From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

**On a Roman Inscribed Stone Found At Cirencester**

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1892-93, Vol. 17, 63-67

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ON A ROMAN INSCRIBED STONE FOUND AT CIRENCESTER.

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The inscribed stone, of which an illustration is given, (Plate IV.), is one of the most important and interesting discoveries that has been made in Cirencester, or, indeed, in the south of England, for some years.

The garden of The Elms in which it was found is in the Victoria Road, a part of the town that was formerly known as the Leauses, and which has always yielded the greatest variety of Roman Remains, and those the best of their kind. About 18 years ago, when the foundation of the houses—called Roman Villas, which are very near to the "find," were being dug, great numbers of columns, &c., were found, and, I believe, sold by the owner to a museum in another town. Atkyns, Stukeley, and others all speak of the vast quantity of relics that have been found here, and also how they were dispersed and destroyed, which holds good to the present day. Stukeley, who visited the town in 1723, says, in speaking of the Leauses, "Large quantities of carved stone were being carried off yearly in carts to mend the roads, besides what is useful in building." Last year, in double digging some ground, the edge of a Roman pavement was come upon at a depth of about 18 inches, this is unusually shallow, as, for instance, a pavement in Cricklade Street was at the depth of six feet, but four feet would be about the average, and therefore the ground in this part of the town has, evidently, not been much disturbed since the Roman occupation, and its level has risen comparatively slowly. A large square stone passage was also seen apparently extending
some distance, and the inscribed stone, 17 inches square, was found, having a socket in the top for a column, and another at the bottom for fixing it upon a lower base, whether it was in situ it is impossible to say, as from the general confusion of the remains it may either have been thrown down or tossed where it was discovered, but in that case it is not likely that it was removed far from where it originally stood. Signs of fire were present, apparently the result of a conflagration, probably at the time that a large part of Roman Cirencester was burnt, or it may have been due to the near neighbourhood of a hypocaust.

Three sides of the stone are inscribed, but the fourth certainly appears as if it had always been left in the rough, though it may be the result of subsequent chippings. Most fortunately it was found in the garden of a gentleman (Mr. Lupton Adamthwaite) who, though he has made no special study of Roman antiquities, is fully alive to the importance of preserving them. He had the stone carefully removed, and at once informed me of its discovery. I immediately took squeezes of the three sides and sent them to Dr. Hübner of Berlin, and I also had it photographed, and sent a set to Mr. Haverfield, who has since had an opportunity of seeing the stone itself. Both these gentlemen agree in the reading I give below, the letters in black type now exist, those in italics are supposed to have been broken off, or are the expansions of abbreviations.

\[ \text{L} \cdot \text{SEPT} \cdot \text{RENOVAT} \cdot \text{ECTAM} \]
\[ \text{VPPR} \cdot \text{PRIMAE} \cdot \text{RISCARE} \]
\[ \text{REST} \cdot \text{PROVINCIAE} \cdot \text{GIONECO} \]
\[ \text{C} \cdot \text{IV} \cdot \text{S} \cdot \text{RECTOR} \cdot \text{MNAM} \]
\[ \text{L} \cdot \text{SEP} \cdot \text{timiss} \cdot \text{[cognomen]} \]
\[ \text{Vir} \cdot \text{Perfectissimus} \cdot \text{PRaces} \cdot \text{[prov Brit]} \]
\[ \text{RESTitvit} \]
\[ \text{Curante IVSTino} \]
\[ \text{sic NVM ET crECTAM} \]
\[ \text{\textasciitext{RISCA RELIGIONE}} \]
\[ \text{COVMNAM} \]
\[ \text{SEPTIMIVS RENOVAT PRIMAE} \]
\[ \text{PROVINCIAE RECTOR} \]
Whether we have the whole of the inscription is open to question. Mr. Haverfield argues that we have not, because he says that as a rule the four sides were filled, or that the back was left vacant, but not, as in this case, one of the sides. If the base stood out by itself this argument would be unanswerable, but if any part of it was concealed by having been built into a wall or otherwise, the exigences of the position might require that one of the sides was hidden and left as it certainly appears to have been, in the rough. A dedication to Jupiter is upon the side, that must therefore have been the front of the stone, and upon the back and other side is what Dr. Hübner styles "a nice poetical epigram." Alluding to the restitution of the statue of Jove and the column upon which it stood—"Statue and column raised by old religion, Septimius, Governor of the First Province renews."

Dr. Hübner says the lettering upon the stone is that of the end of the third century: this agrees with the facts that it was in the reign of Diocletian, 284 to 305, that Britain was divided into Prima, Secunda, &c. This stone is the only epigraphic notice of it known to exist, and makes it almost certain that Cirencester was within the limits of Britannia Prima. The words "Prisca Religione" are especially interesting, whether they are translated by "Ancient Piety," or by the "Old Religion" in contradiction to the new or Christian Religion. In the former case it shows for how long a time to the men then living the Romans appeared to have occupied Britain, which we, looking back through a vista of centuries, hardly realize. I, however, think that "Old Religion" is the correct reading, and that the restoration of the column and statue took place in the time of Julian 361-363.

An inscription that comes from Casæ, in Numidia, somewhat supports this view:—

"D’ (omino) N(ostro) Fl(a)(v(i)o) Claudio Juliano pio felici &c.

1 For the scanning of "religione," Mr. Haverfield quotes the Eucharisticon of Paulinus of Pella (Vienna Corpus Script. Eccl. lat. xvi.) line 462.

Nec ratio aut pietas aut mens religiosa sinebat.

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The letters in round brackets are expansions of abbreviations; the letters in square brackets are those that are destroyed.

The division of the country into Prima, &c., though originated by Diocletian, existed with slight modification through the whole of the fourth century. The lettering, though characteristic of the end of the third century, is, I am told, not inconsistent with the later date, and the fact that the column and statue had been allowed to fall into ruin shows that they had ceased to be regarded with reverence, and that Paganism was waning before Christianity. Julian, in his frantic but vain efforts to restore the worship of the gods throughout the whole empire, took the greatest pains to fill every office with zealous pagans. Septimius may have been a governor appointed during his reign, or with a courtier's zeal may have quickly learnt and carried out what was most pleasing to the new Emperor, and the surest way to imperial favour. Alypius, the chief friend of Julian, took an active part in the civil administration of Britain, and would use any influence he possessed to advance the ardent desire of the Emperor. The only record we have of Septimius is upon this stone, but as Governor of a Province we know certain facts about him. He had been brought up to the profession of the law, very possibly in the hope of rising to his present position. In order that he might not be in any way biassed by his interest or affections, he must not, without a special dispensation of the Emperor, have been born in the Province, and neither he nor his son, if he had one, could marry anyone who had been born in it or had acquired a domicile therein. He might not purchase slaves, lands or houses within his jurisdiction, in fact only clothes and provisions were excepted. He had the power to inflict corporal punishment, or in capital

1 Two or three instances of the Christian monogram have been found at the Roman Villa at Chedworth, a few miles from Cirencester.
offences that of death, but he could not give the criminal the choice of by what death he would die, nor could he pass a sentence of exile. It was thought that whilst in the two latter cases he might be guided by corrupt influences and interested motives, in the awful sentence of death, he would act upon his unbiased judgment. I should point out that in the last line of the inscription on the front of the stone, between the V and S, is a mark or groove that in the photograph looks as if it might have been another letter. The groove itself is clearly not a letter, but the question arises—was it on the stone before the inscription? which would account for the width between the V and S; or has it erased a letter that previously existed? Upon this point opinions differ, but the reading I have given is supported by high authority, and has the advantage of making the inscription complete. I, however, incline to the view that there was either an I or E between the V and S, of which I think I detect some slight trace. There are, undoubtedly, the remains of a letter after the S, and before the stone was broken off at this point there would have been room for about three more additional letters.