VII.—A ROMAN INSCRIPTION FROM BELTINGHAM.

BY C. E. STEVENS, M.A.

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The seventh volume of the *Corpus* of Latin inscriptions is by far the smallest of the whole collection; and this being so, British antiquaries · have naturally tried to squeeze every drop of history from such inscriptions as we do possess. It is rather curious, therefore, that CIL VII, 712, formerly in Beltingham churchyard and now in the Black Gate, has received so little attention—curious and yet explicable. For this Cinderella of northern inscriptions—hard to read, yet in the main quite legible, was presented to the world in a most deformed shape. Hodgson,[1] who was the first to edit it, produced an incomplete and somewhat unsatisfactory copy, from which it would have been hazardous to draw a conclusion. In 1873 the canonical version of Romano-British inscriptions was issued by E. Hübner (CIL VII), and in it he gave the result of his own examination. Unfortunately this amounted to a mere jumble of letters and strokes, from which not even a hazardous conclusion could be drawn. Hübner, however, published, with his own, a reading submitted to him by Bruce, and this reading we now know to be almost exact and quite adequate on all the important details of the inscription. But Bruce himself lacked the courage of his convictions. In the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*,[2] published in 1875, he did not give a reading at

[1] *History of Northumberland*, II, iii, p. 198.
[2] No. 255, p. 131.

all, while his engraver's text differs not a little from what he himself had sent to Hübner, and differs moreover upon a point of crucial importance. It is no wonder, therefore, that the inscription, thus presented, attracted no attention whatever from scholars, even though the points on which it throws light have been more than once discussed : in A. Holder's great collection of Celtic names, the *Alt-Celtische Sprachschatz*, the Textoverdi do not appear. No rescuer came until 1913, when a decisive reading was given by Haverfield.[3]   Since then the inscription has been republished by our member, Mr. R. G. Collingwood, in the Black Gate catalogue,[4] and except for uncertainty in its second line, the reading is now established. Mr. Collingwood's text is **DEAE | SAIIADAE** (?) **| CVRIA TEX | TOVERDORVM |** **V.S.L.M.** That is to say, the stone records a dedication made by the *curia* of the Textoverdi to some unknown goddess.

As the name of the goddess is uncertain,[5] it would be hardly worth while to search the Celtic languages for a word that would fit. Quite possibly the word is not Celtic at all. Gallic analogies suggest that unknown feminine deities of local worship are usually stream or fountain nymphs, but more one can hardly say. " Textoverdi " certainly looks like a Celtic word, but here too no explanation can be attempted. Our knowledge of the original

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[3] *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, IX, p. 593.
[4] AA[4] II, p. 68, no. 50.
[5] Either the third or fourth letters or both could be T, according to Mr. Collingwood; Haverfield read WIIADAE; Robert Blair—after Mowat —(AA[3] XVII, p. 62, no. 117) MINDA[E].

British language is still too small to allow of any but the most hazardous guesses.[6]

Yet even if these could be explained it would be a gain of quite minor historical importance. The important word in the inscription is the *curia* of the Textoverdi, and on this word there is something to be said. At first sight it looks quite easy; it appears to be simply the senate of a Celtic tribe. If this were true, the inscription would certainly be important, and would deserve a fuller mention in general accounts of Roman Britain than it usually receives. But this interpretation raises difficulties which derive from the nature of Roman administrative methods. In the Celtic provinces of the empire Romanization found its expression in an amalgam of the city-state idea and the old tribal organization : and the contribution of the city-state idea to the general scheme expressed itself in the fact that the tribe had one senate which sat in the capital city of the tribe. The technical Roman term for a tribe with such an administrative scheme is *civitas*; and the fact that our own word " city " is derived ultimately from *civitas* shows the importance of the town in the scheme : more-over, though the tribe might be a confederacy of smaller units (and sometimes we know that it was, and we know the names of the units which were called in Latin " pagi "), still there was only one senate governing it, which was called the senate of the whole *civitas*. Thus Manosque in the south of France is in the same tribe as Vaison, the tribe of the Vocontii, but it is not in the same sub-tribe, or *pagus*; in fact it is a long way from Vaison : yet a senator living at Manosque is called *senator Vocontiorum*,[7] not senator of the *pagus* in the territory of which he lived. Again, Grenoble, though an important place, was legally only a *vicus* or village in the territory of the Allobroges, and so a senator living in Grenoble is not a member of the

[6] " Texto " appears to have affinities with Gallic " Tecto " (cf. Tectosages). Dottin (*La Langue gauloise,* p. 291) connects " Tecto " with Old Irish " Techt "=movement. Professor Fraser, however, tells me that this is quite uncertain.
[7] CIL XII, 1514.

senate of Grenoble but of Vienne[8] (here the town is so important that it has actually swallowed the tribal name). The rule may be laid down that where there is a senate, an *ordo decurionum*, there we have a *civitas*, and exceptions to it are of extreme rarity.[9]   Now in Britain we have some idea of what the *civitates* were.   Haverfield[10] pointed out that in the " Ravenna List " certain towns have attached to them the names of tribes, and that these towns had the status of cantonal capitals, the tribes thus being *civitates*.   In this list the " Textoverdi " do not appear. And even though the silence of the " Ravenna List " is certainly an inconclusive argument,[11] we can by unusual good fortune demonstrate under what *civitas* the Textoverdi were included.   It was the *civitas* of the Brigantes. This is proved not only by the evidence of Ptolemy, who takes the Brigantian territory as far west as Lancaster, as far north at least as Binchester,[12] but also from the distribution of altars commemorating the goddess Brigantia, which have been found at Corbridge, Castlesteads and even Birrens.[13]   That there was a *civitas* in the neighbourhood of Beltingham, a *civitas* enclaved in Brigantian territory, is hardly possible.   Such enclaves are mediaeval, not Roman creations.   If then the Textoverdi were not a *civitas*, then their *curia* was not a senate, and it becomes our business to ask what it was.

[8] CIL XII, 2243, 2246.

[9] Decurions of the imperial *saltus* are known from two German inscriptions—one certain, one quite doubtful (Dessau, 7100 and 7103)—and I shall not deny that the Textoverdi may have been the inhabitants of such an imperial *saltus*, and may consequently have had a *curia*; but both these inscriptions mention the *saltus* specifically: so I think that this solution is less likely than the one that I put forward.   The *curiae* in the " pagi " of Africa are not parallels; and it is quite uncertain whether any village (*vicus*) possessed an *ordo decurionum*. · (See Zulueta in *Oxford Studies*, II, p. 77.)   [See below, n. 25.]

[10] *Roman Occupation of Britain*, p. 193. Cf. " Civitas Cornoviorum " in the Wroxeter inscription (JRS XIV (1924), p. 244).

[11] Curiously enough, the Brigantes themselves do not appear in the list.

[12] Ptolemy, II, 3, 10.

[13] EE IX, 1141; CIL VII, 875, 1062.   I agree with Sir George MacDonald, AA⁴ VIII, p. 9, in admitting the validity of these inscriptions for determining the territory of the Brigantes.   Compare, however, E. B. Birley, AA⁴ VII, p. 172, n. 31.

We shall be assisted in the inquiry if we can find examples of this word used in contexts where any reference to a Roman institution is impossible. And, as it happens, the word is found as a place-name in Celtic Switzerland, and very probably also in North Britain. The Swiss example is Curia Raetorum, the modern Chur; the British is Κούρια,[14] mentioned by Ptolemy as a site in the territories of the Otadini, somewhere in the Cheviots. Here Κούρια does not, it is true, stand alone as a reading, but it is supported by the majority of the manuscripts, and as Ptolemy a few lines before has cited a name Κό ια (so all the manuscripts), there was every temptation for scribes to alter the second to fit the first. Nevertheless, this Κόρια,[15] too, a site in the tribe of the Damnonii, is important for our inquiry. The mutation of o and u is a very familiar phenomenon in Celtic phonetics—Eburacum-Eboracum is a familiar example, and it is a reasonable inference, therefore, that Curia and Coria are really the same word; and following on this trail we may add another place-name to our list—Corie,[16] a site mentioned in the Ravenna list and to be located apparently somewhere in Brigantian territory. Holder[17] believes that the cori- root is connected with an old Irish word "cuire," meaning the army; and Holder's view is set in focus by the interesting historical study[18] of Camille Jullian, the great historian of Gaul. M. Jullian, while admitting that it is difficult to fill in all the intervening links, is inclined to see in the Gallic "pagus" a development of the clan, and in the "tribus" a coalition of "pagi," which often took its name from the most powerful member of the group. In the coalition, however, the "pagi" still retained a measure of independence, notably in matters of military organization. The number of *pagi* in a tribe is subject to

[14] Ptolemy, II, 3, 7.

[15] Ptolemy, l.c.

[16] Rav., V, 31, p. 432, 5 (ed. Pinder and Parthey). Perhaps Tolosocorio (Tabl. Peut. *ap.* Miller, *Itineraria Romana,* p. 690=Tolastochora, Ptolemy, V, 4, 5) in Celtic Galatia is another.

[17] *Alt. Celtischer Sprachschatz,* I, p. 1126.

[18] *Revue des Études anciennes,* III (1901), pp. 77-91.

variations, and these variations can sometimes be explained by recorded history; but the Roman conquest had the effect of crystallizing to a very large extent the relation between " pagi " and tribe or, as it is henceforth called, " civitas." In the course of his study, M. Jullian is led to consider a class of tribal names which are compounded of a numeral and the cori- root. Examples of these are the Petru-corii[19] and the Tri-corii. When we find that a tribe which is just about large enough to have four " pagi " is called the Tribe of the four " cori "—we may suspect that " pagus " when used in Gaul is nothing more than a Latin technical term used to translate the Celtic " cori."[20] Ireland does not seem, indeed, to give a parallel for this use of " cori "—as a population group, but it is worth mentioning that the sub-units of the Irish kingdom do seem to have enjoyed military independence, and their name (*tricha céd*) does seem to be founded on military organization.[21] Furthermore, when we remember that under the empire it was particularly in matters of religion that the *pagus* preserved its vitality, it seems fitting that our inscription should be a religious dedication with the instruments of sacrifice carved upon it.

Even if it is granted that this word meaning " army " is really a name for the sub-division of a tribe, it may still seem strange that the word should be used as a place-name : we should not expect to find an English town called " Army." Yet in Celtic Britain it was not so strange. Though the tribal centre might become, like Mont Beuvray, an industrial town, in origin it was the meeting-place of the tribe, the place where for peace or war the warriors of the tribe could be assembled. And whether for peace or war, the assembly was an " army," for the Celt came in armour alike to parliament and to parade :

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[19] It is notable that Perigord—the successor of the Civitas Petrucoriorum—actually comprises four baronies (see P. Barrière, *Vesunna Petrucoriorum*, p. 11).

[20] Haverfield seems to have suspected as much. In EE IX, l.c., he writes: " Curia videtur pagum uel tribum significare."

[21] See Hogan in *Proc. Royal Irish Ac.*, XXXVIII, C. 7.

what more natural, then, than that the place that converted him—so to say—into a unit of the " army " should be called by the name of the army itself? It is much in fashion nowadays to lay stress upon the parallels between Celts and Hellenes, and so it is fitting to remind ourselves that in the fifth century B.C. the Acarnanians, most backward of the Greeks, still used as name for their capital the very word " army " ($\Sigma\tau\rho\acute{a}\tau\sigma$)[22]—an exact parallel to our Coriae in Northern Britain.

It would be a point gained if we could determine either the extent of the " Curia Textoverdorum " or its population; unfortunately this we can hardly hope to do. Both the Gallic " pagi " and its Irish analogues were entities of varying and various size; so that no parallel evidence is really safe. One point, however, may fairly be put; if the equation of *curia* with a Celtic population-group is sound, then it is a very plausible, indeed almost a certain, inference that the centre of the group was the hill-fort of Warden Hill—perhaps the veritable *curia* of the Textoverdi used as a place-name. If this is so, one would like to know whether the Warden Hill fortress maintained its existence under the empire : probably not, it would be unlike Roman methods to leave the natives with such a stronghold; moreover, Beltingham is not a very likely place for an inscription from Warden Hill to go. But we must wait for excavation to give us a decisive answer, and if excavation supports this hypothesis, we must hope that it will also reveal to us what happened to the Textoverdi when their capital was demolished. Some of them, at least, might have been established in the *vicus* of Chesterholm.[23] For knowledge we must await Mr. Birley's spade; but in the meantime I hope that in this paper I have thrown the cloak of at least a speculative respectability over CIL VII, 712, and made it tell a new and

[22] Thucydides, II, 80, 8.
[23] We shall probably never know where CIL VII, 712, was first discovered: another inscription (CIL VII, 715, now destroyed) from Beltingham churchyard was, in fact, taken there from Chesterholm (Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, p. 225).

interesting story. The telling has taken us far afield, so it will be helpful to sum up the results in brief. It is maintained that the *Curia Textoverdorum* has no connection with the senate of decurions; *curia* is a Celtic word meaning " army," which was used not only as a subdivision or " pagus " of the tribe, but as a place-name to describe the meeting-place of the " pagus." And thus the value of the inscription lies in the fact that it shows the survival in North Britain under Roman rule of the old pre-Roman cantonal divisions.[24] It seems to tell us, in fact, that in Roman Britain there was, subordinate to the tribe, a cantonal organization similar to that which French historians have studied in Roman Gaul.[25]

[24] An inscription on a bronze votive horse found at Neuvy-en-Sullias (Loiret) records the dedication to Rudiobus by the " Cur. Cassiciate " (Dessau, 4684). It is probable that in CUR. we have an abbreviation of this same Celtic CURIA. It is quite certain, moreover, that Cassiciate was not a *Civitas*. The " Curia " in the mysterious inscription from Cologne (*Germania*, X, p. 116—Primio Celissi fil. Curia grusduas Mercurio u.s.l.m.) may perhaps be another example.

[25] While this article was printing, I discovered that certain villages in Asia Minor possessed senates of their own (see K. Buresch, *Aus Lydien*, p. 2). Thus the rule asserted in n. 9 *above* needs modification; but it is still quite sound, as far as I can discover, for the western provinces of the Empire.