

XVI Notes

1. THE LOCATION OF ARMAMENTARIA AND BALLISTARIA IN ROMAN AUXILIARY FORTS

THE inscription at Lanchester by *cohors I Lingonum Gordiana* in the period A.D. 238–244 to celebrate their restoration of the *principia* and *armamentaria* raises interesting linguistic and military points, which deserve more attention than they have hitherto been given. The text published in *RIB* reads:¹

*Imp(erator) Caesar M(arcus) Antonius
Gordianus P(ius) F(elix) Aug(ustus)
principia et armamen
taria conlapsa restitu*

5 *it per Maecilius Fuscum Leg(atum)
Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) curante M(arco)
Au(relio)
Quirino pre(aefecto) coh(ortis) I L(ingonum)
Gor(dianae)*

At first sight *armamentaria* would seem very out of place in an auxiliary fort, because in Latin literature *armamentarium* meant an arsenal:² and from Livy we can see that in its original sense *armamentarium* was a large-scale factory capable of manufacturing a wide variety of machines of war from scratch, “*Tormenta machinasque et adnexerat secum, et ex Sicilia missa cum commeatu erant; et nova in armamentario multis talium operum artificibus de industria fiebant.*”³ At Lanchester, however, the meaning most probably approximated to Vegetius’ legionary *fabricae*, workshops for the production and repair of the smaller items of military hardware, “*Habebant etiam fabricas scutarias loricas arcuarias, in quibus sagittae missibilia cassides omniaque armorum genera formabantur.*”⁴ That does not, of course, exclude a unit *armamentarium* having the role of magazine: a secure store for

weaponry is a basic essential for any military unit, and it makes good sense to have an armourers’ workshop and armoury under the same roof. The plural *armamentaria*, however, appears suspicious in the context of Lanchester, as I find it hard to believe that a *cohors equitata* would have a requirement for more than one such building. The probable explanation is that we have here a lapicide’s error, because of a simple confusion encountered from the third century A.D. over the letters *a* and *v* in the common script used in the written draft. It is significant that the *armamentarium* was adjunct to the *praetoria*, and it seems safe to conclude that the buildings were of coetaneous foundation.

Another epigraphic indication that unit armament workshops and magazines were collocated with the *principia* is to be found at Birdoswald, where we read in *RIB* 1912:⁵

5 *praetor(ium) quod erat humo copert(um)
et in labe(m) conl(apsum) et princ(ipia) et
bal(listarium) rest(ituta)*

At this point it has to be said that there are two schools of thought on the meaning of *ballistarium*. In an eclectic piece on *ballistaria* D. B. Campbell asserted that they were simply “artillery emplacements”, and postulated at High Rochester “the adaptation of the towers to accommodate the catapults and protect them from enemy fire.”⁶ His arguments are based on the literary use in Plautus’ *Poenulus*, the inscriptions *RIB* 1280 and 1281, two extremely dubious papyri texts—which can be dismissed immediately without comment—and usage of the Greek word *belostasis*. The semantics and imagery of Plautus’ *ballistarium* have subsequently been reviewed at some length by J. Carter⁷ and Professor H. D.

Jocelyn,⁸ and it can safely be concluded that Plautus' sole example can have no bearing upon the epigraphical usages of the Roman imperial army in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Campbell's attempt to equate the Latin *ballistarium* with the Greek *belostasis* simply will not stand up to examination. Their common root notwithstanding, there is no evidence to suggest the transfer, evolution or survival of a common meaning for the two words. The arguments for the meaning "a magazine and workshop for *tormenta*" seem to me to be conclusive, and are to be found in detail elsewhere.⁹ The *principia* and the *ballistarium* at Birdoswald were patently in a similar state of disrepair and it seems reasonable to deduce that they were of coetaneous foundation and if not contiguous were in close proximity.

It is manifest that it must have been highly desirable to have facilities like an *armamentarium* or *ballistarium* under the close supervision of the unit headquarters; and the simplest way to achieve that aim would be to collocate them with the headquarters building. The practice of siting magazines away from living quarters and administrative buildings in barracks is comparatively modern: it came about with the development of explosive ammunition and the concomitant dangers in the event of fire. The epigraphic indications from Lanchester and Birdoswald would seem to confirm a Roman custom of building armourers' workshops and weapon stores contiguous with or at least adjacent to the *principia*. The importance of the *armamentarium* and *ballistarium* to Roman auxiliary units can be estimated not only from their location with the *principia*, but also by the comparative sophistication of the inscriptions recording their restoration.

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¹ RIB 1092.

² Cicero, *Pro Rabirio*, 7; *De Oratore* 1, 14, 62; Pliny 7, 37, 38; Livy *passim*.

³ XXIX, 35, 8.

⁴ II, 11, 9.

⁵ G. H. Donaldson, "A Reinterpretation of RIB 1912 from Birdoswald", *Britannia*, 21 (1990), 207–14.

⁶ D. B. Campbell, "A Note on *Ballistaria*", *Liverpool Classical Monthly*, 14, 7, July 1989, 98–100.

⁷ J. Carter, "Plautus' *Ballistarium*", *Liverpool Classical Monthly*, 14, 9, November 1989, 130–1.

⁸ H. D. Jocelyn, "Plautus, *Poenulus* 200–202 and the *ballistarium*", *Liverpool Classical Monthly*, 15, 1, January 1990, 5–8.

⁹ G. H. Donaldson, "*Tormenta*, *Auxilia*, and *Ballistaria* in the Environs of Hadrian's Wall", *AA*⁵, 17 (1989), 217–9; *op. cit.*, (Note 5) 210–11.

2. "A QUAKER GRAVE-COVER"— correction and re-assessment

In 1966, at the time when the grave-cover of Abigail Tyzack was removed from Armstrong Park to the garden of the Quaker Meeting House in Jesmond, I published a reconstruction of the original inscription and gave some account of the history of the stone.¹ The inscription tells us that Abigail Tizacke, daughter of John and Sarah Tizacke, departed this life on the 7th day of the 12th month 1679 and in the seventh week of her age. The Tyzacks with the Henzells and the Tyttories were Protestant refugees from Lorraine who settled in Newcastle and actively promoted the glass industry on the Tyne. The stone crept into history because Brand was shown it where it then lay in the garden of a house at the Middle Glasshouse and described it in his *History of Newcastle* (1789).² Brand's *imprimatur*, as it were, sufficed to ensure that others—Clephan, Boyle et al—followed. My own account ended with the rash words, *no record is known of how the stone came to lie beneath a horse-chestnut tree in Armstrong Park, Newcastle*. It is this final statement I have first to correct.

As long ago as 1870 James Clephan said much the same thing³ and was evidently at once corrected, for later in the same year he published a second paper recording the evidence of a Mr. Councillor Cook, who had occupied the house near the Middle Glasshouse in the mid-nineteenth century, that the stone was rediscovered when an old summer-

house in the garden was dismantled.⁴ The stone step at its door was turned over and the inscription was revealed. Mr. Joseph Sewell, managing partner at that time of the Broad and Crown Glass works, had the stone removed to the grounds of his house, Heaton Cottage.⁵ It was in this removal that the stone was broken.

This tidies up one loose end, but, once our attention is concentrated on the episode, the record appears to be bristling with loose ends. Clephan has Abigail's remains interred in the Friends burial-ground in Gateshead and the stone laid over them. He has then to surmise the removal of stone and remains at some unknown date to the garden of a house her parents left in 1684. For his part Boyle accepts that the remains were buried in Gateshead, but scouts any surmise about removal of the stone, which he maintains must have been from the start placed in the garden where later Brand saw it.⁶

The Quaker burial-ground in Gateshead was acquired in the very month that Abigail was born. Presumably the seven weeks of her short life would suffice to bring it into commission. In the absence of any real evidence to the contrary it seems better to accept, with Boyle, the official record that she was buried in the Gateshead burial-ground.⁷ This seems to leave the need to account for a grave-cover dissociated from its interment.

Are we being misled by the description "grave-cover"? If we call it a "memorial-stone" it becomes much easier to accept that the two should be found apart. It may be in the form of a grave-cover (it is not a head-stone, having no un-inscribed base), in line perhaps with covers prepared to protect the remains of children of the Friends Meeting buried in gardens before the burial-ground was acquired, but its purpose may be solely that of a memorial. The words "Here lies . . ." do not appear upon it. On the contrary it simply records Abigail's life and death.⁸

On this understanding of its purpose the stone was first laid in the garden of the house at

the Middle Glasshouse, was there seen by Brand, was re-discovered there in the mid-nineteenth century, was then removed to the grounds of Heaton Cottage which were subsequently to form part of Armstrong Park, where for long it lay alongside the carriage-drive. In 1966 it was removed to the Quaker meeting-house in Jesmond, Newcastle, and there built into a garden-wall where it still remains.

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¹ AA4 xliv, 242–244. In writing the present note I am indebted to the late Dr. P. M. Horsley for drawing my attention to the evidence of Councillor Cook (see note 4 below).

² J. Brand, *History of Newcastle* Vol. I (London 1789), 340. See also: J. R. Boyle, *Vestiges of Old Newcastle and Gateshead*, 34, 144, 148–9; Bourne, *History of Newcastle upon Tyne*, 155; J. W. Steel, *The Society of Friends in Newcastle*, 9, 10, 18 and 19.

³ AA2 viii, 125.

⁴ AA2 viii, 222–225. Clephan too reminds us that the date read by Brand as 7 December 1679 is by our calendar 7 February 1680.

⁵ Heaton Cottage is listed in Thomas Oliver's *Plan of Newcastle* (1884), 25, with Joseph Sewell as tenant. With the surrounding grounds it was transferred to the town about 1880.

⁶ J. R. Boyle, *Vestiges of Old Newcastle and Gateshead* (Newcastle 1890), 34.

⁷ The title of the register is *The Register Book of the Burials of the People of God in scorn called Quakers . . . who have been buried in their burying-ground in Gateshead* (1660–1776). It is No. 88 in the archive of the Newcastle Monthly Meeting, and consists of a transcript made in 1839. There is also an unofficial transcript, No. 82, thought to have been made a little earlier, which leaves blank the place of burial of Abigail Tyzack. I am indebted to John Saunderson, custodian of the Newcastle Monthly Meeting records, and to the Warden of the Meeting-house, for access to records.

⁸ The most exact version of the inscription may be found in AA4 xliv, Plate XVIII, 2.

