



Jupiter Tanarus.

BY R. G. COLLINGWOOD, M.A., F.S.A.



URING the year 1653, a large and beautiful altar of the local red sandstone was found in "Forest Street," Chester—that is, Foregate Street—at a depth of "more than two ells" below the surface, while a cellar was being dug for the house of Richard Tyrer. In 1675 it was given to the University of Oxford, and stands to-day in the entrance-hall of the Ashmolean Museum. Its size and proportions, and the beauty of its ornament, make it a conspicuous object; but when one turns to the inscription, one finds that it is at first sight almost wholly illegible. This necessitates a search for early copies, which may have been taken before the inscription weathered away: and of these the first, and to all intents and purposes, the only one, is that of John Grenehalgh.

Grenehalgh saw the stone on the day of its discovery, and transcribed the inscription next day. He recorded the facts and commented on the text, as he read it, in a Latin document about 1,800 words in length, of which one copy seems to have reached the British Museum, one the Bodleian Library, and one the library of the Dean and Chapter at Chester. The British Museum MS. (Lansdowne 843) I have not seen, but quotations show it to be a copy of Grenehalgh's essay. The Bodleian MS. seems to be no longer extant, but T. Hearne made a complete and careful transcript of it in 1722, and this is now in the Bodleian (Rawl. MSS. D.1173) where I have copied it. The third example came into the hands of Charles Gray, the Colchester antiquary, who in

1742 gave it to P. H. Warburton, for the Chester library. It has been kindly transcribed for me by Mr. W. T. Williams. It is unsigned, but in substance it is identical with the Bodleian MS., which was signed Joannes Grenehalgh, and ended with a postscript stating that it was a new copy of an original now defaced by age and handling. From a detailed comparison of the two texts I judge the Bodleian MS. to have been a later and improved version of the Chester MS.

Grenehalgh reads the altar as follows :—

I . O . M . TANARO
T . ELUPIUS . GALER
PRAESENS . GUNTA
PRI . LEG . XX V V
5 COMMODO . ET
LATERANO
COS.
V . S . L . M.

In GVNTA, line 3, he draws the NT as tied into one letter, which, as he draws it, might by NT or NIT : but he does not so understand it. He regards the T as a mere contraction-mark over the N.

This, he claims, is a complete and accurate transcript *prorsus ad literam et hanc ipsam literarum formam*. He protests too much : for even now it can be clearly seen on the stone itself that LATERANO COS is not in two lines but on one. Nor is his credit improved by his translation ‘T. Elupius Galerius, present governor,’ *praesens gu(ber)n(ator)* ! And the upshot is that we cannot, on his evidence alone, take the drastic step of adding “Elupius” to the list of Roman *nomina*.

Subsequent writers followed Grenehalgh instead of trying to read the stone for themselves. Gale, in his *Antonini Iter*, p. 52, reproduces Grenehalgh, except for a couple of slips in copying. A better scholar than Grenehalgh, he reads the contraction in line three as NIT, and Prideaux interpreted the line on this basis as *praeses Gunit(ae)*, “Governor of Gwynedd.” Bishop Gibson, at the end of the century, also

follows Grenehalgh : and the first attempt at an independent reading was made, probably a little later, by Horsley, who reports it illegible, except for the third line. This he gives as PRAESENS GVNIA, the NI being tied, and here Horsley was, as usual in such matters, right. The rest of his copy is simply borrowed from Grenehalgh. Gough in his *Camden* followed Horsley here as in most things : and the only subsequent departure from tradition was made by the draughtsman who prepared the plates for Chandler's *Marmora Oxoniensia* (part III, plate i, fig. 1). This engraving gives the following text :

I . O . M . TANARO
T . ELUPIUS . GALER
PRAESENS GVNIA
PRI . LEG XX V V
5 COMMODO ET
LATERANO COS.
V . S . L . M.

This is engraved as if it were wholly legible, which we know from Horsley that it was not; and it is clear that in general the draughtsman only copied the traditional version. He did, however, see that the traces of lettering on the stone proved the words LATERANO COS to have occupied one line only. But Huebner (C.I.L. vii, 163) ignores this correction and follows Horsley in every detail except punctuation, remarking that the stone now bears only the faintest traces of lettering, and not claiming to read a single letter for himself.

Every extant copy is thus a mere repetition of Grenehalgh except for two points : Horsley's NI for NT in line 3 and Chandler's one-line spacing of LATERANO COS. But since Grenehalgh's reading is not above suspicion, I thought it time that some attempt was made to read the stone afresh. It is not easy to see anything upon it except a few letters about the middle : but after long and repeated examinations, and with the help of various people who gave me the benefit

of an independent opinion, I found myself able to read the following with certainty :

I. IANARO
I ALER
PIAISIV NIA
PRI.LLG.XXVV
5 CCMMODO.ET
LAILRANCO
L

Line 1. The reading I . O . M . TANARO is confirmed beyond all reasonable doubt.

Line 2. The first letter was certainly never T; it was probably L.

Line 3. PRAESENS is certain, and NI in ligature is quite clear.

The remainder is all certain.

I . [O . M .] Tanaro, L . . . [G]aler. Praesens . . . nia, *pri(nceps) leg(ionis) XX. V(aleriae) V(ictricis), Commodo et Laterano co[(n)s(ulibus), v(otum) s(olvit)] l(ibens) [m(erito)]*. "To Jupiter Tanarus good and great, erected in discharge of a vow by L. . . Praesens, of the Galerian tribe, from . . . nia, *princeps* of the Valerian Victorious Twentieth Legion, in A.D. 154."

The dedicator's *nomen* is quite illegible, and it is evident that even when first the altar was found, the name could not be read with ease. Grenehalgh saw something which he misread as Elupius, and we can now only guess what this was. The *cognomen* Praesens is found in connexion with the *nomen* Pupius, but that is too short a word; and it is more useful to remember that a considerable number of distinguished persons in the second and early third centuries bore the name Bruttius Praesens. A C. Bruttius Praesens was consul for the second time in 140; another was consul for the second time in 180; others were consuls in 217 and 246, and other bearers of the same name are known during this period. Now BRVTTIVS on a weathered stone might

easily look like ELVPIVS if the TI were tied together; and therefore I suggest that we have here a record of one member of this distinguished family.¹

As for the birthplace, Horsley's contemporary, Ward, suggested GVNTIA. Now Guntia is Günzburg, a fort a few miles east of Ulm, where the Günz flows into the Danube. But as Mommsen pointed out (C.I.L. iii, p. 721) such a place could not possibly have been incorporated into the Galerian or any other tribe in the middle of the second century; and Mommsen suggested that the right reading might be, not Guntia, but Luna or Genua, two places which are known to have belonged to the tribe in question. But none of these three names was ever on the stone. The NIA is still clearly legible, and Horsley claimed to read GV: so the name appears to have been Gunia, though this is not the name of any known place.

The dedicator describes himself as *princeps* of the Chester legion. The *princeps* of a legion was the second centurion in order of seniority.² A legion was divided into ten cohorts, and these into centuries, each century being commanded by a centurion; and these centurions were the real officers of the legion. They rose from the ranks, and after receiving their commission, might either work their way up till they commanded one of the senior centuries, or else take over some duty like the command of a cohort of auxiliaries in an outlying fort. Sometimes a centurion was promoted to a more important office, such as the command of a legion (e.g., C.I.L. x, 3342a) or of a fleet, or a high financial post (e.g., C.I.L., ii, 1178) or all three in succession (e.g., C.I.L. iii, 1919, a centurion who became successively admiral of the Italian fleet, prefect of the Sixth Legion at York, commander of a large expeditionary force from Britain operating in Armorica, and procurator of a province with the *ius gladii*). The centurions of the First Cohort of a legion were in order of seniority (i) Primus Pilus, (ii) Princeps, (iii) Hastatus, (iv) Princeps Posterior, (v) Hastatus Posterior; and Vegetius (ii, 8) tells us that according to ancient custom the *princeps* was always selected for promotion to *primus pilus*. Those

centurions who attained high rank in the military or financial service had always been *primi pili*. Hence our dedicator, Lucius Bruttius Praesens, was probably a young member of a distinguished family who was working his way up through the Twentieth Legion as a preliminary to a larger career. But we hear no more of him; for the only L. Bruttius Praesens known to history was a *decurio* of Canusium in A.D. 223, seventy years later.

Who then was Jupiter Tanarus, to whom the altar is dedicated? The name appears nowhere else, but there are names like it. Lucan, in describing the armies engaged in the civil wars, enumerates various contingents of Gauls, worshippers of

Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Esus

Et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae.

(*Pharsalia*, I. 445-446).

Out of these two lines imaginative students of Celtic antiquities have reconstructed an entire religion. Teutates, Esus and Taranis became the Celtic Trinity, the three great gods of Druidism, worshipped wherever the Celtic race extended. It was reserved for M. Salomon Reinach to prick the bubble by pointing out that Lucan was only enumerating a string of local gods.³ Teutates, or rather Toutates, we have as a synonym of Mars on inscriptions in Britain and Noricum: Esus appears on a well-known inscription in Paris; but Taranis never appears on the monuments at all. Clearly, however, he is a thunder-god, his name being the Celtic *taran*, akin to *tonitru*, *Donner* and so forth. And inscriptions name a god Taranucus or Taranuconis, sometimes identified with Jupiter.⁴

Tanarus, then, might be a form of Taranis and Taranucus, altered by transposing the *n* and *r*. This is, indeed, the view of Gale, who wrote, very soon after our stone was found, "Jupiter hic Tanarus idem mihi videtur ac Fulminans, vel a *taran* quod Brittannicè est *Tonitru*, per transpositionem literarum *n* et *r*": and Grenehalgh remarks on the probable connexion between Tanarus and the modern

Welsh *taran*. The same view is expressed in so recent and authoritative a work as Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, where Tanarus is called "wahrscheinlich der einheimische Donnergott der Kelten."

But other authorities prefer to call Tanarus a Germanic god. The various forms *thunor*, *thuner*, *donar*, point to a primitive Germanic form *thunaraz*, and this would give Tanarus without any transposition of consonants. There are plenty of dedications to Germanic deities among the inscriptions of Roman Britain, and may this not be another? I think not. Dedications of the kind in question occur at places inhabited by auxiliary troops of Germanic origin. Chester was a legionary fortress, garrisoned by men who were no half-civilized tribesmen from the Rhine, but Roman citizens. Wherever Praesens came from, it was not a German-speaking place, nor did he command German-speaking troops. But he was quartered in a Celtic country, and it was natural and according to precedent for him to worship the gods of the country. Jupiter Tanarus is thus half Roman and half Celtic, the fruit of that syncretism which, all over the Empire, identified the local deities with those of the Roman pantheon and worshipped at once the gods of the conquerors and the gods of the conquered. In this way the Celtic population of a province like Britain became Roman without ceasing to be Celtic, and a civilisation grew up which, blended as it was with two vigorous and not altogether dissimilar elements, achieved a stability and coherence that may well be envied by those modern peoples which have tried to Europeanise races too remote in blood and in habits to acquire our civilisation without losing their own. This power of developing in its provinces a culture neither Roman merely nor merely provincial, but both at once, was perhaps the greatest triumph of the Roman Empire: and the poet Claudian laid his finger on the secret of this triumph when he wrote that Rome, alone of conquerors, had taken the conquered to her bosom:

Haec est in gremio victos quae sola recepit.

NOTES.

¹ Huebner conjectured FLAVIUS, but this is too far from ELVPIVS to be convincing, and Grenehalgh would not have boggled at reading so familiar a name. A Pannonian inscription (C.I.L. iii, 10423) has the name Valerius Pra(esens), but in spite of the ... ALER on our stone it is not possible to restore the *nomen* Valerius.

² A. von Dornaszewski, *Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, p. 90.

³ *Revue celtique*, 1897, p. 137.

⁴ C.I.L. xiii, 6478: *deo Taranuono Verat[i]us Primus ex iussu* (Boeckingen). C.I.L. xiii, 6094: *in h[onorem] d[omus] d[ivinae] deo Taranuono* (Godramstein). C.I.L. iii, 2804: *Iovi Taranuono Arria Successa v[otum] s[olvit]* (Scardona, Dalmatia). It would be, perhaps, rash to add the I.O.M.T. of C.I.L. iii, 10418, there being no evidence as to what the T stands for.

