

XXVII. *Description of a Roman Altar found in the neighbourhood of Aldston Moor, in Cumberland: in a Letter to the Earl of Aberdeen, K. T. President of the Society of Antiquaries, &c. &c. by the Rev. Stephen Weston, B.D. F.R.S. and S.A.*

Read 18th June, 1812.

MY LORD,

I BEG leave to offer to your Lordship and the Society a Description of a Roman Altar lately dug up in the neighbourhood of Aldston Moor, in Cumberland, near a military road, and not far from a great Roman station. The altar is three feet high, sixteen inches wide, and eight thick. It is divided into three compartments, the capital, the square or plane, and the base. On the top is an oval cavity one inch and a half deep, and about nine over by six, in which the wine, the frankincense, and the fire were placed, and was called *Thuribulum*, the censer, or the focus; but this hole is not on all the Roman altars found in Great Britain. On the sides however of the one I am describing are two bass-reliefs, representing on one part the infant Hercules strangling two serpents (as he is seen on a silver coin of Croton in Italy), and on the other the god in all his strength about to combat the serpent in the garden of the Hesperides (as he appears on a coin of Geta struck at Pergamus). The inscription on the plane runs thus:

DEO  
HERCVLI  
C.VITELLIVS  
ATTICIANVS  
Æ.LEG.VI.  
V.P.F.

“C. Vitellius Atticianus, Centurion of the sixth legion, has caused this Vow to be offered to the God Hercules.”

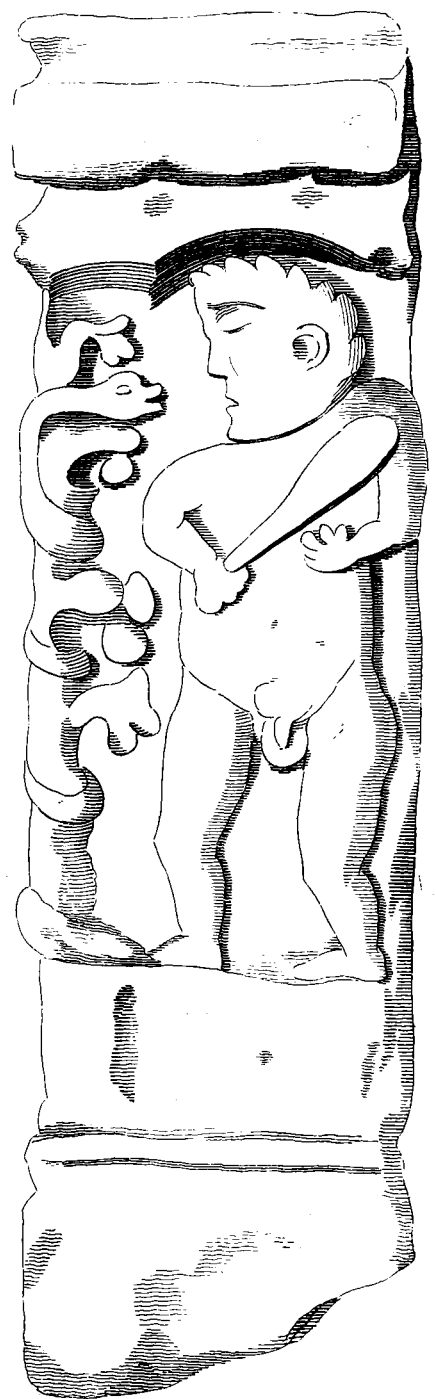
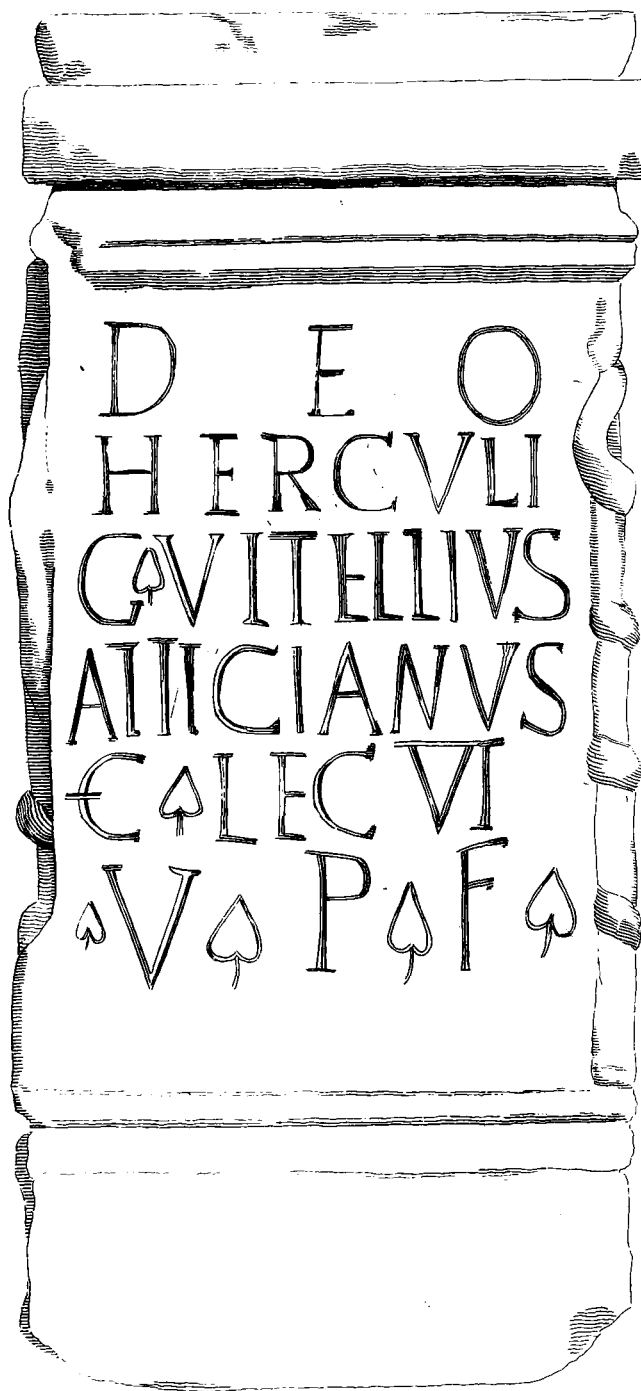
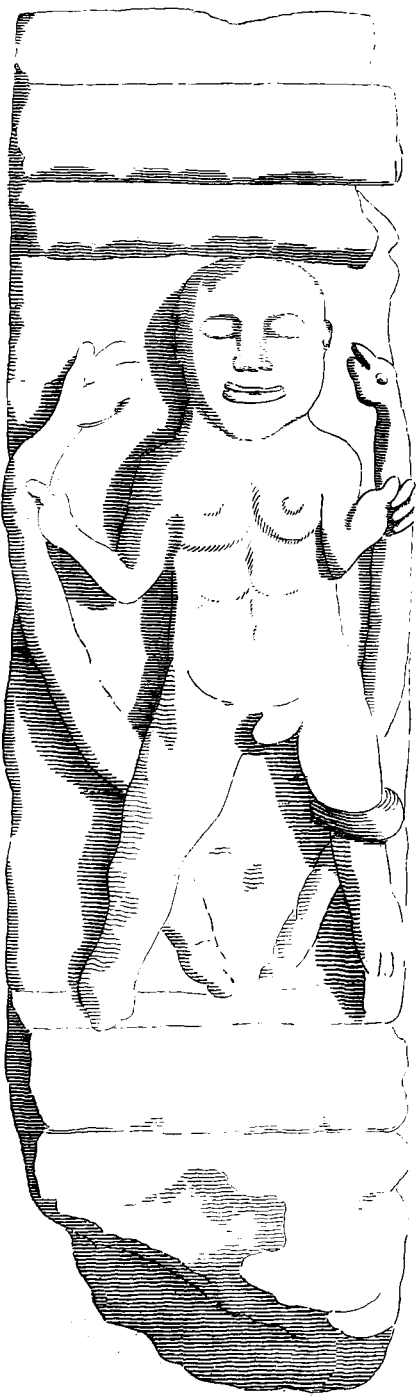
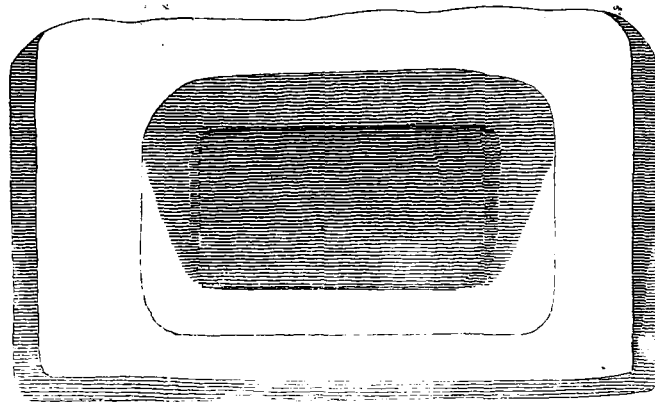
We find the sixth legion, in Horsley, on a stone in Westmorland, N° VI. And in Scotland, N° III. is an inscription in which Antoninus Pius is mentioned, where the stops are of the same form as these on the stone we have described. This curious piece of antiquity is the property of an individual, and was brought to London at his expense; and I conceived that this short account of it, with the accompanying Drawing (Plate XVII.) as the altar itself is too massy to admit of an easy removal, might not be disagreeable to the Society.

The fragment of a hand grasping a club is on the table, and belongs to a statue of Hercules found with the altar; the head and body were broken to pieces in digging up, and the feet only, with this hand, have been preserved, and brought to London.

I have the honor to remain,  
Your Lordship's very humble servant,

S. WESTON.

Edward Street, Portman Square,  
June 16, 1812.



*Roman Altar found in Cumberland.*