of the architectural members used in the abbey can be identified with confidence.⁵ If the stone was dug up at Hexham, there is a general probability that it came from Corbridge. It may well have been dug up or found in a medieval wall on the premises where it is now preserved, for Mr. Lockhart's house is believed to occupy the site of the *Turris de Hexham*.⁶

¹ *Arch. Ael.*, 3 ser. ix, p. 263; *Eph. Epig.*, ix, p. 687.

² *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, xxx, 131; *Eph. Epig.*, ix, p. 615.

³ *Lap. Sept.*, no. 445; *Eph. Epig.*, ix, p. 615.

⁴ Hodgson, *Hist. Northumberland*, II, iii, p. 203. This record seems to have been overlooked by the editors of *Lapidarium* and *Corpus*.

⁵ W. H. Knowles, *Journal of Roy. Inst. Brit. Architects*, 3rd ser. xvi, 509.

⁶ C. J. Bates, 'Border Holds,' *Arch. Ael.*, 2 ser. xiv, p. 18; in the Harleian list of castles and fortalices in 1415.

For the missing word at the beginning of line 2 I suggest *milite*]s. Then followed the name of a miliary cohort, *coh(ortis) primae rum miliariae*. For the missing racial designation we have the choice of five cohorts which were stationed on the northern frontier and had in name at least a strength of 1000 men. We may rule out the First Vangiones (Risingham) because the genitive in -num does not fit, and the First Dacians (Birdoswald) because the title *miliaria* does not occur on any of the thirty or more official inscriptions which it has left, though the fact that its commanding officer was always *tribunus* and the large area of *Amboglanna* are evidence that in fact it was *cohors miliaria*. There remain *Coh. I Nervana Germanorum* at Birrens in Dumfrieshire and *Coh. I Aelia Hispanorum* at Netherby, both rather remote from Hexham; *Coh. I Tungrorum* at Housesteads, and *Coh. II Tungrorum* at Castlesteads and Birrens, but if we restore *Tungro-*, six letters, in line 3 we are hard put to it to fill line 2, for the Tungrians had no standing title before their territorial designation; and finally *Coh. I. Fida Vardullorum*, known to have been stationed both at Lanchester and at High Rochester. This last fits the gap if we read *Coh. I [F. Var | dullo] rum (X) [C. R. Eq.]*. The two known stations of the Vardulli are both on Watling Street, and it may well be that in the exigencies of some campaign the regiment was pushed forward from Lanchester or withdrawn from High Rochester to furnish a garrison for Corbridge. It is well known that another cohort, the First Lingones, has left inscriptions at the same two forts. Possibly in the third century the strain of outpost work at the isolated station of *Bremenium* made it desirable to give its garrison a rest from time to time, and Vardulli and Lingones regularly changed places. We may complete the two last lines *quibus] praees[t followed by some such name as [Pub(lius) Calpur] [nius Vic[tor tribunus]*. I note as a coincidence that two

Birdoswald inscriptions preserve the name of a tribune which would fit if we transferred the word *trib(unus)* to the fourth line and read [*quibus*] *praees*[*t trib(unus)*] | *Ammo*]nius *Vic*[*torinus*]. But in such dedicatory inscriptions the indication of military rank almost invariably follows the proper name. The complete inscription may be restored, then, somewhat as follows:—

[*Disci*]P AVGVST[*orum*
milite]S COH. I [F. Var-
dullo] RVM (X) [C.R.Eq.
quibus] PRAEES[*t Pub.*
Calpur] NIVS VIC[*tor tr.*

If we make allowance for the cable border it is probable that the original length of the slab was about three feet. Its form shows that it was meant to be built into a wall. If the conjecture that it was originally set up at *Corstopitum* is right, it was perhaps incorporated in the administrative building (site XLV) described by Mr. Forster and Mr. Knowles in *Arch.*

Ael., 3 ser. IX, pp. 22-32. Another example of a slab meant to be used in this way, the dedication to *Victoria Aug.* found near *Aesica*,⁷ bears like the stone from Hexham an inscription in the form usually found upon altars.

⁷ *Lap. Sept.*, no. 275, *Arch. Ael.*, ser. XVII, p. 327, *C.I.L.*, vii, 726.

