

VI.

ON JULIUS VERUS, A ROMAN GOVERNOR OF BRITAIN.

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In 1895 the Society excavated the Roman fort of Birrens (Blatobulgium) in Annandale. Among other objects then discovered were some fragments of a large inscribed slab, found some near to, and others in, the well of the so-called "praetorium." Although imperfect, the text of the inscription could easily be restored, except one name in the last line, as follows:—

Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) T. Ael(io) Hadr(iano) Antonino Aug(usto) Pio, pont(ifici) max(im)o tribunicia pot(estate) xxi, co(n)s(uli) iv, coh(ors) ii Tungr(orum) mil(iaria) eq(uitata) c(ivium) L(atinorum), sub Iu leg(ato) Aug pr(o) pr(aetore)

In brief: "Erected in honour of the Emperor Pius in A.D. 158, by the First Cohort of Tungrians, under Ju, governor of Britain." The date, which was at first read xvi, that is A.D. 153, is really A.D. 158, as Dr Macdonald afterwards pointed out.¹

The name of the governor, which could not be supplied in 1896 or 1897, has been revealed by a discovery made in 1903. In August of that year a singularly perfect slab was extracted from the river Tyne at Newcastle, close to the site of the Roman bridge and the modern swing-bridge. This slab states that it was erected in honour of the Emperor Pius, by a draft or drafts of the three British legions, II Augusta and VI Victrix and XX Valeria Victrix, sent over specially (*contributi*) from Germany, under Julius Verus, governor of Britain.² The inscription possesses certain features of technical interest, into which I need

¹ *Proc. of the Soc.*, 10th February 1896, vol. xxx. p. 128; Macdonald and Barbour, *Birrens and its Antiquities*, reprinted with additions from the *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire Antiquarian Society* (Dumfries, 1897), p. 65. I may add that in expanding and Englishing this text we can read either "in honour of" or "in the reign of."

² Illustration in *Proc. of Newcastle Soc. of Antiquaries*, third series, i. p. 72.

not here enter. The point which matters is that it enables us to supply *sub Julio Vero* in the last line of the Birrens inscription.

The Birrens stone is not the only one which thus receives its completion. Two others are similarly helped. One is a slab found, almost at the same moment as the Newcastle slab, in the Roman fort of Brough (Anavio) in Derbyshire, between Buxton and Sheffield. This slab, though much broken, seems to have been erected in honour of the Emperor Pius by the First Cohort of Aquitani, under Julius V[er]us, and under the direct orders of Capitonius Fuscus (or other similar names), praefect of the cohort. The other is a fragment found long since at Netherby in North Cumberland, and now in the Carlisle Museum. It seems to record the erection of a building in the reign of some Emperor Antoninus, and the governorship of one G. Jul The lettering suits the time of Pius, and, with the other stones before us, we may think to have here a fourth mention of Julius Verus.¹

We possess, therefore, no less than four epigraphic references to Julius Verus, at Brough in Derbyshire, the Tyne at Newcastle, Netherby in North Cumberland, and Birrens in Dumfriesshire. Can any historical facts be connected with them? Some explanation certainly is needed. The Brough and Netherby stones might, indeed, be disposed of as mere records of building or rebuilding, such as must occur from time to time in every fort. But the *contributi* from Germany, named on the Tyne inscription, must be something special, and I have always thought that the Birrens inscription, found in the "praetorium" and indicative of building and perhaps even of foundation, required some justification of its particular date. Beside, we have now as many as four stones which mention Julius Verus.

I do not profess to be able to give any certain answer to this question. But I think that a not improbable answer may be adduced. It will be

¹ Lapidarium 777, Corpus vii. 777. Hübner referred the fragment to the time of Caracalla, and in my Catalogue of the Carlisle Museum (No. 79), I was inclined to accept some such date, as there was a governor Modius Julius in that period. But Verus suits much better.

observed that the stones all occur in, or nearly in, the territory of the Brigantes. The exact limits of that territory are, of course, not precisely known. But it is plain from Ptolemy that it included Cumberland and Durham, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and it probably extended a little north and south of these limits. On the north, Ptolemy tells us, the Brigantes marched with the Otalini of North Northumberland and with the Selgovae who held Trimontium (Melrose) and who may be connected with the Selkirk region.¹ On the south they marched with tribes inhabiting the English midlands. Moreover, we have some numismatic and epigraphic evidence. A hoard of coins found in 1893 at Honley near Huddersfield seems to contain Brigantian coins.² A pig of lead of Domitian's reign, found in 1734 near Ripley in the West Riding, bears the letters BRIG, and if this means (as is usually held) *plumbum Briganticum*, the Derbyshire lead-mines may have been within the Brigantian area. Moreover, we have inscriptions of a goddess Brigantia—or some similar name³—and these inscriptions occur just in the area of the Verus inscriptions. The most northerly come from Birrens and South Shields at the mouth of the Tyne; the most southerly from the vicinity of Leeds and Huddersfield. They seem to provide fair evidence that the territory of the Brigantes was very much what I have described. Tacitus calls the tribe “the most populous in all Britain” (Agricola 17), and we should expect to find its lands stretching far and wide.

The activity of Verus, then, belonged to the territory of the Brigantes.

¹ Usually they are connected with Solway. But I think Mr Neilson has proved satisfactorily that Solway is an English name. Can Ptolemy's Ἐπίακον (vv. 11. Ἐπείακον, Ἀπίακον) be Habitaneum? It certainly is not Keswick, with which Holder strangely identifies it.

² *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1897, p. 293. See also Evans' *Ancient British Coins*, p. 404.

³ These have been found at Birrens (now in the National Museum at Edinburgh, CIL. vii. 1062); at a place not exactly known on the Roman Wall in East Cumberland (C. vii. 875); at South Shields (*Proc. of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle*, second series, vii. 44); at Adel near Leeds (C. vii. 203); at Slack near Huddersfield (*ibid.*, 200 and *Ephemeris*, vii. 920); and at Woodnook near Castleford (*Archeol. Journal*, xlix. 191, No. 100). Two of these are dated A. D. 203-205, the rest are undated.

With this we may connect a statement in Pausanias (VIII. 43) to the effect that "the Emperor Pius annexed the larger part of the territory of the Brigantes because they made an armed attack on the 'Genounian Moira,' which was subject to Rome." The statement is not quite satisfactory. No date is given for the action; the "Genounian Moira" (τὴν Γενουνίαν Μοίραν), too, is unknown. The best suggestion, that it refers to *V'inovium* (Binchester, in Durham county), is not at all probable, and the name itself is so odd that Whitley Stokes declares it not to be Celtic but Pictish. Nor is the action of Pius quite intelligible. Hadrian built a wall from Tyne to Solway and thereby placed the largest part, if not the whole, of the Brigantian territory within the Roman frontier. Strictly speaking, there should therefore be no talk of Pius annexing their land. But it is possible that, although they were included within the Roman boundary-line, they were yet allowed some kind of local autonomy, and that the action of Pius consisted in a suppression of this. Such suppression would mean that the territory passed under the direct Roman administration, and the word "annexed" (ἀπετέμετο) might perhaps be reasonably employed to denote it. I should then be inclined to think that the activity of Verus consisted in subduing the semi-independent Brigantes, and in planting or restoring forts in suitable places to hold them down. One such fort is in Derbyshire. Others are in the naturally less quiet regions of the north. Others again are doubtless unknown to us—though scanty bits of evidence drawn from coins and the like may tempt us to think that some other South Brigantian forts, like Templeborough and Melandra, were actively occupied about the period in question. If this be so, we obtain from our four inscriptions the dating and description of a hitherto practically unknown war, and some light is cast on the history of Roman Britain in the middle of the second century.

Of Verus himself little else is known. He was governor of Syria about A.D. 161-5—a fact which agrees well with his British governorship about A.D. 158, since at that period it was not unusual for the same man, late in his career and when thoroughly experienced, to govern

first Britain and almost immediately afterwards Syria. He may be an unknown officer mentioned on a broken inscription found at Æquum in Dalmatia (C.I.L. iii. 2732). The man's name is lost: he held first a row of minor offices, and finally the governorships, in succession, of Germany, of Britain and of Syria, and he certainly lived somewhere in the beginning or middle of the second century. Dessau, however, points out that Julius Verus governed Syria under the joint reign of Marcus and Verus, while the unknown's titles do not betray any sign of a joint reign.¹ The identification must therefore remain doubtful.

Since the preceding paragraphs were written, Dr Emil Ritterling has contributed a note on the same subject to the "Korrespondenzblatt" of the *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift* (xxii. 93). He agrees generally with what I have said above as to Julius Verus, and produces strong and new reasons for identifying him with the soldier of the Dalmatian inscription. He differs from me in respect of the history. Pausanias (he thinks, or implies) must refer to the campaign of Lollius Urbicus in A.D. 142, when the Vallum was built from Forth to Clyde. On the other hand, he assigns the bridge inscription from the Tyne to some more or less elaborate work connected with Hadrian's Wall between Tyne and Solway. He finds another reference to this supposed work in a building inscription (C. vii. 563) found on this wall in 1752, apparently between Rutchester and Benwell (British Museum MS. Add. 6210, fo. 33, 34), and dated to A.D. 158. As a conjecture, he suggests that this work may be the construction of the Turf Wall discovered lately by myself and my companions in excavation on the line of Hadrian's Wall.

I regret that I cannot agree with most of this. The work of Lollius Urbicus in 142 was, as far as we know, confined to the region of the Vallum of Pius, and lay wholly outside the territory of the Brigantes. A war against the Brigantes must have been something quite distinct, as Mommsen rightly saw (*Römische Geschichte*, v. 172). Further, it is to be observed that Julius Verus, in all his four appearances, occurs off

¹ *Prosopographia*, iii. p. 498; *Inscr. Selectae*, 1057.

the line of Hadrian's Wall. If he carried out a systematic reconstruction of the frontier defences of the Wall, we should expect to meet him oftenest on that Wall. As it is, we meet him once many miles away from the Wall, and three times in its neighbourhood, but never actually on it. Nor does evidence exist for any systematic reconstruction of the Wall in 158. The one inscription cited by Dr Ritterling stands alone. That incidental repairs were executed under Pius, as under other emperors, is likely enough. That the Brigantian fighting involved the Wall is also likely. More than this seems neither provable nor probable.

I may be excused from here entering on the problem of the Turf Wall. It is complex, and it does not necessarily concern the question before us. But I may say that, when Dr Ritterling attributes the Turf Wall to A.D. 158, he conflicts, by implication, with recent English results. In order to find a wall for Hadrian, he has to suppose the Vallum anterior to the Turf Wall and to assign the Vallum to Hadrian. This is in flat contradiction to the discoveries made since 1895 on the line of Hadrian's Wall. It is natural enough for a German scholar to consider Vallum, Turf Wall, and Stone Wall as three successive works. He is led to assume this by the fact that on the Romano-German frontier the various lines of work seem to be successive defences, constructed one after the other. But in Britain the Vallum seems to be an exception to that condition of things, just as, in its form and shape, it is an exception to ordinary frontier defences.