

### III.—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORT AT CHESTER-LE-STREET IN A.D. 216.<sup>1</sup>

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In 1879 within the Roman fort of Chester-le-Street and near the church two inscribed stone fragments were found which form the *sinister* end of a large dedication slab,<sup>2</sup> 24 inches high and now only 14 inches wide. The stones are now preserved at the west end of the church, and read :

]EQQ  
].....  
]ERRITO  
]INDVXIT  
]OLO IN 5.  
]DIANI LEG  
]VLLIN·C·OS

Hooppell showed great ingenuity in proposing a restoration for the missing parts of the text which can be dated to A.D. 216 from line 7 : ]*ullin.cos* which in full will have been *Sabino II et Anullin(o) cos.* For lines 5 and 6 he proposed [*balneum cum basilica a s*]olo in| [*struxit*. From *induxit* in line 4 he saw that the provision of a water-supply was in question, and from *eqq.* in line 1 that the unit concerned was a cavalry squadron with a title in line 2 which had been

<sup>1</sup> The following abbreviations are used: *AA* *Archæologia Aeliana*; *AJ* *Archæological Journal*; *CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*; *EE* *Ephemeris Epigraphica*; *ILS* Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*; *JRS* *Journal of Roman Studies*; *LS* Bruce, *Lapidarium Septentrionale*; *NCH* *Northumberland County History*.

<sup>2</sup> Hooppell, *AA*<sup>2</sup> ix (1882/3), 173, with figure; Watkin, *AJ* xxxvii (1880), 153; Haverfield, *EE* vii, 986.

purposely deleted. For *errito* in line 3, however, his suggestion of *Big]errit(anus)*. *q* | [*ui* is inapposite, and there seems no alternative to Mommsen's proposal<sup>3</sup> of *territorium* in some form, however unusual the mention of this may seem. This use of *territorium* and the absence of an emperor's names are features which merit further study.

In the last two lines we have not only the end of the names of one of the two consuls<sup>4</sup> but also part of the governor's *cognomen*, *]diani*, in the genitive. We may therefore supply in front of this at least a *nomen* and *sub cura* on which the two names in the genitive will depend. Following *leg.* there will be *Aug.pr.pr.* to be inserted at the beginning of line 7. The last two lines may be completed as follows: *sub cura . . . .]diani leg. | [Aug.pr.pr. Sabino II et An]ullin(o) cos.* We can therefore determine the approximate length of the text, while observing that as the size of the lettering in the final line is smaller, this line will have contained rather more letters than the previous lines. The names of the governor must have been given here with greater brevity than on the contemporary inscription<sup>5</sup> from High Rochester where there is room for a single<sup>6</sup> letter abbreviating the *praenomen* and in the next line space for about 13 letters, enough for *nomen* as well as *cognomen*.

The first two lines may next be considered. As Hoopell saw, the word at the end of line 2 has been erased, a treatment usually reserved for titles belonging to, or derived from, emperors whose memory had been condemned. Such a title would be in place here, not as part of an emperor's style, but as an honorific title of the unit whose *eq(wites)* are mentioned at the end of line 1. Further, in

<sup>3</sup> *EE* vii, 986.

<sup>4</sup> The mason seems to have cut *ANVLLIN·C·* and then added a ligatured *os* in the space at the end. *C·OS* is unusual, but has been confirmed by a squeeze.

<sup>5</sup> *CIL* vii, 1043; *NCH* xv, 144, no. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The available space shows that the letter in question must have been one of the broader letters of the alphabet.

A.D. 216, when this stone was erected, many units were in fact bearing the title *Antoniniana* in honour of Caracalla. It is thus reasonable to restore this adjective, either abbreviated or in full, to agree with *alae*, a genitive depending on *equites* in line 1. If used in an abbreviated form, there would still be some space in the middle of line 2 which might be filled with a further abbreviated adjective indicating the fort to which the unit belonged, just as the *n(umerus) explorator(um) Brem(eniensium) Gor(dianus)*<sup>7</sup> took its name from *Bremenium*, High Rochester, and the *n(umerus) eq(uitum) Sar(matarum) Bremetenn(aciensium) Gordianus*<sup>8</sup> from *Bremetennacum*, Ribchester. There is also the possibility that the unit was a *numerus equitum* rather than *equites alae*. In this event the word *numerus* would have to be included in line 1, and there would be more space in line 2 with the omission of *alae*.

Despite the fullness of the text there is on the stone, as we have it, no mention of the emperor, and yet it was the normal practice to cite the emperor either in the dative, as the person in whose honour the work had been done, or in the nominative, as the agent of the work. On inscriptions of the early third century the nominative is very frequent, and imperial titles and genealogy are given with great elaboration. Furthermore, a subject in the singular is required for *induxit* in line 4. It cannot be the provincial governor, for he is mentioned in a prepositional phrase in line 6. The *eq(uites)* of the first line are in the plural, and could only form part of the subject if the phrase was *n(umerus) eq(uitum)* rather than *eq(uites) alae*. It is true that the unit concerned often forms the subject of the verb;

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* vii, 1030.

<sup>8</sup> *CIL* vii, 218; *LS* 183. Without more evidence it is not possible to identify the third century garrison of Chester-le-Street. In the second century some ten cavalry regiments are recorded as being in Britain, and in the third century four of these can be accounted for as being stationed at other forts. Even so, the choice need not be limited to the remaining half-dozen which were still in Britain, for we know of other mounted units styled *numeri equitum*, and the units imported by Severus in his extensive reorganization may have included some of which we have as yet no record.

but it is most unusual for it to take pride of place and omit all reference to the emperor. The difficulties can best be overcome by assuming that this slab was only half of the full text and that it was matched by a similar slab which carried the full names, titles and ancestry of Caracalla, for these might well fill a seven line inscription. A likely parallel comes from a contemporary inscription<sup>9</sup> at Bird-oswald: *sub Modio Iu|lio leg. Aug. pro|pr. coh. I Ael. D(a)c.|cui praeest M.|Cl. Menander|trib.*, which omits the emperor and any mention of what was built, presumably the east gateway, where the slab was found. This would be more intelligible if we assumed that a parallel stone carried the first half of the text. Comparison with the dedication slab<sup>10</sup> set up to Caracalla at High Rochester sometime between 10 December 215 and 9 December 216 by the First Cohort of Vardullians will show how a contemporary inscription fills the first seven lines with imperial titles. The dimensions of the stone are comparable, and the first seven lines will serve as model for the presumed counterpart of the Chester-le-Street stone with little more than transposition from dative to nominative.

As the first line cannot have contained the emperor's full style, and *eq(uites)* is not the subject of the singular verb, we need a phrase which will bring in *equites* in an oblique case and make an imposing beginning to what has been an ornate inscription. The sense of the text is not that of a religious dedication, as Schulten's<sup>11</sup> *pro salute* would suggest, but, at least in part, the provision of amenities for the garrison. This might be expressed by two nouns,<sup>12</sup> such as *utilitati et usui*, with *eq(uitum)* to complete the line.

<sup>9</sup> *CIL* vii, 838; *LS* 389. Compare the Chesterholm inscription (*CIL* vii, 715; *LS* 262) recording the building of a gateway with its towers (A.D. 222-5), which leaves insufficient room in the first line for the emperor's titles.

<sup>10</sup> *CIL* vii, 1043; *LS* 568; *Black Gate Catalogue*, no. 91; *NCH* xv, 144, no. 2, plate facing p. 144.

<sup>11</sup> *Hermès*, xxix (1894), 481, *Das territorium legionis*.

<sup>12</sup> These nouns are conjectural, but such a dative occurs on the Severus Alexander slab at South Shields (*EE* ix, 1140): *aquam usibus*

Turning now to the central lines 3-5, we seem to have a record of some constructional activity. Before *induxit* we may supply *aquam*, while *a s]olo in[. . .* must refer to some building, with *in* forming the prefix of a verb. Words like *instauravit* or *inaedificavit* might fit, but, taken in conjunction with *a solo*, *instruxit* seems most suitable, and the building in question, when mentioned immediately after *aquam induxit*, can hardly be anything but *balneum*.<sup>13</sup> There will still be space for about a dozen letters between *balneum* and *a solo*, and this may conjecturally be filled by *cum basilica*, which seems better than an abbreviation of *vetustate conlapsum*. The whole phrase occurs on the Lanchester inscription<sup>14</sup> under Gordian *balneum cum basilica a solo instruxit*, or again, at Lancaster,<sup>15</sup> both buildings are mentioned: *balineum refect(um) et basilicam vetustate conlabsum a solo restitutam*.

For lines 3 and 4 Mommsen conjectured [*in balnea* (?) *t]errit(orium)q(ue)* [*eorum*]. But recent examination of the stone has shown that line 3 ends with *errito*, not *erritq*, for, although the last letter appears to have a tail which would convert it into a *q*, the mark resembling the supposed tail is shallower and rougher than the true cutting of the letter and goes straight downwards, quite unlike the horizontal tails of the two *q*'s of *eqq.* in line 1. The adoption of *]errito[* as the reading supports the restoration *territorium* and obviates the need for a preceding noun to which the conjectural *-q(ue)* would refer.

Instances<sup>16</sup> of *territorium* on inscriptions are not very

*mil(itum) coh(ortis) V Gallo(rum) induxit*, and on the aqueduct slab at Chesters (EE ix, 1171): *aqua adducta alae II Astur(um)* the word *alae* is presumably a dative of advantage. *Usus* is used frequently, in either singular or plural, and is occasionally combined with *utilitas* as in ILS 5701 (from Segusio), *thermas . . . extruxit ornavit et usui Segusinae reddidit civit[atis] . . . aquam deduxit, ne quid vel utilitati vel us[ibus] deesset* or in ILS 5520 (from Lambaesis) *meatus fluentorum . . . ad usum utilitatemque (sic) eiusde(m) urbis. . .*

<sup>13</sup> As Schulten saw, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> CIL vii, 445; LS 699.

<sup>15</sup> CIL vii, 287, with *conlabsum* as read by Collingwood.

<sup>16</sup> See Schulten, note II.

frequent and mainly refer to the domain lands of a town which are quoted in subordinate relationship to the action of the main verb. If the word were used subordinately, it would be unlikely to precede the main objects, *aquam* and *balneum*, but would come after them as in the instance of a legionary *territorium* at *Aquincum* quoted by Schulten:<sup>17</sup> *balneum a solo territorio leg(ionis) II Ad(iutricis) P(iae) F(idelis) Severianae*. On the Chester-le-Street stone, however, the order of words seems to preclude a subordinate usage and suggests that *territorium* is also a main object to be associated with an appropriate governing verb. The connection with the structural work cited in lines 4, 5 is one of time and not of place:

If, then, *territorium* is a main object, the action concerning it requires consideration. The most essential action relating to the domain land of a fort would be the definition of its boundaries. The need for this, as part of the early third century reconstruction between Tyne and Tees, will be especially understood if it is remembered that Binchester and Ebchester were now reoccupied for the first time since the Flavian period whereas the Hadrianic site at Lanchester was not restored until the time of Gordian in the middle of the third century. No exact parallels can be quoted, but inscriptions record the establishment of boundaries between the *prata*, or ranches, of military units and the domain land of the local township, not only in the case of legions,<sup>18</sup> but also with auxiliary cohorts.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *EE* ii, 696; *ILS* 2456; *CIL* iii, suppl. 10489.

<sup>18</sup> *ILS* 2454, 2455.

<sup>19</sup> *ILS* 5969, *EE* viii, p. 408, no. 131, from Bedunia in Callaecia: [*ter(minus) Aug(ustalis) p*] *ratorum coh. IIII Gall. inter coh. IIII Gall. et civitatem Bidunien[sem]*. The operative verb to be used with *territorium* seems to be *definivit*, *limitavit* or *terminavit*. For these compare: *ILS* 9379 (from Dalmatia) *inter Sidrinus et Asseriates Q. Aebutius Liberalis* *leg. XI definit*; *CIL* viii, 22786f., *ILS* 9375: *leg. III A[ug.] leimitavit C. Vibio Marso procos III . . .*, which refers to actual centuriation of land in Africa in A.D. 29-30, after the rebellion of Tacfarinas had been suppressed; *ILS* 5964, *limes agrorum . . . inter territorium Aurelie(n)se et privata(m) ratione(m)*; and *ILS* 5938. *Cn. Sentius Saturninus C. Clodius Licinus cos. terminaverunt locum publicum ab privato*.

The gap preceding *territorium* must next be considered. If the deleted title *Antoniniana* was inscribed in full, it may have helped to fill the space. But there is no proof that this was so, and there are parallels for abbreviated versions of the title. The balance of the inscription will be better if the titles of the military unit end with the second line and if the third line begins the statement of the activities to be recorded. Thus it is by no means too fanciful to suggest that the first phrase concerned the fort itself, or its defences. There is room at this point for a noun, or two short nouns, and a governing verb. We may compare the way in which a gate and walls are mentioned at Risingham<sup>20</sup> in A.D. 205-207 and a gateway with its towers at Chesterholm<sup>21</sup> in A.D. 222-5. Other possibilities are internal buildings, such as granaries (*horrea*), as at Birdoswald<sup>22</sup> under Severus or at Great Chesters<sup>23</sup> under Severus Alexander, or the headquarters building (*principia*), as at Birdoswald<sup>24</sup> under Diocletian and Maximian or at Lanchester<sup>25</sup> under Gordian.

Taken together the activities recorded in lines 3-5 would then form a reasonable sequence; first comes some essential construction connected with the fort, then a definition of the unit's domain land, then the amenities, comprising a water-supply and, as its corollary, the bath-house. In the military zone the Severan governors, Virius Lupus and Alfenus Senecio, had concentrated on rebuilding the principal forts. After the campaigns of Septimius Severus and the new frontier policy instituted by Caracalla and Geta in A.D. 211, governors had time both to fill gaps in the fort system and to consult the comfort of the units in all forts. It has long been recognized<sup>26</sup> that the present inscription records the provision of amenities so well exemplified by the aqueduct

<sup>20</sup> *CIL* vii, 1003; *LS* 628; *ILS* 2618.

<sup>21</sup> *CIL* vii, 715; *LS* 262.

<sup>22</sup> *JRS* xix, 214; xxxi, 142.

<sup>23</sup> *CIL* vii, 732

<sup>24</sup> *JRS* xix, 214.

<sup>25</sup> *CIL* vii, 446.

<sup>26</sup> *JRS* xiii (1923), 77.

- slab<sup>27</sup> of A.D. 222 from South Shields. But the unique feature of this fragmentary text is its clear reference to so many of the tasks required when a fort and its *territorium* were established anew after destruction or disuse. The restoration proposed above may be tentative in parts, but the main purport of the text is clear when the historical context is understood.

The text, apart from the phrases discussed above where the choice lies between two or more alternative restorations, is as follows :

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[ . . . . . ] EQQ
[ALAE . . . . .]
[ . . . . . ] T]ERRITO
[RIVM . . . . . AQVAM] INDVXIT
[BALNEVM . . . . . AS] OLO-IN 5
[STRVXIT SVB CVRA . . . . .] DIANI-LEG
[AVG-PR-PR-SABINO-II ET AN] VLLIN-C-OS
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<sup>27</sup> *EE* ix, 1140.