

CHAPTER VIII

Objects of Stone Including Inscriptions

The Inscribed Stones

IT has already been noted that the comparative absence of inscribed stones was a disappointing feature of the excavations. Apart from four tantalising fragments, the number of new inscriptions recovered was three. All of them were upon altars. A fourth altar had originally borne a dedication, but the surface had so far decayed as to render the letters wholly illegible. All four altars were found lying in positions which suggested that they had been concealed when the fort was finally abandoned. A detailed account of the discovery, in the well in the Principia, of the one dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus has been given above; its associations showed that it had been deposited there in post-Hadrianic times. Another, dedicated to Apollo, found in Pit LXXXIII, was only six feet from the surface, although the total depth of the pit was seventeen feet; it lay among the black deposit, while on the same level were picked up fragments of decorated Terra Sigillata characteristic of the second century. This second altar had clearly been thrust into an already existing rubbish pit. The two others were taken from the ditch of the East Annexe. In the following descriptions it will be convenient to include the two altars which were discovered many years ago upon the site.

Altar to the Campestris

1. An altar dedicated to the Campestris was found by Thomas Vair, weaver in Newstead, while ploughing in the field next the Red Abbeystead park, and about 200 yards east from it, in the year 1783. This altar, which is now in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, is of red sandstone, and is two feet three inches in height and one foot broad. It shows little decoration. On the top are remains of the usual volutes with a circular focus between them. The base projects slightly and the inscribed panel is separated from the top by bands of moulding. For a number of years it was deposited in the Advocates' Library, from whence it

passed to the Museum of Antiquities. The circumstances of its discovery had been entirely forgotten until they were brought to light again through the instrumentality of Dr. John Alexander Smith.¹ From the illustration in Plate XVII., Fig. 1, it will be seen that the dedication reads:

CAMPESTR(IBVS) · SACRVM · AEL(IVS) · MARCVS · DEC(VRIO) · ALAE · AVG(VSTAE) ·
VOCONTIO(RVM) · V(OTVM) · S(OLVIT) · L(IBENS) · L(VBENS) · M(ERITO).

Sacred to the Campestres. Aelius Marcus, Decurion of the Ala Augusta of the Vocontii, willingly gladly deservedly has performed his vow.

Altar to Silvanus

2. According to Dr. Smith's report² a second altar—dedicated to Silvanus—was found on 15th January, 1830, in digging a drain, about three feet below the surface, in a field immediately to the south of the Red Abbeystead. The exact spot is indicated in a diary of the late Mr. George Burnet, now in the possession of his son, Mr. F. Burnet, Leaderfoot, as having been sixty yards south-east of the south-east corner of the Red Abbeystead field. This would point to very much the same place as that in which the altars Nos. 4 and 5 were discovered. This altar was for many years preserved at Drygrange. It is now at Ross Priory, Dumbartonshire, in the possession of Sir Alexander Leith Buchanan, Bart. Its height 'is 43 inches, breadth 18 inches, and thickness 12 inches. It is formed of a block of yellowish sandstone with an ogee moulding round its base. The moulding is continued round three of its sides, leaving the altar as usual plain on the back.³ Dr. Smith renders the name of the dedicator as CARRIUS DOMITIANUS. Obviously, however, it should be read G. ARRIUS DOMITIANUS. The inscription runs thus:

DEO · SILVA ·
NO · PRO · SA
LVTE · SVA · ET
SVORVM · G · AR
RIVS · DOMITI
ANVS > LEG · XX
V · V · V · S · L · L · M

DEO · SILVANO · PRO · SALVTE · SVA · ET · SVORVM · G(AIVS)
· ARRIVB · DOMITIANVS · C(ENTVRIO) · LEG(IONIS) · XX · V
(ALERIAE) · V(ICTRICIS) · V(OTVM) · S(OLVIT) · L(IBENS) · L
(VBENS) · M(ERITO).

To the God Silvanus. For his safety and that of his household Gaius Arrius Domitianus Centurion of the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix willingly gladly deservedly has performed his vow.

3. The altar dedicated to Jupiter, found on 14th September, 1905, at a depth of twelve feet below the surface in Pit No. I—the well of the

1 *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. i p. 30.

2 *Ibid.* p. 29.

3 *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 28. An illustration is given in plate i, of the volume.

Principia—is now in the possession of T. J. S. Roberts, Esq., at Drygrange. It has been cut from a block of yellow sandstone and stands four feet high, being seventeen inches wide and fifteen inches thick. On either side of the top are volutes sculptured with rosettes, and between the volutes is a circular focus. The panel containing the inscription is hounded by broad bands of moulding. The illustration in Plate XVI. shows that it is to be read thus:

I(OVI) · O(PTI MO) · M(AXI MO) · G(AIVS) · ARRIVS · DOMITIANVS · C(ENTVRIO) ·
 LEG(IONIS) · XX · V(ALERIAE) · V(ICTRICIS) · V(OTVM) · S(OLVIT) · L(IBENS) ·
 L(VBENS) · M(ERITO).

To Jupiter the Best and Greatest. Gaius Arrius Domitianus Centurion of the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix willingly gladly deservedly has performed his vow.

4. The fourth altar, which is now in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh (Plate XVIII., Fig. 1), was found on 6th March, 1909, in the ditch of the East Annexe of the fort (Field No. 555 O.S. Plan of the Parish of Melrose). It lay at no great depth from the surface. The yellow sandstone of which it is composed was much disintegrated, and flaked off as it was lifted. The dimensions are as follows: height, three feet eleven inches; breadth, eighteen inches; thickness, eleven and a half inches. It has been more highly decorated than any of the preceding. There are on the top the usual volutes, and between them a circular focus. Beneath the volutes runs a band of ornament resembling pointed leaves, and below this again are bands of moulding. On the sides are sculptured the vessels used in the sacrifice—the jug (*urceus*) and the patera. The inscription has disappeared.

5. The fifth altar, dedicated to Diana, was found on 8th March, 1909, close to No. 4, in the ditch of the East Annexe (Field No. 555 O.S. Plan). It is now in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, and stands forty-eight inches high. At the upper and lower extremities its width is twenty-one and a half inches, while across the inscribed panel it measures twenty inches. It is only seven inches deep. It is very plain, showing no signs of either volutes or focus. Like No. 4, it lay at no great depth from the surface. Like it, too, it was of yellow sandstone, and was in a very brittle condition. Pieces of the inscribed face had flaked off, and some unavoidable damage was done in raising it and transporting it to Edinburgh. The following letters are, however, still legible; the others are uncertain:



PLATE XVI. ALTAR FOUND IN PRINCIPIA

DIANAE · REGI
NAE OS
VS

G · ARRIVS
DOMITIANVS
> LEG · XX · V · V
V · S · L · L · M ·

DIANAE · REGINAE G · ARRIVS · DOMITIANVS · C(ENTVRIO) ·
LEG(IONIS) · XX · V(ALERIAE) · V(ICTRICIS) · V(OTVM) · S(OLVIT) · L
(IBENS) · L(VBENS) · M(ERITO).

To Diana the Queen Gaius Arrius Domitianus Centurion
of the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix willingly gladly
deservedly has performed his vow.

Altar to Apollo

6. The sixth altar, dedicated to Apollo, was taken out of Pit LXXXIII on 25th March, 1910. It was found at a depth of six feet from the surface, together with a separate stone which had formed its base. It is now in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh. The height, inclusive of the base, is three feet nine inches, and the width of the inscribed panel is twelve inches. The depth is fourteen and a half inches. Altar and base are both of red sandstone. It has the usual volutes on the capital, and between them a circular focus which shows signs either of being defaced or of unfinished work. The inscribed panel is enclosed within a complete framework of mouldings. A bow, the familiar attribute of Apollo, is carved in relief on the right side. On the left side is a much defaced representation of what may have been a bow-case or a quiver. As will be seen by reference to the illustration (Plate XVII., Fig. 2), the inscription reads:

DEO · APOLLINI · L · MAXIMVS · GAETVLICVS · C(ENTVRIO) · LEG(ION IS).

To the God Apollo. L. Maximus Gaetulicus Centurion of the Legion.

The number of the legion, like the conventional termination V · S · L · L · M, is omitted, obviously from want of space. Fortunately an inscription from Aesica enables us to supply it. An altar found in the fort there is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus by LUCIUS MAXIMIUS GAETULICUS, Centurion of the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix. Professor Haverfield, who has dealt with the Aesica altar elsewhere, is of opinion that from its character and find-spot it should not be placed earlier than the reign of Hadrian, while from its associations it cannot be later than Severus.¹

Inscribed Fragments

The fragments of inscribed stones are few in number, and are too incomplete to admit of any satisfactory interpretation. The largest of them (Plate XVIII., Fig. 4) came from the upper levels of the pit in the Principia (No. I). It is part of a sandstone slab. Portions of three lines of an inscription still remain. The second

1 *Archaeologia Aeliana*, vol. xix. p. 271.

of these consists of the word **LEG** (*legio*) followed by a number **X**. It is evident that it has contained a reference to the Twentieth Legion. Beyond that it does not seem possible to go. The second fragment (Plate XVIII., Fig. 2) is but a small one. It bears the letters **V R** well cut, and was taken out of the ditch in front of the south gate. Probably it is part of a tablet. A portion of a third tablet (Plate XVIII., Fig. 5) was found in excavating the early building lying between Blocks XVII and XVIII. It shows parts of two lines, and the letters have evidently been well cut. The last of the inscribed fragments is a thin slab of red sandstone from Block XIII (Plate XVIII., Fig. 3). It has the letters **RINO** very rudely cut upon it.

Passing from the inscribed stones, we may mention the following. A block of stone (Plate XVIII., Fig. 6), thirteen inches long, seven and a half inches thick, seven and three-quarter inches high, has the figure of a boar carved on it in relief. This was found in the Well Meadow about the year 1825.

A small fragment of sandstone from Pit I, the well of the Principia, is five and a half inches long and seven and a quarter inches high, and bears in relief a figure of a boar running to the left. It had probably formed part of a tablet. There is a somewhat similar figure on an incomplete tablet of the Twentieth Legion found at Cappuck. A heavy block of sandstone, one foot four inches high by one foot seven inches broad (Pit I), has on the top a lewis hole, six inches long by seventh-eighths of an inch broad by two inches deep, to be used for lifting the stone into position. One end shows fine diamond dressing, while on the side is a very rudely cut figure of a boar in somewhat low relief. One or two of the larger blocks from the Principia (Pit I), which are finely tooled, have been deposited in the National Museum.

On the whole, the distinctively architectural fragments were few and unimportant. The best was perhaps the portion of a column found in front of Block XV, and illustrated in Plate XI., Fig. 1. A rudely executed sandstone baluster eighteen inches in height was found in Pit LIII, while a curious block, perhaps a finial, came from the Baths. The latter has a rectangular base, fourteen inches long by six inches high. Above this base it is fashioned into a cone-like shape, the whole standing one foot eight inches high. The back is flat, as though it had been affixed to a gable end or a stone wall. Mention may also be made of four or five roughly hewn hypocaust pillars of stone two feet six inches high, and from nine to six



Height 2 feet 3 inches



Height 3 feet 9 inches



PLATE XVII. ALTARS AND QUERNS

inches in diameter, found in the Baths. Then there were the stone troughs of the latrine, a portion of a pierced drain cover, and several arch stones. These last consisted of blocks one foot high, four and a half inches thick, and ten inches wide. They are rounded at one end and flat at the other, and have on each side a projecting flange two inches in length. Some of them came from the reducing ditch, others from the neighbourhood of Block XVII, and others again from the débris of the Baths.

Querns

Among smaller stone objects, querns were by far the most richly represented. The broken fragments were very frequently found at the bottom of the rubbish pits. On the whole those of Niedermendig basalt lava appeared to be the most numerous. That these had been imported from the Rhine seems certain. Through the kindness of Herr Heinrich Jacobi, of the Saalburg Museum, a portion of one of the Newstead examples was submitted to Herr Michels, Director of the Company now working the Niedermendig quarries. Herr Michels, who has a wide expert knowledge of such material, had no hesitation in saying positively that the specimen laid before him must have come either from Niedermendig or, less probably, from Mayen in the Eifel. The quarries, as is proved by the inscriptions to Hercules Saxanus in the Brohlthal,¹ have been worked at least from Roman times, and the export of which we find the evidences at Newstead continues to the present day. The number of such querns found in the fort throws an interesting sidelight on the then existing facilities for transport.

As has been noted elsewhere, four of the specimens found were complete. Two of these are shown in Plate XVII. The larger, on the left, came from Pit X; the smaller from Pit XIX. Both appear to date from the first century occupation. In all four cases the iron spindle was preserved. It measured about seven and a half inches in length; the lower end was pointed and was probably inserted in a wooden peg fixed in the hole in the lower stone, while the upper end, which was rounded, was passed through a hole in a thin plate of iron, placed across the opening in the upper stone and having its ends driven into the stone and fixed with lead. In the sides of the upper stones may be noted the loops for the handles by which the necessary rotary motion was given to the quern. A fragment of an ash handle was taken from one of these.

Among the other querns figured in the group are specimens made of granite and of millstone grit. None of these call for special notice, with the

1 *C.I.L.* xii. 7693 *et seq.*

exception of the small quern on the extreme right, which belongs to a class entirely distinct from querns like those from Niedermendig. This came from Pit LXVI. It is made of a hard grit and belongs to the beehive type, which was rare in the fort. Professor Boyd Dawkins, dealing with Melandra Castle, has illustrated¹ a group of similar querns found there, and has attributed them to the Prehistoric Iron Age. He finds them to be identical with the querns found at Danebury, near Northampton, and at the Lake Village at Glastonbury, both dating from the period in question, but to differ from those introduced by the Romans inasmuch as the latter are thinner and wider. The Roman querns are also disc-shaped, and frequently have grooves cut in their grinding surfaces, a characteristic specially noticeable in the Niedermendig stones.

A stone mortar in very good preservation was found in Pit XCIII. Its height is six and a half inches and its diameter twelve inches. It is of the red sandstone so common on the site. On either side projects a handle two and a half inches in length. Among still smaller objects may be noted a few ballista balls from ditches and surface finds. Whetstones occurred in large numbers. They were usually made from river stones, but among them were a few which were clearly manufactured articles. The finest of these is figured in Plate LXII., and is dealt with elsewhere. One or two flat circular discs of stone should be noted. The smallest of these, one and five-eighths inches in diameter, is made of sandstone and came from Pit LXXXIX. Another is illustrated in Plate LXXXIII., Fig. 5, where there is also shown a small stone celt (Fig. 1) which was lying on the inner margin of the outer ditch system of the West Annexe. This and a flint scraper, from the ditch of the early fort, were the only prehistoric implements of stone met with in the course of the digging.

1 *Melandra Castle*, edited by R. S. Conway, p. 7, fig. 1.



1 Height of altar 3 feet 11 inches



2 3

4 5



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PLATE XVIII. ALTAR AND INSCRIBED AND SCULPTURED FRAGMENTS