

DEA BRIGANTIA

By NORAH JOLLIFFE

This study of the Romano-British goddess Brigantia was suggested by a photograph, lent to me by Miss Mary Kitson Clark, of the relief with an inscription to Brigantia (pl. i), which was discovered at Birrens in Dumfriesshire in 1731 and is now at Edinburgh in the National Museum of Scotland. I wish to thank the Museum authorities for permission to reproduce this hitherto unpublished photograph.¹

A goddess called Brigantia is named in three Romano-British inscriptions, and four others, which contain the abbreviated forms *Brig*, *Brigan* and *Brigant*, may be assumed to refer to the same goddess. Apart from the Birrens inscription, they are all on altars.

According to Holder,² *Brigantia* is the Latinized version of a Celtic form **Briganti* (feminine participle, nominative singular) equivalent to Old Irish *Brigit*. A Celtic inscription in the Beaune Museum, from Volnay, preserves in *Brigindu* a variant of the same divine name. The element *brig* is said to mean 'high', either in a literal sense or with the metaphorical meaning of 'exalted', 'holy' and the like. The river-names Braint (Anglesey) and Brent (Middlesex) are derived from a form **Brigantiā* as well as certain place-names, e.g. Brentford (Middlesex), South Brent and Brentor (Devonshire) and East Brent (Somerset).³

¹ I owe also a particular debt of gratitude to Miss Kitson Clark, to Miss J. M. C. Toynbee, of Newnham College, Cambridge, to Dr. F. Saxl, Director of the Warburg Institute, and to the Rev. M. P. Charlesworth of St. John's College, Cambridge, for their encouragement and helpful advice and to Mr. I. A. Richmond, of King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, for his kindness in reading the paper in proof and making a number of valuable suggestions.

² *Alt-Celtischer Sprachsatz*, i, pp. 535 f. *Ibid.*, pp. 534-43 and references for all *brig*-names mentioned in this paper.

³ Ekwall, *English River-Names*, pp. 51 f.; *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, p. 60. The connection of these names with the Romano-British Brigantia is not obvious. Possibly the word was an honorific epithet for both rivers and hills of peculiar sanctity, which was associated in northern Britain with a more definite divine personality. I have not ventured to trespass far into the field of philology, but there is clearly room for further investigation into the origins of the names of all the people called Brigantes.



BIRRENS, DUMFRIESSHIRE. INSCRIBED RELIEF, 3 FT. $\frac{1}{2}$ IN. HIGH,
RECORDING A DEDICATION TO BRIGANTIA



CORBRIDGE, NORTHUMBERLAND. INSCRIBED ALTAR, 36 IN. HIGH, RECORDING A DEDICATION ' TO JUPITER
ETERNAL DOLICHENUS AND CAELESTIS BRIGANTIA AND SALUS '

By courtesy of the Society of Antiquarians of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The goddess Brigantia, it can hardly be doubted, was the tutelary goddess of the South Pennine people called by the Romans Brigantes.¹ The datable inscriptions to Brigantia all belong to the beginning of the third century A.D., when the Brigantes had long been under Roman rule, so that lengthy discussion of their origin and previous history would be out of place here. But, in view of possible connections between Brigantia, the goddess Brigit of Irish mythology and the Volnay Brigindu, it is worth noting that the worshippers of all three may have had common ancestors in the Brigantii whose home was by Lake Constance. A branch of Brigantes settled in Ireland, near Waterford, may have brought Brigit there.² But in the period of the Roman occupation of Britain, these goddesses would be sisters rather than identical. The different fortunes of the various branches of the Brigantian people would have had their repercussions on the original tutelary goddess of the parent stock. Adaptation to local conditions would have caused her to split into three distinct personalities. The people of the Highland zone of Britain, whom the Romans knew as Brigantes, were the mixed descendants of the original immigrants and the earlier inhabitants. Moreover, the evidence for Brigantia belongs to a few years of the Romano-British period, the evidence for Brigit comes from Irish literature of a much later time. (Brigindu is known only from one inscription.) Yet the identity of Brigantia and Brigit is often taken for granted and Brigantia has been credited with the supposed functions of Brigit as a goddess of fire and fertility, of knowledge (which includes wisdom and all the arts and crafts), and of poetry. But the character of Brigantia must be discovered first from the Romano-British evidence, the background of which is Roman history rather than Celtic myth.

The inscriptions fall into two groups. Three belong

¹ For the extent of Brigantian territory v. Haverfield, *P.S.A. Scotland*, xxxviii (1903-4), pp. 454 ff.; M. Kitson Clark, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xxxiv (1938-9), pp. 80 ff. Miss Kitson Clark regards the Brigantes as belonging properly to SW. Yorkshire. There is nothing in the evidence of the Brigantia cult to conflict with her view.

² The Irish Brigantes may have been an off-shoot of the British. (R. A. S. Macalister, *Archaeology of Ireland*, p. 17.) Resemblances between Brigit and Brigantia would then depend on the date when the migration to Ireland took place, which does not appear to be known.

to SW. Yorkshire, the heart of Brigantian territory. (The pre-Roman capital was probably at Almondbury, near Huddersfield: the Roman cantonal capital, *Isurium Brigantum*, was Aldborough by Borough-bridge.) The others are from sites nearly a hundred miles away, in the region of Hadrian's Wall.¹

The following are the Yorkshire inscriptions:

1. *C.I.L.* vii, 200; Dessau 4719. Greetland, between Manchester and York.

D(eae) Vict(oriae) Brig(antiae) et Num(inibus) Aug(ustorum) T. Aur(elius) Aurelianus d(ono) d(edit) pro se et suis s. macs? Antonino III et Geta (consulibus).

'To the Goddess Victory Brigantia and the imperial divinities T. Aurelius Aurelianus gave (the altar) as a gift on behalf of himself and his family . . .'²

2. *Eph. Ep.* ix, 1120; Dessau 4720. R. Calder, near Woodnook in the neighbourhood of Castleford.

Deae Victoriae Brigant(iae) a(ram) d(edicavit) Aur(elius) Sen[?]pianus.

'To the Goddess Victory Brigantia the altar was dedicated by Aurelius Senopianus.'

3. *C.I.L.* vii, 203; *Eph. Ep.* ix, p. 683. Adel, near Leeds.

Deae Brigant(iae) d(onavit) Cingetissa.

'To the Goddess Brigantia (the altar) was presented by Cingetissa.'

Another SW. Yorkshire site, Longwood, near Slack, has produced an altar, dedicated not to Brigantia but to a deity called either 'the Brigantian God' or 'the God Brigans' (or perhaps 'Brigantis'). The inscription (*Eph. Ep.* vii, 920) reads:

Deo Breganti (*sic*) et num(inibus) Aug(ustorum) T. A(u)r(elius) Quintus d(ono) d(edit) p(ecunia) et s(umptu) s(uo).

'To the God Brigans and the imperial divinities T. Aurelius Quintus gave (the altar) as a gift at his own cost and expense.'

¹ A distinction already noted by Miss Kitson Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

² The meaning of *s. macs* is obscure. The following suggestions have been offered: (i) Hubner (on *C.I.L.* vii, 200): *S(acerdote) Mag(ia) S(evero)*, 'Magius Severus acting as priest'. (ii) I. A. Richmond, *Huddersfield in Roman Times*

(*Tolson Memorial Museum Publication*, iv (1925)): *S(. . .) mag(istro) s(acrorum)*, 'S . . . (a name beginning with S.) being in charge of the sacred rites'. (iii) F. and H. W. Elgee, *Archaeology of Yorkshire*, p. 153: 'without blemish', based presumably on '*s(ine) mac(ula)*'. They do not quote the second *s*.

This last inscription is included here, because, as in the case of two of the altars to Brigantia, the dedicant is called Aurelius. They are all, in fact, men who were not born Roman citizens, but were enfranchized by an emperor whose family name was Aurelius, either one of the last two Antonines, therefore, or one of the Severi. The Greetland altar from the date of the third consulship of Antoninus (Caracalla) was put up in A.D. 208, which suggests that this Aurelius obtained the citizenship under Severus. The conferment of citizenship on provincials had a definite policy behind it: the intention was generally to accelerate the Romanization of a particular region. The situation in Britain in the second half of the second century was not such that this could have been contemplated before the Severan reconstruction of the whole frontier. That Severus not only repaired the military defences, but also took some measures to secure the loyalty of the Brigantes, who had revolted not long before the disaster, is suggested by the fact that the town walls of Aldborough were built in the early third century.¹ If some reorganization of the Brigantian state was contemplated, this would explain a crop of Aurelii in Brigantian territory. Whether these were enfranchized native officials or retired native soldiers who had won the citizenship through service with the auxiliaries, the fact that two of the Yorkshire inscriptions contain the formal dedication to the imperial divinities means that the dedicants were anxious to stress their loyalty, a very proper sentiment if they were newly enfranchized natives. The woman of the Adel inscription has a name that sounds native. They were all sufficiently Romanized to honour their goddess through the Roman forms of cult. It is unlikely, however, that the identification with Victory would be entirely to the taste of the Roman government, as the chief motive for the reorganization of the Brigantes would be to eradicate those warlike qualities which had prompted the Brigantes to revolt.

¹ *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xxxiv (1938-9), pp. 232 f. The possibility that the Yorkshire altars were to be connected with a Severan reorganization of the Brigantes was suggested to me by a lecture given in June, 1941, to the Society

for the Promotion of Roman Studies by Mr. I. A. Richmond on 'The Military Policy of the Severi'. I had already arrived independently at a very similar interpretation of the name Aurelius.

Victory was a goddess of the Roman armies and the equation of Brigantia with Victory might well have been made by soldiers at the time of the revolt or in older wars against the Brigantes. It is comparable with the identification of many Celtic gods with Mars. Not all of these were gods of war, but many (probably most) exercised general powers of protection over the land and were therefore expected to defend it from the enemy. The Romans, having a more departmentalized notion of supernatural force, created their idea of a foreign divinity out of the aspect which impressed them most and thus gave the name of Mars to gods who aided the enemies of Rome in battle.¹ Victory, being the constant companion of Mars as a Roman battle-goddess, provided a name for a goddess in circumstances similar to those in which a god would be identified with Mars.² Dio hints at such a case in his mention of a British goddess called Andate, worshipped by the rebellious Icenii at the time of Boudicca's revolt, who was their 'Victory'.³ This is a good parallel to Victory-Brigantia. Although the identification of a native goddess with a deified abstraction may seem curious, there is another example from Germany, where the native Vagdavercustis was apparently identified with the Roman army goddess, Virtus (Courage).⁴

As the full name Brigantia does not appear in any of the Yorkshire inscriptions, the question might be asked whether it is a case of identification with a named goddess at all and whether the abbreviations should not rather be expanded to *Briganti* ('Brigantian') or *Brigantum* ('of the Brigantes'). (In any case, the presence of the word *Deae*, usually a sign that a native goddess is intended, makes it practically impossible that the inscriptions should commemorate

¹ A. G. van Hamel, 'Aspects of Celtic Mythology' in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, xx (1934), pp. 207 ff., suggests (p. 239) that the Gaulish Mars was an 'oath-strengthening' god (cf. p. 238) on the evidence of Caesar (*B.G.*, vii, 2) who states the Gauls swore by their upraised standards of battle. This suggestion of van Hamel's may be further supported by the fact that images of Mars and Victory were carried on Roman standards.

(A. von Domaszewski, *Religion des römischen Heeres*, pp. 4 ff.)

² Leucetius, a Rhineland god equated with Mars, has for companion a goddess called Nemetona. For her name that of Victory is substituted in one inscription. (*C.I.L.* iii, 7412; Dessau 4586b.)

³ lxii, 7. Andate is probably the same goddess as Andraste of c. 6.

⁴ E. Krüger, *Germania*, 22, pp. 900 ff. Cf. A. Alföldi, *ibid.*, 21, pp. 15 ff.

Roman victories in Brigantian territory by dedications to the Roman goddess of Victory, who would not need to be defined as '*Dea*'.) 'The Brigantian Goddess of Victory' (or more accurately 'The Brigantian Goddess, Victory') would be possible, but she would almost certainly be the same goddess who is called Brigantia in the inscriptions from outside Yorkshire, even if in these Brigantia is never called Victory. The existence of Brigit and Brigindu is in favour of the existence of a sister-goddess in pre-Roman Britain. On the whole we are justified in assuming that *Brig* and the other abbreviations stand for *Brigantiae*.

If the name Aurelius suggests a Severan date for the whole group of altars, the Romanized cult in the Brigantian state would appear to have begun in the reign of Septimius, possibly with official encouragement. The pro-Roman native, adopting the Roman cult forms, addressed his goddess by the name of Victory, an identification already established from the Roman side.

Victory-Brigantia is not found outside Yorkshire. Evidence from sites elsewhere points to an identification which supplanted or was felt to be an improvement upon this first and rather obvious *interpretatio*, and this we may regard as official. If a real change of attitude is reflected, it may perhaps be associated with the arrival of the imperial family in Britain. They were there by 209. The only representation of the goddess in art, the Birrens relief, probably belongs to the following year.¹ It will be shown later that the conception of Brigantia expressed in this fine monument is influenced by the religious cults most closely connected with the Severan dynasty.

The inscriptions from the neighbourhood of Hadrian's Wall are as follows:

4. *Eph. Ep.* ix, 1138; Dessau 4717. South Shields.

Deae Brigantiae sacrum Congennicus v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).

'Sacred to the Goddess Brigantia. Congennicus willingly and deservedly paid his vow.'

¹ S. N. Miller, *Journal of Roman Studies*, xxvii (1937), pp. 208 f.

5. *Eph. Ep.* ix, 1141; Dessau 9318. Corbridge, Northumberland.

Iovi Aeterno Dolicheno et Caelesti Brigantiae et Saluti C. Iulius Apolinaris (*sic*) ɔ(enturio) leg(ionis) vi ius(su) de(i) ? *or* de(orum) ?

'To Jupiter Eternal Dolichenus and Caelestis Brigantia and to Health (*or* Safety?) (set up by) C. Julius Apolinaris, centurion of the Sixth Legion, by order of the god ? (*or* the deities ?)'

6. *C.I.L.* vii, 1062; Dessau 4718. Birrens, Dumfriesshire.

Brigantiae s(acrum) Amandus arcitectus (*sic*) ex imperio imp. ? f.

'Sacred to Brigantia (set up by) Amandus, architect, by command . . .'

7. *C.I.L.* vii 875; *Eph. Ep.* ix, p. 604.

Deae Nymphae Brig(antiae) quod [vo]verat pro salute [e]t inco[l]umitate dom(ini) nostr(i) invic(ti) imp(eratoris) M. Aur(elii) Severi Antonini Pii Felic(is) Aug(usti) totiusque domus divinae eius M. Cocceius Nigrinus [pr]oc(urator) Aug(usti) n(ostri) devo[tissim]us num[ini] maies]tatique eius v(otum) [s(olvit)] l(ibens) m(erito).

'To the Goddess the Nymph Brigantia, the vow which he had made for the welfare and safety of our invincible lord emperor M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus the Pious the Fortunate the August and of all his divine family, M. Cocceius Nigrinus, imperial commissioner of our August Emperor, consecrated to his divinity and majesty, paid willingly and deservedly.'

From the South Shields inscription it is difficult to extract more than that the dedicant was a Celt (cf. 'Cingetissa' of the Adel inscription). South Shields was a military site.

The Corbridge altar (pl. ii) served as the kerb of a fourth-century road and is probably of third-century date.¹ Its height is 36 inches. The ends of the bolsters are decorated with symbols not easily identified. That on the right may be the crescent and disk sign of the goddess Caelestis. In the centre of the side of each bolster is a human face. These perhaps represent the

¹ *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Third Series, vii, pp. 176 f. and pl. ii (facing p. 143), from which my pl. ii

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Sun and the Moon. On the right side of the altar is the figure of a Genius, wearing a mural crown, carrying a cornucopiae and pouring a libation over an altar. The figure on the left side is a Cupid carrying a bunch of grapes and a sickle of oriental type (*harpe*). Neither of these figures has familiar cult associations with any of the deities mentioned in the dedication. The crowned Genius is a common art-type of the *Genius Castrorum*. A Cupid with a basket of grapes sometimes stands for autumn in groups of the four seasons.¹ C. Julius Apolinaris may have had in mind his legionary headquarters at York and may have set up his altar in autumn. It is possible that he was not the original dedicant, as the last three lines of the inscription are cut over an erasure.

What is chiefly noteworthy, however, is the association of Brigantia with Jupiter Dolichenus and her title of *Caelestis*, which means that she was identified with the chief goddess of North Africa, the Semitic Tanit,² Romanized as Dea Caelestis ('Goddess of the Heavens').

Jupiter Dolichenus,³ whose cult is attested in Britain by inscriptions from a number of military sites, was in origin a Syrian god, the *Ba'al* ('Lord') of Doliche in Commagene. He was equated with Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus, the Roman sky-god and supreme protector of the Roman state, chief of the gods of the Roman army. His cult was beginning to spread in the West under the Antonines, but the bulk of the dedications belong to the reigns of Severus and Caracalla.⁴ The cult had declined by about the middle of the third century. His usual art-type is a bearded god, wearing the uniform of a Roman commander, brandishing a double axe and standing on the back of a bull. The epithet *Aeternus* stresses his cosmic powers. He is the supreme ruler

¹ J. M. C. Toynbee, *The Hadrianic School*, p. 207.

² Preisendanz in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopadie* (2), iv, 2, pp. 2178 ff., s.v. 'Tanit' and references, esp. S. Gsell, *Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord*, iv, pp. 243 ff.; Cumont, Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopadie*, iii, 1, pp. 1247 ff. and references, for *Caelestis* (s.v.).

³ Cumont in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopadie*, v, 1, pp. 1276 ff. and

references. Important new material in R. Noll, *Der Grosse Dolichenusfund von Mauer* (1938). Two fragments of an inscribed relief of Dolichenus and his consort were discovered near the Antonine fort on Croy Hill. v. G. Macdonald *The Roman Wall in Scotland* (2nd edn.), p. 269 and pp. 415f.

⁴ Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Romer* (1912), p. 362.

of the universe, a conception of divine force which originated in eastern astrology. With Dolichenus was worshipped a goddess, a *Ba'alat* ('Lady'), Romanized as Juno Regina, the consort of Jupiter Capitolinus. In art the goddess also stands on the back of an animal, generally a deer. A statue of a goddess (pl. iii), identified without justification as Cybele, which was found at Cilvernum and is in the Chesters Museum, perhaps represents Juno Regina, though the head and attributes are missing. This goddess, like the god, stands on the back of a bull.¹

Juno Regina was also the *interpretatio Romana* of Caelestis of Carthage, but the joint dedication to Dolichenus and Caelestis does not mean that Caelestis is taking the place of the Syrian Juno as consort of the god. There is no need to suppose that they had a joint cult. (The epigraphic evidence suggests that Juno was not very prominent in the cult: most of the dedications are to Dolichenus alone.) But the fact that the Syrian Jupiter and the African Caelestis are associated points to the reign of either Septimius Severus or Caracalla for the date of the altar. It was the African-born Severus who introduced the cult of Caelestis into the state religion of Rome.² His wife, the empress Julia Domna, was a native of Emesa in North Syria. She was worshipped as Caelestis Dea by the Rhineland armies.³ Indeed, there is reason to suspect that she assumed this divine role on occasion for the expression of her protective care of the Roman armies as *mater castrorum*.⁴

¹ The statue probably represents a Roman empress as the consort of Dolichenus. Mr. Richmond has drawn my attention to the resemblance between this figure and a statue from Carnuntum representing Julia Mamaea as the consort of Dolichenus, paired with Severus Alexander as Dolichenus (von Domaszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 65).

² Wissowa, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

³ *C.I.L.* xiii, 6671, von Domaszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 72ff. (cf. *C.I.L.* xiii, 6754, where Caracalla is identified with Invictus Sol.)

⁴ In certain coin-types with the Rev. legend *MATER CASTRORUM*, Julia Domna holds the caduceus, an attribute symbolizing Felicitas, but

also associated with African divinities and an attribute of Tanit in particular. (The types are Mattingly and Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, iv, 1, no. 563, p. 168; no. 880, p. 210.) In a relief from the *Porta Argentariorum* (*British School of Rome Supplementary Papers*, 1939; D. E. L. Haynes and P. E. D. Hirst, *Porta Argentariorum*, pl. vi.) erected to celebrate the return of Severus from Africa, the caduceus is visible behind the shoulder of Julia Domna and her right hand is uplifted, palm outwards, in a ritual gesture. The hand recalls the open hand which with the caduceus is a common symbol on Phoenician stelai associated with Tanit.

A Caelestis type for *mater castrorum*

Caelestis in origin was the Semitic Tanit who, with a male consort, protected the city of Carthage. The cult of Tanit spread from Carthage to other Phoenician colonies in Africa and elsewhere. After Africa became a Roman province the Tanit-cults became cults of Caelestis and continued to spread. Local goddesses lost their identity in the cult centred at Carthage and Caelestis became the representative divinity of North Africa. At Carthage she was Juno, but outside Carthage she may have taken other forms. She begins as the Carthaginian version of the Semitic fertility goddess called Astarte by the Greeks and Romans and 'interpreted' by them as Aphrodite Urania and Juno Caelestis. The distinctive aspect of the Carthaginian goddess was the 'celestial': she was pre-eminently a sky-goddess. She was believed to ride through the heavens on a lion.¹ The influence of Syrian astrology equated this Virgo Caelestis with the zodiacal sign Virgo.² She was also a war-goddess, receiving the title of *Victrix*, and statues of Victory stood in her shrine. One inscription refers to her breastplate.³ This military aspect suggests an art-type, different from Juno Regina, of a warrior goddess guarding a city, like Athene Polias, whom the Romans would call Minerva. Astarte had a warrior type in some Phoenician colonies and there is evidence from North Africa of a Minerva wearing a mural crown,⁴ which was very probably a Caelestis type. The conception may be not uninfluenced by a tradition amongst the non-Phoenician inhabitants of a warrior goddess identified by the Greeks with Athene.⁵ The reference to the breastplate of Caelestis is in an inscription recording the erection of a temple which had been vowed by the priestess of the deified Plotina. Is it possible in view of the prominence under Trajan of the cult

would correspond to the Cybele type for the title of *mater deum* (e.g. Mattingly and Sydenham, *op. cit.*, no. 859, p. 209). In the Portus Argentariorum inscription she is described as *mater castrorum*.

¹ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, vi, 4. In the Severan coinage there are types of Caelestis riding on a lion, with various attributes, including the thunderbolt (e.g. Mattingly and Sydenham, *op. cit.*, nos. 759-760, p. 194).

² The well-known metrical inscription from Carvoran (*C.I.L.*, vii, 759; Buecheler, *Carmina Epigraphica*, 24) in honour of Julia Domna refers to the zodiacal Virgo. Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur römischen Religion*, pp. 148 ff. is misleading.

³ *C.I.L.* viii, 993; Dessau 4433.

⁴ Gsell, *op. cit.*, pp. 276 f.

⁵ Gsell, *op. cit.*, p. 277, n. 3.

of the Capitoline triad,¹ Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina and Minerva Augusta, that Minerva Augusta was the *interpretatio* of the warrior Caelestis—and thus a Roman cult of two Caelestes originated, Juno Caelestis and Minerva Caelestis? It would explain a dedication from Auzia in Mauretania² which begins *Caelestabus Augustis*.

If a Minerva Caelestis type could be assumed, the identification of Brigantia with Caelestis would be consistent with the Minerva type of the goddess in the Birrens relief. Further discussion must be postponed for the moment in order to return to other points raised by the Corbridge altar.

The link between Jupiter Dolichenus, Caelestis Brigantia and Salus may be that they are all for this occasion divinities of healing. Salus, though she can stand for Welfare in general, is also the Roman equivalent of the Greek Hygieia and as such was worshipped with Aesculapius. The last two words of the inscription to some extent support this interpretation. Haverfield³ proposed to expand *ius. de.* to either *iussu deorum* or *iussus dedicavit*. The former is preferable or, better still perhaps, *iussu dei*, referring to Dolichenus alone. It is a regular formula in religious dedications, of the same type as *monitu dei* and *ex praecepto dei*. It has been argued with some plausibility that the direct instructions of a god can only be given if he actually appeared in a vision, that such formulae are equivalent to another, namely *ex visu*, and that they therefore refer to the medical treatment called *incubatio*,⁴ in which the patient was put to sleep in the temple and the god of healing revealed to him in a dream the required cure. The most famous centre of dream-oracles was the sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus. One inscription⁵ associates Dolichenus with Aesculapius and Ygia (i.e. Hygieia.) From the frequency with which formulae of the *iussu dei* type

¹ Wissowa, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-4.

² *C.I.L.* viii, 20744; Dessau 4430 (cf. *dominamque biforem* of 4428). The colony at Auzia was founded by Septimius Severus. The earliest of the dated dedications to the *Caelestes* belongs to A.D. 200.

³ *Archaeologia Aeliana*, third series, vii, p. 176 and *Eph. Ep.* ix. 1141.

⁴ A. H. Kan, *De Iovis Dolicheno Cultu*, pp. 25 ff. Loeschke, *Bonner Jahrbuch* 107, pp. 67 f. v. W. R. Halliday in *Greek Poetry and Life (Essays presented to Gilbert Murray)*, p. 286, for references to cures at Epidaurus.

⁵ *C.I.L.* viii, 2624; Dessau 4323.

occur in dedications to Dolichenus it is very likely that he had the power of healing diseases (it would be part of his Syrian inheritance as the functions of Semitic divinities, like Celtic, were universal, not specialized). The Phoenician Tanit is known to have had healing powers and doubtless retained them as Caelestis. They can be ascribed to Brigantia also not only by virtue of her identification with Caelestis (incidentally, powers of healing belong to Minerva rather than Juno), but also because she was of Celtic origin. The evidence of Irish literature goes to show that supernatural power meant for the Celts the power to provide plenty, to give protection, especially in war, and to heal diseases.¹

If this interpretation of the inscription is correct, there may be a reminder in the figure of the Cupid that autumn was notoriously an unhealthy season of the year and that its spirit needed to be propitiated.

The impression made by the identification of Brigantia with Caelestis, a cosmic goddess, is that she has been exalted to the highest rank of divinity. But it was customary for local goddesses to be regarded as manifestations of the greater divine powers. Isis, for instance, tended to absorb into herself the chief goddesses of almost innumerable places in the Graeco-Roman world. The list of goddesses under whose name Isis is invoked in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius² is surpassed by the long tale of those enumerated in a second-century papyrus,³ which includes the names of goddesses of very remote parts of the empire. Epigraphy provides a parallel in the goddess Noreia of the Danubian province of Noricum, who was identified with Isis-Fortuna.⁴ Originally a goddess localised at one cult-centre, the town whose name she bore, Noreia became the tutelary goddess of the whole province. The assimilation of Brigantia to Caelestis was probably also propaganda for the imperial cult, for in the Severan age the cult of cosmic powers is hardly separable from ruler-worship.

The cosmic character of Brigantia is corroborated

¹ Van Hamel, *op. cit.*, p. 211 and *passim*.

² Apuleius, *Met.*, xi, 2 ff.

³ Oxyrhynchus, 1380. v. A. D. Nock, *Conversion*, pp. 150 f.

⁴ E. Polaschek in Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, xvii, 1, s.v. and references.

by the art-type of the Birrens relief (pl. i).¹ It is said to have been found in the ruins of the fort. The date of the inscription is probably A.D. 210, according to S. N. Miller,² who identifies the architect Amandus, who dedicated it, with a Valerius Amandus, *discens*, of an inscription from Iversheim of the year 208, and supposes him to have been transferred from the Legio I Minervia at Bonn to the Legio VI Victrix at York, in order that he might be employed in the rebuilding schemes of Severus. Operations in southern Scotland in 210 provide an occasion for undertaking reconstruction work on the fort of Birrens.

(The significance of the last word of the inscription is not clear. Some authorities have detected the traces of another letter after *imp.* and Mommsen read *impe(ratum) f(ecit)*, 'executed the order'. Other suggestions are *imp(ensa) s(ua)*, 'at his own expense' and *ip(sius)*, 'of the goddess herself', with *m* inserted in error. If this were correct, the hypothetical letter might be *l* for *l(ibens)*.)

Ex imperio is another formula of the same type as *iussu dei*. They occur frequently in religious dedications from the German provinces and *ex imperio* happens to be the favourite amongst them in Lower Germany,³ a circumstance which supports Miller's identification of Amandus. Whether such formulae are invariably evidence for *incubatio* is a disputed point.⁴ Ihm⁵ objected that their number is far too great to make it likely. But it is not utterly improbable that there was some widespread native custom associated with gods and goddesses of healing on which the Romans could have imposed the *incubatio* form. In Irish literature music has healing powers.⁶ Music was also important in Celtic manticism as an aid to prophetic inspiration.⁷ Medicine was a branch of magic rather than science and music was regarded as a means of communication with spirits.⁸ It may be

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, xxx (1895-6), pp. 133 ff.

² *J.R.S.* xxvii (1937), pp. 208 f.

³ F. Drexel, *Römisch-Germanisch Kommission Bericht* (1922), p. 2, n. 5.

⁴ Bergk, *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift*, i (1882), p. 149; Hettner, *ibid.*, ii (1883), p. 427.

⁵ *Bonner Jahrbuch*, 83, p. 52.

⁶ Van Hamel, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁷ N. K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy*, p. 6 (taken in connection with p. 14).

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 45 and p. 14. Cf. Van Hamel, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

that its employment to produce the prophetic trance was paralleled in medicine by using it to hypnotize the patient. The dedicant of a Romano-British altar to the Nymphs¹ describes himself as *somnio prae-monitus*. It is hardly too much to say that the beneficent activities of all water-spirits included healing. The combination of health-giving waters and an oracle is common, e.g. in the cult of Serapis-Moritasgus, the Dove-deity of Alesia.² If this identification is accepted, *incubatio* was almost certainly part of the cult at Alesia.³ It was very probably practised in the cult of the Romano-British god Nodens—whose name is equivalent to that of the Irish god Nuada—who was worshipped in the elaborate fourth-century temple-settlement near the Severn in Lydney Park.⁴ Nodens may also illustrate, as Brigantia does, the identification of a local divinity with a cosmic power, as there are grounds for supposing that he was assimilated to the oriental Sun-god.

If, on the evidence of *iussu dei*, Dolichenus in the Corbridge inscription was regarded as a god of healing, he may be credited with a temple there. It is not necessary to assume that Brigantia and Salus also shared it permanently. The god's instructions would explain which deities would effect the cure and the patient might even be ordered to make a journey to a particular shrine some distance away.⁵ The centurion could have been commanded to seek further advice at some temple of Brigantia not in Corstopitum, Dolichenus (or his priests) being aware that Brigantia had some fame as a healer in her own territory. It is not very different from being ordered to take the waters at Buxton or Harrogate.

Caelestis Brigantia is probably the significance of the goddess as she appears in the Birrens relief. She stands in a gabled shrine. The height of the figure

¹ C.I.L. vii, 998.

² A. N. Newell, 'The Dove-deity of Alesia and Serapis-Moritasgus' in *Revue Archeologique* (1939), pp. 133 ff.

³ On dream-oracles in the cult of Serapis v. Nock, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

⁴ R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Report on the Excavation of the Pre-historic, Roman and Post-Roman Site on Lydney Park, Gloucestershire.*

(*Society of Antiquaries Research Report ix*), p. 43 for *incubatio*; pp. 39-43 for Nodens and his cult. Nodens as hunter and healer is in accordance with Celtic ideas of supernatural powers as generally protective. Hunting is a special form of protection. v. Van Hamel, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 f.

⁵ Cf. Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

is 2 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. She is dressed in a long tunic and a cloak, one end of which hangs down from her left shoulder, while the other is wound about her waist, with an overhanging fold in front, and, as though after crossing her back, just covers her right shoulder, with a fold pulled forward, and presumably hangs down behind it. On her breast is a small medallion of the gorgon's head. She appears to be wearing shoes or sandals. She holds a spear in her right hand and a spherical object, almost certainly a globe, in her left. By her left side, rather precariously supported at some distance from the ground by being caught between her draperies and the side wall of the shrine, is a round shield showing the straps on the inside. On her head is a helmet of non-Roman type, almost hemispherical and horned, bordered by a mural crown, through the central gateway of which her hair emerges in thick tresses on either side of a central parting. The helmet is surmounted by an ornament of lotiform appearance, which is probably a clumsy rendering of a triple crest seen from the front. Above, some lines scratched on the gable of the shrine look not unlike a palmette, but this may be accidental.¹ She is also winged. The wings are recurved and appear to spring from the waist, recalling the traditions of oriental rather than classical art. Resting on the lower moulding of the side wall near the right leg of the figure is a stone of omphaloid shape. A narrow moulding at its base suggests a small platform.

The style is interesting. The technique is rather uncertain, but the general effect is vigorous. The decorative rather than realistic treatment of the folds of the tunic has a hint of that flair for linear design which is said to be characteristic of Romano-British sculpture. The pattern formed by the groups of long folds on either side of the right leg, with the chevron-like creases over the legs themselves, and also the frilled effect of the edge of the skirt almost reproduce, though in a less skilful manner, the arrangement of the folds of the skirt of the Chesters goddess

¹ The palm-branch had some special significance in the cult of Tanit. It is represented by incised lines on a stele from the temple of Ba'al and Tanit (A. Merlin, *Le*

sanctuaire de Baal et de Tanit près de Siagu, fig. 7.). (I have not seen the actual relief of Brigantia, only the photograph and the (inaccurate) woodcut in *P.S.A.*, Scotland, xxx.)



Gibson, Hexham

CHESTERS, NORTHUMBERLAND. STATUE, 5 FT. 3½ IN. HIGH,
OF A GODDESS STANDING UPON A BULL, FROM THE FORT OF
CILURNUM



A. BULLA REGIA, NUMIDIA. MARBLE
STATUE, 2 M. HIGH, OF A GOD, FROM
THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO



PLATE IV

To face page 51

B. BULLA REGIA, NUMIDIA. MARBLE
STATUE, 1·92 M. HIGH, OF MINERVA,
FROM THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO

(pl. iii), which has been assigned to the second century. The manner in which the cloak is pulled forward over the shoulder is another point of resemblance. The treatment of the hair is not unlike that on two other Romano-British heads, one from Lancaster,¹ the other (unfortunately lost) from Lydney,² if one may judge from not entirely reliable illustrations.

Amongst the attributes of this syncretistic figure those of Minerva are the most immediately recognizable. There is nothing conspicuously Celtic except the rather barbaric coiffure and the helmet with horns attached.³ In view of the wings, which are probably borrowed from Victory, she may be called Minerva Victrix.⁴ (Is it a coincidence that Amandus served in two legions called Minerva and Victrix? This fact may have given him faith in Brigantia.) By assimilation to Minerva, Brigantia falls into line with Gaulish goddesses equated with Minerva. Caesar⁵ regarded the Gaulish Minerva as the patron of handicrafts, but it is maintained by van Hamel⁶ that her real role was that of benevolent and protecting divinity of the land, one which may be ascribed without hesitation to Brigantia of the Brigantes. The mural crown confirms the land-protecting aspect. In Graeco-Roman art it is the mark of a Tyche-Fortuna, the protecting

¹ W. T. Watkin, *Roman Lancashire*, p. 180. (I owe this reference to Miss M. V. Taylor.) A poor woodcut. Miss J. M. C. Toynbee kindly undertook to examine the head, which is in the Lancaster Museum, but unfortunately this was not possible owing to wartime conditions.

² Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pl. xxiva. A nineteenth century drawing.

³ Horned helmets occur also in oriental art. If these horns are bovine, they are oddly set. One would expect the concave curve to come next to the helmet. The arrangement here is reminiscent of a bronze bust of Astarte (?) from Syria, illustrated in Perrot and Chipiez, *A History of Art in Phoenicia and Cyprus*, i, fig. 26. For the hemispherical shape cf. the helmet of the god on an earthenware mould from Corbridge (*v. Arch. Ael.* (3rd ser.), vi, (1910), p. 224).

⁴ 'Minerva Victrix' occurs chiefly as a legend on coins accompanying

a wingless Minerva. It should correspond to the Greek Athena-Nike, who was also wingless. A. B. Cook (*Zeus*, vol. iii, p. 823 f. and footnotes) holds that the wings of the Ostia winged Minerva (*ibid.*, fig. 634) are not those of Victory in origin but derive from a traditional type of Minerva which preserved in this way her original bird-form.

⁵ *B.G.* vi, 17. 1.

⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 240. In the well-known Chichester dedication (*C.I.L.* vii, 11) by a *collegium fabrorum*, Minerva must be a goddess of handicrafts. I am, however, inclined to think that in Britain Minerva was more often the *interpretatio* of the healer aspect of local water-goddesses (cf. *infra* p. 39, n. 2, and contrast Gaul, where so many healing gods were absorbed into Apollo. *v. Toutain, Cultes Patiens*, iii, p. 201 f.) and that it was the Romans who made her into a 'Tyche'.

goddess of a city or larger unit of administration.¹ It is a translation into Roman terms of her pre-Roman function of land-divinity. Brigantia may therefore be regarded as the Fortune or Luck of the land of the Brigantes (as organized under Roman rule) and to some extent as identified with it. There is, however, no evidence that the Romans ever used the name Brigantia to mean the land of the Brigantes.

So far the figure appears to embody what Brigantia might stand for as a Celtic goddess seen through Roman eyes. (The identification with Minerva is also consistent with her having had powers of healing.)² But the globe in her hand is a sign that she rules the world. This is the symbolic meaning attached to the globe as an attribute of Victory and Fortune, but they are usually shown standing on the globe, not holding it. So Brigantia's globe is probably not borrowed from Victory. There is also still the omphaloid stone to reckon with. Sacred stones of this type (probably meteorites)³ of varying shapes are prominent in the cult of Semitic divinities of both Africa and Syria. There is plenty of evidence for stone-worship in the cult of Tanit. An *omphalos* is therefore an appropriate and probably essential attribute of a goddess identified with Caelestis. Further, the only other example in Roman imperial sculpture of a syncretistic winged Minerva⁴ was found in Africa and may be a Caelestis type. A pair of marble statues, of Antonine date, rather over life-size, which were

¹ A mural crown is also the attribute of Cybele, but none of her other attributes are present (e.g. drum) so she may be safely disregarded. There is plenty of evidence for the mural crown as an attribute of Tanit-Caelestis (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie* (2), iv, 2, pp. 2178 ff.).

² e.g. The identification of Minerva with Sul, goddess of the Bath waters, v. A. B. Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 859 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 881 ff. for the cult of meteorites. Tanit was worshipped as a stone (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie* (2), iv, 2, pp. 2211). Elagabalus sent to Carthage for Urania (i.e. Caelestis) in order to marry her to the black stone which was his Sun-god. (His first choice of bride had been the ancient image of Minerva, the Palladium, which

was probably a meteorite. The second bride was no doubt also a stone.) (Herodian, v, 6.)

⁴ A headless statue of Minerva from the same site, with traces of wings, may also have been syncretistic. The Ostia Minerva (p. 51, n. 4) is the only other example of a winged Minerva in Roman sculpture. If the wings did not originate as the wings of Victory, in Africa there may have been a Phoenician type of a winged Caelestis, the wings suggesting the power of flight through the heavens (cf. the eagle of Jupiter). v. Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie* (2), iv, 2, pp. 2213 for references for Stele 183 on which the sky-goddess is represented with wings.





a



b

ROME. MARBLE PILASTER CAP FROM THE TEMPLE OF ELAGABALUS AND TANIT ON THE PALATINE, SHOWING THE CONICAL STONE BETWEEN TWO GODDESSES—CAELESTIS ? (a) AND MINERVA (b)

By courtesy of the Cambridge University Press

discovered in the Temple of Apollo at the Roman colony of Bulla Regia in Numidia,¹ are shown by their mural crowns to be the divine protectors of the city (pl. iv). One is a noble example of the type of sacrificing Genius,² whose precise identity amongst Roman gods is immaterial for the purpose of this paper. He is probably either a Saturn or a Pluto, whose native form would have been simply a *Ba'al*. The other is a statue of Minerva, the type of which (apart from the attributes of wings, mural crown and cornucopiae) goes back to an original Athene type of the fourth century B.C. Stylistically there can be no possible connection between this figure and the Birrens Brigantia, but it is possible that both are based on a conception of Caelestis as a virgin warrior which, as suggested above, was current in North Africa. (The Birrens Minerva Victrix is not likely to have sprung fully armed out of the head of Amandus!)

We have seen already the union of Africa and Syria in the imperial house reflected in the Corbridge dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus and Caelestis Brigantia. We find it again in the form given in the state religion of Rome to the Sun-god cult of Emesa,³ the birthplace of Julia Domna, who belonged to a princely family with an hereditary priesthood of the cult. Elagabal, the *Ba'al* of Emesa, is best known through the extravagant piety of that later Severus who borrowed the name of the god whom he served as priest. But the Roman form of the cult must have been substantially the same in the earlier reign, though the omphaloid stone which was the aniconic image of the god remained undisturbed during that period at Emesa. With the god were worshipped two goddesses, one of whom was the Semitic Astarte, the Greek Aphrodite Urania, the Roman Juno Regina and hence Caelestis. The other developed out of the Arabian virgin warrior and moon goddess Allât, whom the Greeks 'interpreted' as Athene and the Romans therefore regarded

¹ A. Merlin, *Le Temple d'Apollon a Bulla Regia*, pl. iv, figs. 1 and 3. I regret that owing to the war these have been reproduced without permission.

² The Genius of a colony is naturally the same type as the *Genius castrorum*, as a colony was a settle-

ment of ex-soldiers in the neighbourhood of a military station.

³ For the Emesan cult, see von Domaszewski, *Abhandlungen zur römischen Religion*, pp. 197 ff. All three divinities would have been represented by stones in Syria.

as Minerva. The sacred stone is represented (pl. v) on the capital of a pilaster of a temple raised to Elagabal in Rome.¹ In front of it is the solar eagle and on either side a goddess. One goddess is too badly damaged to be recognizable but presumably she was Juno Caelestis. The other is clearly Minerva. The group at the same time represents the Capitoline triad, the Sun-god taking the place of Jupiter. The eagle (solar in the Syrian cult) is a bird sacred to both.²

If 210 is the correct date of the Birrens relief, with the Severi actually in Britain, it is difficult not to feel that a Minerva with a sacred stone by her side ought to have some association with the Emesan religion. That both Caracalla and Geta were under the protection of the Sun is clear from their coinage.³ (On the coins the Sun is anthropomorphic, but this Sun is surely the same as that of their mother's birthplace.) Caracalla was actually worshipped as Sol Invictus. More prominent in the Severan coinage is the Roman Minerva Victrix, daughter of Jupiter. The interpretation of certain coin-types is that she symbolizes the co-operation of the sons of Severus (especially Caracalla) in sharing the burden of empire and the triumphs of his arms.⁴ That the Roman and Emesan Minerva could coalesce is suggested by a series of Minerva types amongst the early issues of Severus from the mint of Emesa.⁵ It is interesting also to note that the globe in the hand, the attribute of the world-ruler—comparatively rare in art as an attribute of divinities—is in the Severan coinage held only by the Sun-god, Geta, Julia Domna, and Securitas, a deified imperial virtue who could on occasion be invoked to support the principle of dynastic succession.⁶

A difficulty in equating the Birrens Minerva with the goddess of Emesa is that she ought then to be distinct from Caelestis, who in the Emesan cult was

¹ *Cambridge Ancient History*, Plates, v, p. 157b.

² Cumont, *L'Aigle funeraire des Syriens et l'apotheose des empereurs*, for the Syrian eagle.

³ Mattingly and Sydenham, *op. cit.*, p. 79 (Geta). Sol is a frequent type of both.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 145 f., nos. 408-10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75. Securitas holding a globe is a type of Septimius, Caracalla, Geta and Julia Domna. (I have mentioned only the types of single figures holding globes. To these should be added Providentia (or Aeternitas ?), p. 325, no. 81.)

Juno, but it is not a very serious difficulty if we may assume that in an age when there was so much fusion in religion the Emesan Minerva could be identified with the North African, just as the Juno of Carthage and of Emesa were identified.

The Birrens relief, then, considered in the light of the normal principles of *interpretatio Romana* and also the significance of Minerva in the Severan age, through the apparent image of the goddess of the chief state of northern Britain reflects at the same time the divine associations of the imperial family and in particular of the two princes. Perhaps we can go further and say that she was more closely connected with Caracalla than with Geta because on other evidence she had some fame as a goddess of healing. This is supported by the Cumberland inscription, which will be considered after a last point about the Birrens relief.

Brigantia has been connected by some writers with stone-worship in Yorkshire. Such names as Bridestones are thought to indicate that she was the successor of the Bronze Age Mother Goddess of megalithic religion.¹ The *omphalos* on the Birrens relief might be taken as further evidence for the continuity of stone-worship in northern Britain. It is possible that sacred stones associated with the cult of Brigantia may have been one reason for the identification with Caelestis. But it is not certain. Brigantia may simply have taken over the *omphalos* with the other furniture of Caelestis. Reliable evidence for continuity from Bronze Age times into the Roman era would have to be as unimpeachable as a temple with an inscription to Brigantia, incorporating in its structure an ancient *menhir*.² As far as the Romano-British evidence goes, all the datable inscriptions of Brigantia's cult belong to the reigns of Severus and Caracalla and must be interpreted against the background of the ideas and history of that period.

The megaliths are also assigned to Brigantia on the grounds that she was identical with the Irish goddess Brigit, because Brigit was an almost universal Celtic goddess and a goddess of fertility and therefore

¹ Elgee, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

² One instance of this is known on the continent, *v.* H. Kettner,

'Ein Menhir als Tempelkultbild' in *Germania*, 16 (1932), pp. 276 ff.

a suitable heiress of the ancient Mother Goddess. But the idea that Brigit was a universal goddess is probably due to confusion with the Christian saint, now known in Ireland as Bridget and elsewhere in the British Isles as Bride. Like all saints, she has supplanted pagan divinities in many places of venerable sanctity, but it cannot be assumed that wherever her name is found Brigit or Brigantia was there before her. Thus 'Bridewells' get their names because they are near churches of St. Bride. That her anniversary, February 1st, is celebrated with fire-rites is no evidence that Brigit was a fire-goddess, for in many parts of Europe there are in the early days of February fire-festivals (either to stimulate the sun or to avert lightning) attached to different saints. Candlemas itself is another survival of the same ritual. It must be a rite of remote antiquity, dependent on the season, not on the special department of this or that saint or pagan deity. Nor is it entirely certain (seeing that we have next to no data for tracing the distribution of the cult of Brigit) that Brigit was the primitive 'Vesta' who bequeathed to St. Bridget the perpetual fire in the monastery at Kildare.¹ That Brigit was actually connected with fire is, however, a possibility, for, as Frazer points out, her patronage of smiths might well be a secondary development from the aspect of fire-goddess. (There is no trace in the Romano-British evidence for any association of Brigantia with fire.) I suspect that Brigit was no more than a local goddess before she passed through the refining pages of the Irish epic. Apart from her perpetual fire, her patronage of wisdom and poetry and medicine (which may all come under the head of oracular knowledge) makes her the kind of goddess who would have been equated with Minerva if the Romans had met her. The fire also can be accounted for as in harmony with the rest, when we remember the original spa at Bath (*Aquae Sulis*), the temple of Sul-Minerva, in which there was a perpetual fire (Solinus, 22. 10). Its significance in the cult is not clear, but it is possible that the combination

¹ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vol. ii, p. 240. on the relation of St. Bridget to a Celtic Sun-goddess. v.

A. B. Cook in *Folk-Lore*, xvii (1906), pp. 324 ff.

of healing springs and perpetual fire was more widespread than this isolated example can reveal. Where fire is connected with divinities with healing and fertility powers, I believe the fire is solar. *Sul* (or *Sulis*) is equivalent to Latin *Sol* and the well-known male gorgoneion from the Bath temple pediment may represent the face of the Sun (*v. Cook, op. cit.*, p. 863). The derivation of *Grannus*, the name of a Celtic god worshipped chiefly in the Danube lands and identified with the great healer, Apollo, is said to be either from Gaelic *greann* = 'hair,' 'beard' (which recalls the flame-like locks and moustache of the Bath Medusa), or Old Irish *grian* = 'sun' or from a form akin to Sanskrit *ghrans*, *ghransas* = *solis ardor*, *solis lumen*, *claritas* (*v. Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie, s.v.*). Many of the modern survivals of well-rites (*v. especially British Calendar Customs, Scotland*, i, pp. 125 ff.) include a circuit of the well, invariably sun-wise, sometimes with the celebrants carrying torches or lighted candles. For modern cures at holy wells it is frequently required that the patients should bathe in the water or drink a draught of it before sunrise. In some cases the time prescribed is 'between the sun and the sky', i.e. between daybreak and sunrise. The great day for well-visiting in Scotland is May 1st, Beltane, the great day in the Celtic year for fire and solar ceremonies. (In England it is Palm Sunday, *v. British Calendar Customs, England*, i, pp. 56ff.). On certain altars from High Rochester (*v. infra*, p. 59, n. 2), dedicated probably to the local well-goddess under the name of Minerva, solar symbols, e.g. swastikas and rosettes appear in the decoration (and also palm leaves).

It is not necessary, then, to identify Brigantia with Brigit. It is more likely that they were goddesses of the same general type, exercising their powers, especially the power of healing, in accordance with the facilities provided by their environment. If all Brigantes were descendants of one Brigantian group, when they split up their goddess must also have done so, because the later forms of the cult would have been accommodated first to the geographical conditions of their respective areas and then to the experiences of their worshippers. The Severan reorganization

of northern Britain was an experience the Irish Brigantes did not share.¹ The Brigantia known to us was practically a creation of that reorganization.

There remains the lost inscription from an unknown site somewhere near Naworth in East Cumberland. The titles of the emperor fit Caracalla and the year A.D. 213. It is an official dedication made by an imperial procurator. Brigantia is here styled not only 'goddess' but also 'nymph'. On the analogy of *Dea Nimfa* (sic) *Coventina* of a Carrawburgh inscription,² 'nymph' may be interpreted as meaning that Brigantia for this occasion was essentially a water-goddess and therefore a goddess of healing. The correct form of the name of the Carrawburgh goddess was probably *Coventina*, and she was perhaps the goddess of a *conventus*³ (community) of German soldiers stationed at *Procolitia*. That she was a water-goddess with healing powers, the sacred well and shrine, the relief showing her reclining with a fan made of a water-leaf, and the objects retrieved from the well leave no room for doubt. (If *Coventina* was derived from *conventus* she was hardly the original owner of the spring, but a usurper.) There was no time in Caracalla's life when his health was not a matter for anxiety, but, according to Dio,⁴ in 213 he was so concerned that he sent offerings to the shrines of all the most famous health-giving gods. Asclepius, Serapis and the Gaulish Apollo Grannus are the only ones mentioned, but seeing that he had only left Britain the year before, could he not have tried the shrines of Brigantia as well and instructed his commissioner to propitiate her? Those who would prefer not to find Brigantian sites so far from South-west Yorkshire may take comfort from the thought that the commissioner was not a Brigantian and need not have been scrupulous about giving her name to the

¹ When did Brigantes reach SE. Ireland? At whatever date they migrated from Britain (if they did) they would hardly have known *Caelestis Brigantia*.

² *Eph. Ep.* iii, 191; Dessau 4726. (The inscriptions to *Coventina* are collected in *Eph. Ep.* iii, 185 ff., with one addition, *Eph. Ep.* vii, 1037.) For a different interpretation of *Dea nymppha Brigantia* v. F. Heichel-

heim in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie*, xvii, 2, p. 1597, s.v. 'Nymphai'. Heichelheim's is the only recent survey known to me of the Brigantia material. Pp. 1591 ff. are useful on 'nympha' as an *interpretatio Romana* for native goddesses.

³ *Germanischen Gottesnamen*, p. 49f. (Cited as authority in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, xv, p. 294, n. 60).

⁴ lxxviii, 5-6.

less well-known guardian of a convenient shrine of healing, which may have been on the bank of the Irthing. Brigantia's Greetland altar was discovered not far from the Calder and the Woodnook altar was found in it. There are also the Brent and the Braint to show that Brigantia was an honorific name for rivers.¹ It is possible that at Birrens Brigantia superseded a local water-goddess who had already surrendered her identity to Minerva. An altar dedicated to *Dea Minerva* (not therefore to the Roman goddess) by the Second Tungrian Cohort² is ornamented with dolphins and birds (doves?). This strongly suggests the cult of a goddess of healing, with a spring and an oracle.³ It would be easy for a man of the Sixth Legion, coming from Brigantia's own country, to identify the two goddesses, particularly if the official art-type of Brigantia was a Minerva. Another possibility is that Brigantia was deliberately imposed on a number of shrines all over north Britain (though we have evidence only of two) in order to effect uniformity of cult as an aid to easy

¹ The modern spa of Harrogate is in Brigantia territory, and Buxton and Matlock are not far away. In R. C. Hope's list of holy wells in the English counties, Yorkshire leads easily with 60, Northumberland has 35, Cumberland 26, Derbyshire 24. The only others with large numbers are Cornwall, 40, Shropshire 36, and Staffordshire 30. (*Holy Wells*, p. xxix f.)

² *P.S.A. Scotland*, xxx, p. 153, fig. 21; *C.I.L.* vii, 1071; *Eph. Ep.* vii, 1090. The dedication is made by a whole cohort. There is a similar dedication by a cohort to Coventina at Carrawburgh (*Eph. Ep.* iii, 186). May it be conjectured that cults of this kind were part of the medical services of the forts? It is convenient to add here that the South Shields altar has a *cantharus* (two-handled vase) carved on one side, which is a water symbol. (Cf. the *cantharus* on an uninscribed Birrens altar, illustrated in *P.S.A. Scotland*, xxx, p. 132, fig. 10.) An altar from High Rochester, dedicated to *Dea Minerva* and a *Genius Collegii* (*C.I.L.* vii, 1034; Bruce, *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, p. 281, 546), is ornamented below the bolsters with a series of wavy lines which rather suggest water. An

almost identical 'wave' motif occurs frequently on the pre-Roman stelae of Tanit at Carthage. A second altar from High Rochester (Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 282, 547) dedicated to *Dea Sancta Minerva* has palm-branches (and crescents) amongst its decorations, with which may be compared the row of palm-branches below the *cantharus* on the uninscribed Birrens altar. A relief from Carrawburgh shows Minerva and another deity (too badly damaged for identification) with the serpent-wreathed tree-stump between them which is the familiar attribute of Aesculapius and Salus. Probably it was usual to make Minerva preside over the local holy well, unless special circumstances assigned it to some other goddess. A holy well at High Rochester is attested by a relief of three nymphs, a central figure of the Venus Anadyomene type, kneeling in the water pouring from an overturned vase, and two attendants. (Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 305, 584; *History of Northumberland*, xv, pl. facing p. 153.)

³ v. Newell, *op. cit.*, pp. 140 ff. Fish and doves were also commonly associated with Semitic fertility goddesses.

administration (cf. Noreia, *supra*, p. 47). On the whole this is the more likely. The Cumberland altar might even be commemorating the foundation of the cult.

The distribution and history of the cult may now be considered. No problem arises over the three Yorkshire inscriptions. As Miss Kitson Clark has pointed out,¹ the sites of these and the altar to the god Brigans² lie within forty miles of York and Aldborough, a region where the evidence for continued occupation by the Brigantes is strongest. The official Romanized cult of the goddess probably began with the Severan reconstruction of the Brigantian state. The identification with Victory, however, may have been established at the time of the Brigantian revolt or earlier. So far no trace of the cult has been found in York, but the dedicants of the Corbridge and Birrens inscriptions as members of the Sixth Legion had both come from the legionary fortress at York and may have met the cult in the *canabae* round about. The imperial commissioner of the Cumberland inscription was surely in touch with York. But the personal associations of the dedicants with Brigantian territory are possibly less important than they seem, as it might have been the official policy (as suggested in the cases of the Cumberland and Birrens inscriptions) to spread the worship of Brigantia from a Brigantian centre all over north Britain. The South Shields inscription could be accounted for in this way.

The division of Britain into an Upper and a Lower province was comparatively recent.³ Was Brigantia intended to be the goddess of the whole province? Her mural crown suggests that she had in her care a town of Roman status or a province or both at once. I suggest tentatively that she was the divine guardian of the new colony of York⁴ and that from there the

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 82.

² Pairs of divinities are common in Romano-Celtic cult. Brigans may have been a consort assigned to Brigantia in the early form of the cult, who faded into insignificance later. The original *deus* and *dea* would express the form in which the Romans represented a local cult about which they knew very little.

³ S. N. Miller in *Cambridge Ancient History*, xii, pp. 36 f.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42. If she was the Tyche of York, there is stronger reason for the dedications by men of the Sixth Legion. Assuming that York would have anyhow had a Genius, the god and goddess together would then be a companion picture to the Bulla Regia divine protectors (its Tyche and Genius, whatever the particular names of the Roman divinities). Perhaps this is why a Genius adorns the Corbridge

cult was to be carried to the rest of the province. (She would thus be following the course taken by the original Caelestis in North Africa.)

The identification with Caelestis and the globe Brigantia carries show that she was of sufficient importance in the eyes of the imperial family to attract her into their own orbit for propaganda purposes. In origin we may suppose her to have been a rather vague creature of the water, but nevertheless the source of Brigantian prosperity, potent to heal diseases, to bless the land and to protect it in war or other adversity. The Romans appreciated her first as a battle-goddess and identified her with Victory. Later, the policy of Severus requiring that the Brigantes should be educated in the arts of peace and loyalty to the throne (and probably also because of the fervour with which Caracalla embraced the cult of any efficacious divinity of healing), she was transformed into a Minerva, but a Minerva whose special care it was to watch over the safety and welfare of the emperor's two sons, who were destined to succeed him and were conducting important military operations from a general headquarters in Brigantian territory. With the extinction of the dynasty Brigantia may have lost something of her 'celestial' grandeur and her popularity with the Sixth Legion. The Romans, at any rate, have told us no more of her history.

altar, and if Dolichenus urged C. Julius Apolinaris to see what Brigantia could do for him, he was well aware, like the Delphic oracle before him, of the needs of the political situation. Further, if the conferment of the status of colony on York was also the occasion for the foundation of the cult of Brigantia this would explain why the three important monuments at Corbridge, Birrens and in Cumberland are probably very close to one another in date. The cult would need

advertising in the early years. A last point, if I am right in thinking that Julia Domna preferred a Caelestis type as the symbol of her divine power as *mater castrorum* (for the range of her divine types *v.* Mattingly and Sydenham, *op. cit.*, p. 89), Brigantia is more likely to have had military than purely civil associations, i.e. is more likely to have been exalted as the goddess of the colony of veterans than as the goddess of the native cantonal capital at Aldborough.