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NEW READINGS OF A SEVERAN INSCRIPTION FROM NICOPOLIS,  
NEAR ALEXANDRIA

By R. P. WRIGHT<sup>1</sup>

(Plates i, ii, 3, 4)

The inscription here discussed was found at Nicopolis near Alexandria on 24th May, 1801, while a British force was besieging the French garrison. It was first published, but only partially, by Captain Walsh,<sup>2</sup> aide-de-camp to Major-General Sir Eyre Coote; and the latter took it to England and set it up in the hall of West Park, his country mansion near Fordingbridge in Hampshire. There was a diagonal fracture across the last line, and so the workman concerned sawed off the jagged bottom of the stone and thus removed half a line of text.

The partial text given by Walsh was repeated in *Eph. Epigr.*<sup>3</sup> without further reference to the stone, but this was later remedied by Haverfield, who visited West Park at Mommsen's request and procured the full text, which Mommsen gave in the next part of *Eph. Epigr.*<sup>4</sup> but quoting the fragmentary last line from Walsh's plate. The same version was repeated in the *Corpus*.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile Haverfield had in 1883 published this new material in the *Journal of Philology*.<sup>6</sup> In 1891 he added some revised readings<sup>7</sup> for the ending of some of the lines on the sides, by drawing on a manuscript copy of the stone made in 1801 by General Wolfe and filed among the papers of the Society of Antiquaries. The omission of one or two of the letters at the end of several lines on the sinister side in Haverfield's own version suggests that, when the stone was fixed to the wall in the hall at West Park, this edge was obscured by cement.

Two recent discoveries have prompted a fresh publication of the text. In 1935 there came to light a letter<sup>8</sup> written in the British camp on 4th July, 1801, by Brevet-Major George Cookson, whose drawing (fig. 4) not only forms an excellent piece of epigraphy by a faithful rendering even of peculiarities, but also portrays the stone before the irregular portion was sawn off. We thus have some additional lines, 43-5 on the sinister side, as well as a rendering of the fragmentary eighth line of the front.

<sup>1</sup> The writer makes grateful acknowledgment of the help and facilities given by Mrs. E. A. Coote, Lady Eyre Coote, Canon H. W. Allen of Salisbury, Mr. Eric Birley, Mr. H. Cookson, the Rev. H. W. Moule, Dr. A. Raistrick, Mr. I. A. Richmond, Mr. Thomas Wake, and finally Dr. Gordon Ward, who has kindly presented to the Haverfield Library, Oxford, the photostat copy of the Cookson letter, part of which is here reproduced.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Walsh, *Journal of the late Campaign in Egypt* (London: ed. 1, 1803), pl. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. v, p. 3, no. 10; cf. p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 259-262.

<sup>5</sup> *CIL* iii, suppl. 6580; see *ILS* 2304.

<sup>6</sup> xii (1883), 292-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Academy*, 29th August, 1891, p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> Written to William Remington, Banker, of 69 Lombard Street, London. Its author commanded the artillery at the sieges of Aboukir and Marabout and before Alexandria; in 1830 he was promoted Lieut.-General and died in 1835. His grandson, Mr. Hugh Cookson, of the Wendy House, Woodland Rise, Sevenoaks, Kent, consulted Dr. Gordon Ward and let him take a photostat copy for submission to Mr. R. G. Collingwood.

Secondly the sawn-off portion <sup>9</sup> can now be produced. For in 1939 three small marble fragments with parts of an inscription were found embedded in the back drive of Bradenham Hall, Norfolk. The difficulty of interpreting them was overcome when the present writer realised that they belonged to the stone mentioned in Major Cookson's letter. Then followed a visit to the main stone in the garden at West Park <sup>10</sup> to take photographs and squeezes, which have made possible a new text which adds to, or alters, previous ones mainly in the line-endings of the sides.

The face of the stone is 29½ in. wide and 26 in. high (or 28 including the sawn-off fragment). At the top a plinth projects above the face and two sides. The sides are 14 in. wide along the top and vary between 13½ and 12 in. below. The back is rough, and at some stage before its discovery in 1801 part of it had flaked away, to the extent of an inch or two on the dexter side. At the bottom of the die the face of the stone curved outwards, as is shown by the curvature on the sawn-off fragment, but there is not enough left now to make it clear whether the stone terminated in a plinth. The block is of marble of the type quarried at Luna and extensively used in Roman times.<sup>11</sup> The text is given in type-facsimile, but the forms of the letters <sup>12</sup> can be studied in plates i and ii, 3, 4.

(a) Front :

## IMP & CAESARI

L · SEPTIMIO SEVERO PERTINACI  
AVG · PONTIF · MAX · TRIB · POT · II ·  
IMP · III · COS · II · PROCOS · P · P ·

5. VETERANI LEG · II · TR · FORT · MISSI  
HONESTAM ISSIONE QVI MILITARE  
COEPERVNT APRONIANO ET PAVL<sup>o</sup>  
[consulibus II QVIBVS] ET PERPETVAM

8. ]JOVIRVS *Walsh*<sup>13</sup> : ]QVIB (or R) VS C : QVIBVS H.

<sup>9</sup> Found by Master A. J. Penrose, at Bradenham Hall. Two parts of it were handed to Mr. Thomas Wake, of the Castle Museum, Norwich, who kindly sent them for examination, and later provided local details about Bradenham Hall. The connection with West Park would seem to be as follows: Lord Nelson's grandfather was rector of Bradenham parish from 1720, and one of his daughters married a James Smyth, who built Bradenham Hall. Smyth's son inherited the property and between 1800 and 1805 Susannah, the eldest sister of Nelson, and her husband, Mr. Thomas Boulton, lived at the Hall, and again in 1813. As Nelson and Sir Eyre Coote both took a prominent part in campaigns in Egypt, it is quite probable that their families were on terms of friendship. In this way a member of the Nelson family might see the marble fragment lying about at West Park and ask to have it as a curiosity, and so take it to Bradenham Hall.

<sup>10</sup> On the sale of the West Park estate

in 1941 the stone was moved to Damerham Vicarage near by, for temporary storage by the Rev. H. W. Moule.

<sup>11</sup> Pointed out by Mr. I. A. Richmond, and kindly confirmed by Dr. A. Raistrick.

<sup>12</sup> Some of the T's have a very short cross-bar, while the P's have a large serif at the foot. In l. 26, dexter side, the large serif combined with the absence of loop makes POL look like LOL. The centurial signs sometimes encroach on the next line and in one case, l. 29, sinister side, the L of POL is omitted for this reason. Cookson gives a close rendering of these differences and so sometimes appears to read CASIRIS instead of CASTRIS. These minor variations have been omitted in the *apparatus criticus*, as well as those additions made by Wolfe which agree with Cookson.

<sup>13</sup> Names are abbreviated thus: C: Cookson, H: Haverfield, Wo: Wolfe, W: Wright. Letters partly missing, but certain, are marked by subscript dots.

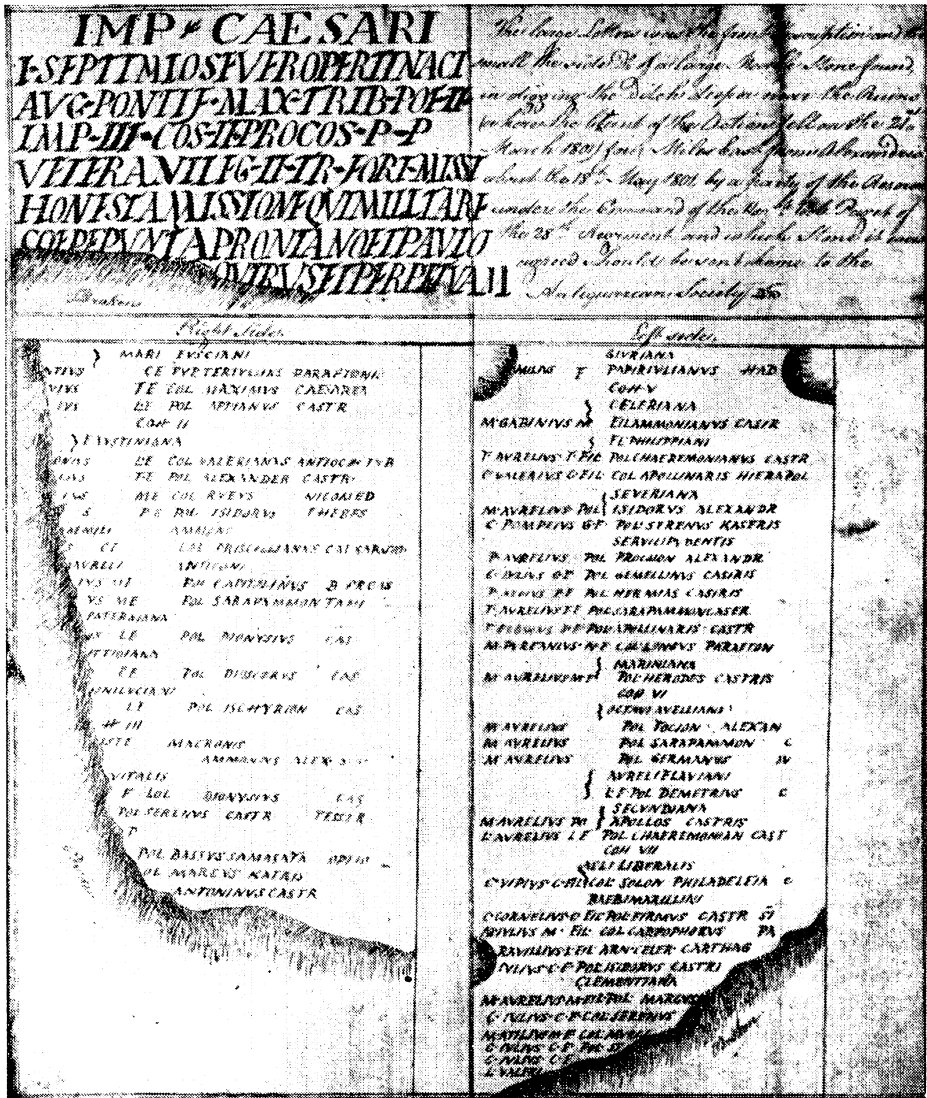


FIG. 4. COPY OF AN INSCRIBED STONE FROM NICOPOLIS MADE DURING THE SIEGE OF ALEXANDRIA and sent in a letter from the British camp by Brevet-Major George Cookson, 4th July, 1801

## (b) Dexter Side :

		> MARI FVSCIANI			
	JTIVS	CF	PVP	TERTVLLINVS	PARAETONIO
	VIVS	TF	COL	MAXIMV	S CAESAREA
	IVS	L·F	POL	APPIANV	S CASTR
5.		COH · II ·			
		> FAVSTINIANA			
	ONIVS	L·F	COL	VALERIANVS	ANTIOCH·TVB·
	AVR]ELIUS	TF	POL	ALEXANDER	CASTR·
	ÆEM]IIIVS	MF	COL	RVFVS	NICOMED
10.		S	PF	POL ISIDORVS	THEBES
		> ÆEMILI AMMONI			
	]S	CF	COL	PRISCILLIANVS	CAESAR·SIG·
		> AVRELI ANTIGONI			
	]IVS·	MF	POL	CAPITOLINVS	B PR CAS
15.	]IVS	MF	POL	SARAPAMMON	TANI
		PATERNIANA			
	]VS	LF	POL	DIONYSIVS	CAS
		ATTIDIANA			
		CF	POL	DIOSCORVS	CAS
20.		IONI LVCIANI			
		LF	POL	ISCHYRION	CAS
		CO]H III			
		ISTI	MACRONIS		
			AMMONIVS	ALEX·	SIG·
25.		VITALIS			
	F	LOL	DIONYSIVS		CAS
	POL	SERENVS	CASTR	TESSER	
		]NA			
		POL·	BASSVS ·	SAMASATA·	OPTIO
30.		OL	MARCVS	KASTRIS	
		ANTONINVS CASTR			

33.

]S

2. NTIVS . . . TERTVLLINS C: TIVS . . . TERTVLLINVS H, Wr. 8 LIVS C, H: (AVR]ELIVS Wr. 9 IVS C: NIVS H: [ÆEM]I]LIVS Wr. 11 > ÆEMILI C, Wr: ÆEMILI H. 12 ]S . . . SIO C: SIG H: ]S . . . SIG Wr. 18 ]ITTIOIANA C: ITTIDIANA W<sub>o</sub>: ]DIANA H: ATTIDIANA Wr. 19 CF C, Wr: ]S CF H. 20 IONI C, Wr: ONI H. 23 ISTI C, Wr: STI H. 25 VITALIS C, W<sub>o</sub>, Wr: N]ATALIS H. 26 F LOL C: IOL W<sub>o</sub>: POL Mommsen from H, who inclined to LOL rather than POL or COL: LOL, as mistake for POL Wr. 27 POL C, Wr: ]OL H. 28 P C: ]A H: [ ] . . . ]NA Wr. 29 SAMASATA C, Wr: SAMOSATA H. 30 KATRIS C: KASTRIS H: KASTRIS Wr. 33 ]S Wr.

## (c) Sinister Side :—

		> GAVRIANA			
	AV]RELIVS	F	PAPIR IVLIANVS HAD		
		COH V			
		> CELERIANA			
5.	M·GABINIVS	M	FIL	AMMONIANVS	CASTR
		> FL· PHILIPPIANI			

- T AVRELIVS T FIL POL CHAEREMONIANVVS CASTR  
 C· VALERIVS C·FIL·COL APOLLINARIS HIERAPOL  
 > SEVERIANA
10. M·AVRELIVS· POL ISIDORVVS ALEXANDR  
 C·POMPEIVS· C·F·POL SERENVVS KASTRIS  
 > SERVILI PVVENTIS  
 P·AVRELIVS POL PROCLION ALEXANDR  
 C IVLIVS CF POL GEMELLINVS CASTRIS
15. P·AELIVS PF POL·HERMIAS CASTRIS  
 T AVRELIVS T·F POL SARAPAMMON CASTR  
 T·FLAVIVS·T·F·POL APOLLINARIS·CASTR·  
 M·PVRFANIVS·MF·COL· LONGVVS PARAEON·  
 > MARINIANA
20. M·AVRELIVS·M·F POL·HERODES CASTRIS·  
 COH VI  
 > OCTAVI AVELLIANI  
 M AVRELIVS POL FOCION ALEXAN  
 M AVRELIVS POL SARAPAMMON C
25. M AVRELIVS POL GERMANVVS IV  
 > AVRELI FLAVIANI  
 L HAPION L F POL DEMETRIVS C  
 > SECVNDIANA  
 M·AVRELIVS PO APOLLOS · CASTRIS
30. L AVRELIVS·LF POL CHAEREMONIAN· CAST  
 COH VII  
 > AELI·LIBERALIS  
 C·VLPIVS C·FIL COL·SOLON PHILADELFIA[C]  
 > BAEBI MARCELLINI
35. C CORNELIVS C· FIL· POL FIRMVVS CASTR·SIG  
 M·IVLIVS M·FIL·COL·CARPOPHORVVS PA  
 L·RAVILLIVS·L·FIL· ARN·CELER·CARTHAG  
 C·IVLIVS·C·F·POL· ISIDORVVS CASTRIS  
 > CLEMENTIANA
40. M AVRELIVS M·FIL·POL· MARCVS  
 C·IVLIVS·CF· COL·SERENVVS C  
 M·ATILIVS MF COL· MVCIA  
 C·IVLIVS·C·F·POL· SE  
 C·IVLIVS C·F
45. >  
 L·VALERI

1 GAVRIANA C: GIVRANA *Wo*: ///IANA *H*: > GAVRIANA *Wr*.  
 18 M·PVRFANIVS N C: M·FVRFANIVS·M *H*: M·PVRFANIVSM *Wr*  
 (the initial P is clear and is a mason's error for F). 27 L·HAPION omitted by C.  
 29 PO(L) C, *Wr*: POL *H*. 33 C·VIPIVS . . . PHILADELFIA C C, *Wo*:  
 M·VLPIVS . . . PHILADEL// *H*: C·VLPIVS . . . PHILADELFIA *Wr*.  
 34 BAEBI MARILLINI C: > BAEBI MARCELLINI *H*, *Wr*. 35 SI[ C: SIG  
*Wr*. 36 PA C, *Wr*. 37 RAVILLIVS C: RAVILIVS *H*: L·RAVILLIVS *Wr*.  
 38 IVLIVS C, *H*: C·IVLIVS *Wr*. 39 > omitted by C. 40 M·AVRELIVS . . .  
 MARGVVS C: /AVRELIVS . . . MA// *H*: M·AVRELIVS . . . MARCVS  
*Wo*, *Wr*. 42 M·ATILIVS . . . MVRCI C, *Wo*: MA/// *H*: M·ATI[LIVS  
 . . . MVCIA[ *Wr*. 43 C·IVLIVS·C·F·POL SE[ C, *Wo*, now lost. 45 > *Wr*.

The inscription dates to A.D. 194, the second year of Septimius

Severus' reign. It is a dedication to the Emperor by veterans who started their service in the consulship of L. Venuleius Apronianus Octavius and L. Sergius Paullus, both for the second time; this was A.D. 168. The names of the veterans concerned are listed on the sides, and the missing part of the stone must have carried the names from the other cohorts of *Legio II Traiana Fortis*.<sup>14</sup>

In the last line there is a space of 11 in. before [Q]VI[B]VS, and this, with the smaller size of lettering adopted in this line, will need about twelve letters. As both consuls were holding office for the second time, we may fill out the line with CONSVLIBVS II. The relative clause QVIBVS ET PERPETVAM[. . .] doubtless stated the nature of the privileges which Severus had granted to these veterans. It seems highly probable that the noun to be restored here is *immunitatem*<sup>15</sup>, for this could be given in *perpetuum*<sup>16</sup> and would constitute a substantial privilege, appropriate to legionaries. If this reading be adopted, we can understand why the recipients felt moved to set up this fine dedication in honour of the Emperor.

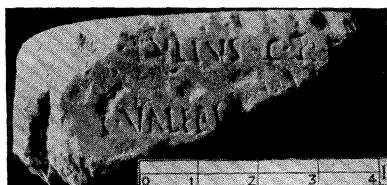
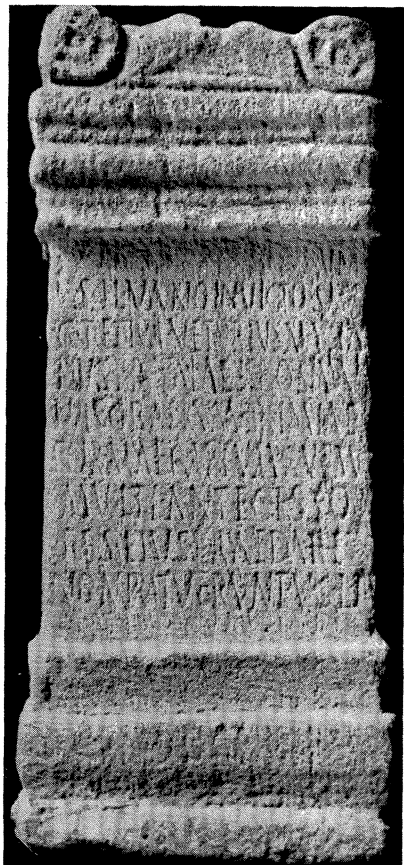
<sup>14</sup> The following alterations may be made to the names of the centurions listed by Ritterling, P-W *s.v.* 'Legio', 1491-2: for Cohort II: ]ionius instead of ]onius Lucianus, and add Attidius; cohort III: ]istius instead of ]stius Macro, and for *Natalis* read *Vitalis*; cohort IIII: add *Gaurius*. The evidence provided by the stone for the domicile of recruits has already been discussed: see G. L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* 80; H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* 183.

<sup>15</sup> Proposed by Professor H. M. Last. See *CIL* xvi, 25, where Titus made certain praetorians *immunes*; *ibid.* App. no. 12, *ILS* 9059, Domitian gave some veterans of *legio X Fretensis* *immunitas* from *vectigalia* and *portoria*; *cf. ibid.* App. nos. 10, 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Digest* 50, 6, 8: 'immunitates generaliter tributae eo iure, ut ad posteros transmitterentur, in perpetuum succedentibus durant.'







1. STANHOPE, DURHAM : ALTAR TO THE DIVINITY OF THE EMPERORS RE-USED FOR A DEDICATION TO SILVANUS ON THE CAPTURE OF A MAGNIFICENT BOAR. *c.*  $\frac{1}{8}$  (see p. 115)  
 2. WOTTON, NEAR GLOUCESTER : TOMBSTONE OF RUFUS SITA, OF THE SIXTH COHORT OF THRACIAN HORSE, NOW IN GLOUCESTER MUSEUM. *c.*  $\frac{1}{2}$  (see p. 43)  
 3 AND 4. NICOPOLIS, NEAR ALEXANDRIA : FRAGMENTS OF L. 8 OF FRONT OF INSCRIBED SLAB AND OF LL. 44 and 45 OF SINISTER SIDE. (See p. 33 ff. and plate i)

*Photographs of 1, 3, and 4 by R. P. Wright*