

V.—*Notice of a Monument at Pallanza, North Italy, dedicated to the Matronæ; with an attempt to investigate the Origin and Nature of the Cult of the Matronæ, as distinct from that of the Deæ Matres. By WILLIAM MICHAEL WYLIE, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., in a Letter to Charles Roach Smith, Esq., F.S.A.*

Read May 18, 1876.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have made the study of the *Deæ Matres* and the *Matronæ* so peculiarly your own, by the notices, in *Collectanea Antiqua* and *Roman London*, of the many memorials of these lesser Roman divinities which exist in Britain, Germany, and France, that, in venturing on the same subject, I feel almost like a trespasser. Yet we are all bound to contribute our respective gleanings to the general stock of information. Moreover, the Cisalpine examples of the cult of the *Matronæ*, which I now propose to consider, though perfectly analogous to those of other countries—the subjects of your studies—yet have their respective points of difference. These, though difficult to explain, should not pass unnoticed, and your labours have lightened my task.

On a point of land that extends itself into the fair waters of the Lago Maggiore, in Upper Italy, lies the thriving little town of Pallanza and its dependencies. As at Bellagio, on the neighbouring Lake of Como, the high land of the Pallanza promontory, where the church of San Remigio is said to hide the site of a temple of Venus, commands an outlook over the expanse of waters far as the eye may reach in all directions. Little open to attack, favoured with a prolific soil and a climate mild even in winter, it is just the spot which a band of ancient adventurers would have selected for a settlement; accordingly, we find Pallanza laying claim to an early origin. Whether the legend be true or not that the place derives its name from a former temple of Pallas Athena, this much at least is certain, that the Romans were in early possession here, and have left many memorials of their occupation. To one of these memorials I would now call the attention of the Society.

This monument is traditionally said to have been discovered at Pallanza, so far back as 1601, beneath a heap of ruins; and this is the only record we have, or are likely ever to obtain. It is a plain quadrangular *cippus* of white marble, sculptured in bas-relief on all four sides. The dimensions are about 3 feet 3 inches in height, by 2 feet 2 inches in breadth, and 16 inches in thickness. The front and more important sculpture represents a sacrifice. Above this is a dedicatory inscription of four lines to the *Matronæ*, which it may be well to give at once, before entering into details.

MATRONIS SACRVM
PRO SALVTE C' CÆSARIS
AVGVSTI GERMANICI
NARCISSVS C' CÆSARIS.

The monument is placed at present in a very insecure wall which connects the campanile of the church of S. Stefano at Pallanza with the main building. It is not more than six feet from the ground, in a situation easy for injury, and its preservation thus far must be attributed to the seclusion of the spot.

It is indeed much to be regretted that no clue appears to exist to any detailed record of the original discovery in 1601. It is therefore impossible to ascertain whether the ruins, under which the marble is traditionally said to have been found, were those of a Roman *sacellum*, or more probably of a villa.

The first mention of the inscription I can meet with is in Gruter,^a who gives it on the authority of a correspondent of his, a certain Cantoni^{us}. (*Pallantiæ ad Verbanum lacum in D. Stephani*. Cantoni^{us} Gruter^o.) Cantoni^{us} omits the very important letter c. before CÆSARIS in the second line. This error was perpetuated by Galleratus,^b and again by Amoretti, at the close of the last century, and his subsequent editor, Dr. Labus.^c The rubbing before us therefore enables us to give the true reading—probably for the first time. Dr. Mommsen will also give it in the forthcoming volume of his *Inscriptiones Galliæ Cisalpinæ*.^d

This omission must have been the result of mere carelessness, as the front face

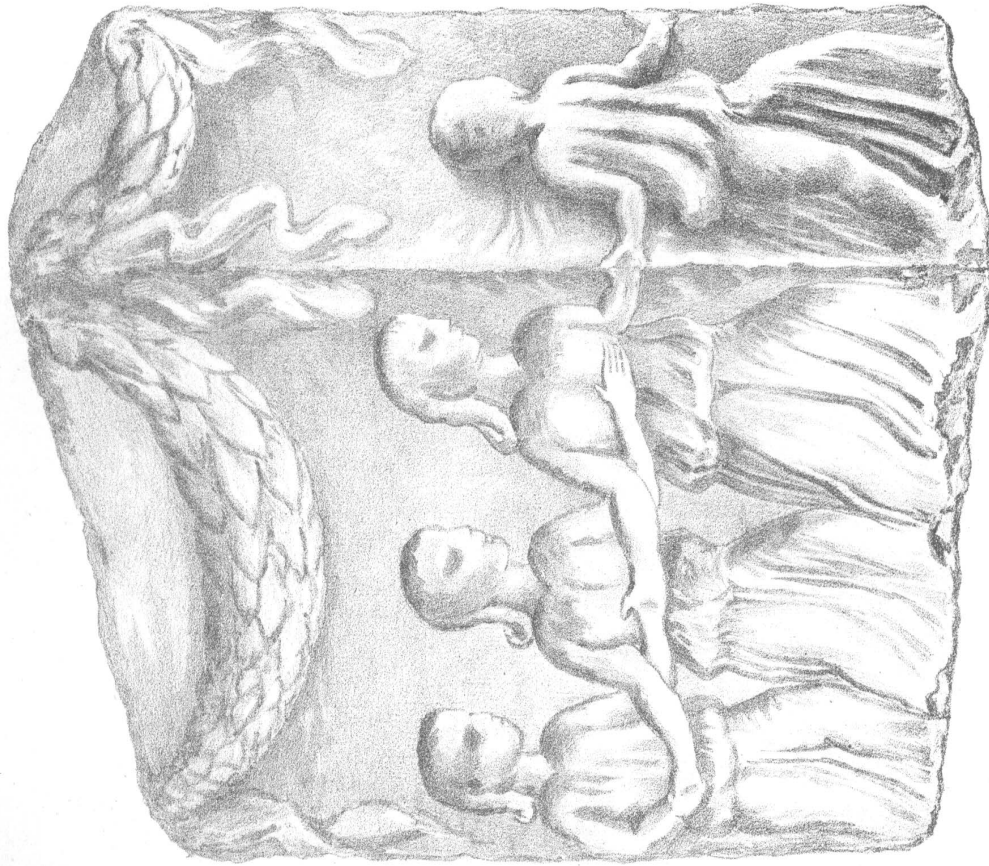
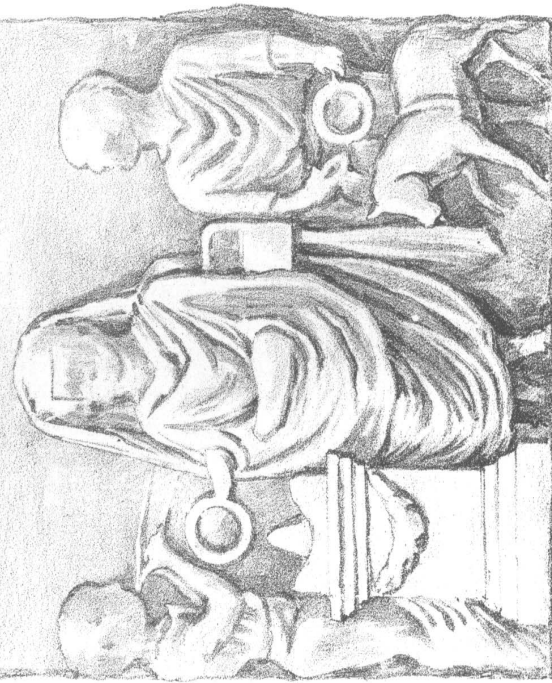
^a Corpus Inscriptionum. Tom. iii. p. 1,074.

^b Antiqua Novariensium Monumenta. Novara, 1612. Inscr. xlv.

^c Carlo Amoretti. "Viaggio da Milano ai tre Laghi," p. 59. 6^{ta} Edizione corretta e corredata dal Dottore Gio. Labus. Milano. 1824.

^d Since this was written Dr. Hübner has published the inscription in the *Archäologische Zeitung*. Jahrgang xxxiv. 1876. p. 66.

MATRONI SSACRVM
 PROSALVTE GCAESARIS
 AVCVSTICERMANICI
 NARCISSVSGCAESARIS



of the monument, representing the sacrifice, always stood in an outside and full light. The *cippus* was originally placed in the wall of the Chiesa di S. Stefano in Pallanza. The front could then be distinctly seen on the outside of the building, and the back, with the three female figures, from within. Amoretti indeed complains that the three dancing figures were sadly obscured by the main altar. He terms them the graces, though he might have known better. As he makes no mention of the other dancing figures, we may infer these were completely mortared-up at that period, and concealed within the wall, so that their very existence had become forgotten. Amoretti well remarks on the then position of the monument, "Questo cippo starebbe pur bene isolato."

His advice must have been partly followed at some subsequent period, when the heathen monument was removed from the wall of the actual church to its *present resting-place*, with the obvious purpose of showing all the sculpture so far as possible. It is not built into the wall in the usual manner, but stands rather askew in an aperture so prepared in the wall, like a window, that the front, back, and one of the sides are fairly visible, the other side being only imperfectly so. This has necessitated the oblique view given in our engraving. (Plate V.)

Some of the guide books mention cursorily a bas-relief on the wall of the church of S. Stefano; others, of a more inventive genius, suggest the female figures to be the wives or sisters of the emperor dancing for joy at his recovery. The monument in its entirety remains inedited.

For a primary knowledge of this interesting example of Romano-Keltic art I am indebted to the Rev. W. Owen, B.A.,^a British chaplain at Pallanza, as also for a rubbing of the inscription taken by himself, which has proved very valuable. Mr. Owen has also, at my request, caused the drawings, from which our illustrations are taken, to be executed by a local artist, under his own superintendence. We have the monument, therefore, before us exactly in its present condition, free from any attempt at restoration, with all details accurately rendered. The inscription, as will be seen, is in a perfect state. The sculpture has considerably suffered; but neither the inscription nor sculpture give a favourable idea of the state of the arts in Gallia Cisalpina at the period.^b

^a Sketches of Lago Maggiore and Pallanza, by the Rev. W. Owen, B.A. A brochure, published by G. J. Passmore. London. 1875. 2nd edition. Bickers. London. 1879.

^b Subsequently, in the autumn of 1876, I had an opportunity of visiting Pallanza, and seeing the monument.

We will now proceed to details. The inscription already given is a dedication of the stone to the *Matronæ* divinities by a certain Narcissus, in token of thankfulness for the restored health of his imperial master Caius Cæsar (Caligula).

Beneath the inscription is a bas-relief portraying a sacrifice. In the foreground is an altar. By it stands the officiating priest in his toga, a fold of which appears thrown round his head. In his right hand is a *patella*, from which he is pouring a libation on the altar; in his left there appears to be a *cistella*, or small incense-box. Nearly opposite to the priest is the *tibicen*, or, more correctly, perhaps, *tibicina*, if we may judge from the feminine appearance of the figure, playing on the double *tibia*, as the rite required.^a In the background is a male attendant with the victim, holding the *præfericulum* in his right hand, and in his left not a *speculum*, as some have fancied, but a ladle, or *patella* with a handle. Similar sacrificial implements often occur on Roman altars, and we have a peculiarly good example on the Rodingen *Matronenstein*, now in the Granducal Museum at Mannheim.^b On one side, or end, of this a youth is sculptured holding in his hands a ladle, and *præfericulum*; on the other is a female figure fully draped. The remaining three sides of the stone bear at their top the usual floral festoons. Beneath these, in bas-relief, are five female figures—the *Matronæ*, as I take them to be. Three of these figures are sculptured on the side opposite to the sacrifice, and one on each of the remaining sides. The figures are fully draped, —“longam indutæ vestem,”—graceful, and appear to be “treading a measure.” Their arms are interlaced, and their hands clasped interchangeably.^c

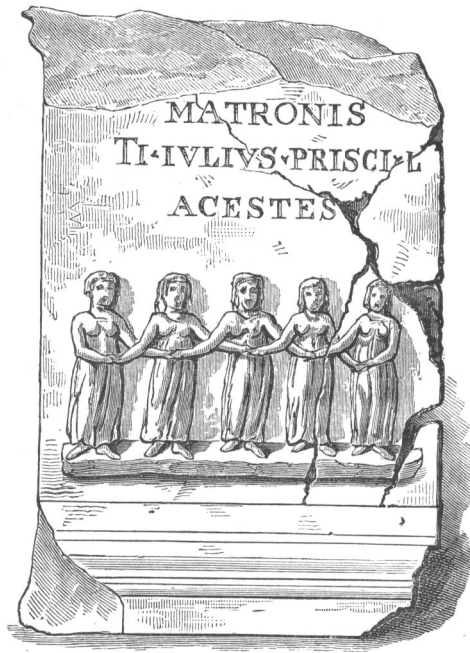
^a Livy. ix. 30. Ovid. Fast. vi. 657.

^b See paper on this monument by Herr F. Haug in the *Archäologische Zeitung*. Jahrgang xxxiv. 1876, p. 61.

^c Dr. Mommsen, in the second volume (No. 6641) of his “*Inscriptiones Galliæ Cisalpinæ*,” published since this paper was read, gives the Pallanza inscription, and, in lieu of an illustration, thus describes the monument:—

vir tibiis	vir capite velato	fig. stans. d.
canens.	sacrificans, d.	nescio quid,
	ex patella libans	sin. speculum
	ara. in ara, s. cistel-	quod videtur
	lam tenens.	tenens.
<i>In latere</i>	<i>In postica.</i>	<i>In latere.</i>
corona.	corona.	corona.
similis mulier	tres mulieres	similis mulier
proximam manu	manibus	proximam
apprehendens.	junctis	manu non appre-
	saltantes.	hendens.

All this corresponds exactly with the details of the Avigliano monument, also from North Italy, which, it will be remembered, was discovered in 1869, and communicated to us by our learned colleague, the Rev. Padre Garrucci. It was engraved from a very indifferent sketch made on the spot, and appeared the same year in our Proceedings (Second Series, iv. 289). The woodcut is here repeated.



Altar dedicated to the *Matronæ* at Avigliano, Upper Italy.

The only variation in the treatment of the subject in the Avigliano stone is that the *Matronæ* are there represented together in a row. It would be unsafe to generalise from two examples only, or we might be inclined to suspect some mysterious symbolism—such as the ancients attributed to the Graces—in this interlacing movement, and that the sculptors of Gallia Cisalpina were wont to convey the idea in this conventional fashion.

Be this as it may, I feel assured the learned Fellows present will already have anticipated me, and that these female figures, sweeping in festal dance,

“ Ut festis matrona moveri jussa diebus,”^a

^a Horace, De Arte Poet. 232.

will have recalled to their memories those charming lines of the poet—

“ Quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris,
Nec certare joco, nec dare brachia
Ludentem nitidis virginibus.”^a

This sculptured marble sets before us some such dance as the Roman poet refers to. If it shall be thought generally, as I myself think, that this interlacing movement of the dance be the very “dare brachia” of Horace, our Pallanza monument will at least have the merit of rendering a solution of what has always been a difficulty with his commentators.

The Pallanza marble is probably as well developed an example of the cult as we are ever likely to obtain, but most unfortunately it conveys no further information which may guide us in our attempts to ascertain the origin of the cult. Some of us have thought this *Matronæ* worship might have taken its rise in the awful veneration for the Aurinias and Veledas—the Alruna dames of the Teuton forests—which really did exist in popular belief, whether Germanic or Roman,^b and found its way even into Scandinavia. Such an idea, indeed, finds utterance in the triad monuments at Lyons, Cologne,^c London, and other places, (see woodcuts) where the *three Matronæ* appear seated on their thrones with baskets of fruits and flowers on their laps, symbolic of their supposed power over the productions of the earth. Thus far they undoubtedly coincide pretty much with the *Deæ Matres*, and both sets of divinities would be aptly classed among those



Upper part of altar, dedicated to the *Matronæ*,
by M. Marius Marcellus, Cologne Museum.^e

“ Dique Deæque omnes, studium quibus arva tueri.”^d

^a Horace, *Carm.* II. xii. 17. “Dare brachia.” A note in the Orelli edition, Turici, 1850, gives “Hæc maxime demonstrant matronam Romanam hic significari, quibus solis ducere licebat sacros Dianæ choro, una cum virginibus ingenuis.” Compare also Livy, xxvii. 38.

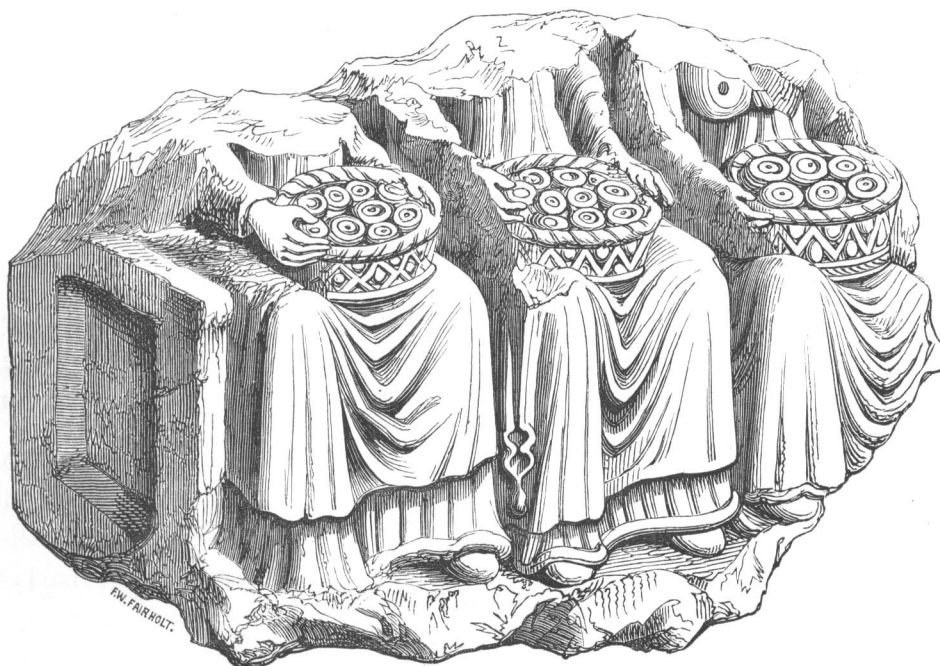
^b Proceedings. Second Series. Vol. iv. p. 293.

^c C. R. Smith’s *Roman London*, p. 36. Idem. *Collectanea Antiqua*. Vol. i. p. 136.

^d Virgil, *Georgics*, i. 21.

^e This and the following woodcut have been kindly lent by Mr. C. Roach Smith.

But in these examples of North Italy we find the reverential idea completely changed—perhaps with the differing genius of a different people. The austere triads no longer appear. In their stead we have these quintettes of female forms moving in festal dance, possibly expressive of a more joyous personification of the powers of nature. Our learned colleague, Dr. Keller, whose suggestions are always of weight, is inclined to associate *Matronæ* worship with that of the lesser Keltic female deities.^a It may, indeed, be even so, and that the same old superstition, though swept away out of sight on the advent of Christianity, still continued to linger on in popular fancy under the form of the *fées* of France, and the fays or fairies of our own islands.^b



Fragment of group of the *Matronæ* found in Hart Street, Crutched Friars, London.

Shakespeare beautifully embodies the essence of *Matres*, *Matronæ*, *Nymphæ*, *Sulevæ*, and their many congeners, in Prospero's incantation :—

^a Anzeiger für Schweizerische Alterthumskunde. Vol. ii. p. 337. Pl. xxxi. Zürich.

^b Mr. C. R. Smith advances a similar opinion in his *Roman London*, p. 40, *note*, though more in application to the *Deæ Matres*. Also Keller in the *Anzeiger*, *loc. cit.*; and Mr. T. Wright in the "*Celt, Roman, and Saxon*," p. 283. Jacob Grimm too in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, 3rd. ed. p. 388. "*Das weben der nornen und die spindel der feen weist uns auf häusliche, mütterliche gottheiten. . . . Bei den Celten namentlich mögen die fatæ in den begrif der Matres und Matronæ auslaufen.*"

“Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back.”

Dr. Keller's idea is certainly supported by the fact that the Galli Boii were long in possession of Upper Italy, where they would not have failed to introduce their own superstitions. Moreover Gaul in its totality, after Cæsar's final conquest, as also Britain, came to entertain far closer relations with Rome than ever did Germany.

I fear it is hopeless to attempt a direct deduction of the *Matronæ* from any classical source. With the festival of the *Matronalia* they certainly have nothing to do. Yet, as we see their cult to have been an established fact, we may endeavour to ascertain what supernatural powers they were held to possess, which entitled them to divine honours among the various Romanised peoples. I am not aware of the existence of their memorials in Rome, or even anywhere in Italy proper.

Some have thought that while the *genii* and *nymphæ* had charge in particular of *loci* and *aquæ*, the *Matres* and *Matronæ* were the guardians of the *vici* and *pagi*. Muratori^a considers the *Matronæ* to be “Deæ quædam provinciarum, urbiumque tutelares,” and the same as the *Junones*. But who were these *Junones* who also are so frequently commemorated in inscriptions? Spon gives an inscription from a collection at Verona:—

IVNONIBVS
AVG.
L. LICINIUS HYMNVS
VIVIR
V. S. L. M.^b

and adds “*Junones erant Deæ unicuique mulieri præsidentes, sicut viris Genii; ita muliebres Genios non male nominaremus.*” In support of this opinion Spon further cites Pliny “*Major cælitum populus quam hominum intelligi potest, cum*

^a Thes. inser. tom. i. 93.

^b Spon, *Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*. Sect. 3, xxv. The AVG. in the second line is simply a title of veneration, which Ovid explains,

“*Sancta vocant Augusta patres; Augusta vocantur
Templa sacerdotum rite dicata manu.*”—Fast. i. 609.

singuli quoque ex semetipsis totidem Deos faciant, Junones Geniosque adoptando sibi.”^a He also cites Seneca, Epist. 110, “Memineris Majores nostros, quia crediderunt hoc, Stoicos fuisse : singulis enim et Genium et Junonem dederunt.”^b

In actual proof of this doctrine we may refer to the “Inscriptiones Galliae Cisalpinæ,” No. 7593.

G . L . N̄
IVN . CLIVANAE . N̄
IVN . ANNAEAE . N̄
VI//ELLIA
RESTITVTA

which Mommsen renders as

G(enio) L(ucii) N(ostri)
IVN(oni) CLIVANAE N(ostræ)
IVN(oni) ANNAEAE N(ostræ)
VI[T]ELLIA
RESTITVTA.

Nos. 6,950 and 7,237 of the same work are all good examples of the cult of *Genii* for the male, and of *Matronæ* for the female sex. In fact, nothing can be more clearly shown than this point of Roman belief, which must have been derived from Etruscan, or possibly still more distant Oriental sources. Who can doubt this that has ever studied the mythology of the Etruscans as depicted in their tombs, where the artist has sought to raise the mysterious veil, and introduce the spirit-world to mortal eyes. “In the Turanian spirit-world,” says Mr. Taylor,^c “a prominent place is taken by the guardian spirits who were

^a Plin. ii. c. 7.

Thus too, Menander, (frag. xviii.)

“Ἀπαντι δαίμων ἀνδρὶ συμπαρίσταται
Ἐθθὺς γενομένω, μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου
Ἄγαθός.

^b The absurd multiplication of the *genius loci* is ridiculed by Prudentius,

“Quamquam cur genium Romæ mihi fingitis unum?
Cum portis, domibus, thermis, stabulis soleatis
Adsignare suos genios; perque omnia membra,
Urbis perque locos, geniorum millia multa
Fingere, ne propria vacet angulus ullus ab umbra.”—Contra Symmach. ii. 445.

^c Etruscan Researches. London. 1874.

believed to be the constant protectors of the persons to whom they were attached. This doctrine also takes its place in the Etruscan mythology, and from thence it penetrated into the Roman system. Every human being was believed to have his protecting spirit, whose sex corresponded to the sex of the protected person. Every man had his Genius, and every woman had her Juno."

Now we gather from all this that these plural *Junones* were, in popular belief, attendant spirits or genii attached to each individual. Having advanced thus far it only remains to connect them with the *Matronæ* in order to understand the worship these ladies subsequently received.

The following inscription, found near Milan, and preserved by Muratori (i. 93), would show that *Matronæ* and *Junones* were but convertible terms:—

MATRONIS
IVNONIBVS
VALERIVS
BARONIS . F
V . S . L . M

Again, in Mommsen's Gall. Cis. Inscriptiones, No. 5249:—

In latere.		In latere.
IVN	IVNONIB	IVN
C . V . M	MATRON.	C . V . M
	EX . VISV	
	C . VIR . MAX	

This evidence may suffice for our present purpose; but there is yet another inscription it may be well to cite as connecting the *Matronæ* with the *Genii*. It is at Ossuccio, a village near the Lago di Como, the name of which remains but little altered. It begins—

MATRONIS . ET . GENIIS
AVSVCIATIVM . CONSECRAVIT
ARVIVS . &c.^a

By this somewhat roundabout process we seem to arrive at the possible origin of these obscure *Matronæ*.

^a Amoretti. Viaggio ai tre Laghi, p. 287.

The idea of a spirit, or *δαίμων*, attending on each individual, is simple and æsthetic enough, and perhaps even finds support in Holy Writ,^a but its character became altogether changed when combined with the superstitions of other nations. Whether the *Junones* doctrine appeared to the Kelts and Germans to harmonise with the cult of their female divinities, or whether they thought fit to associate it with the reverential regard both nations entertained for the counsels of the female sex, believing that “*in esse quin etiam sanctum aliquid et providum*,” certain it is that beyond the actual confines of the Italian States the doctrine became wonderfully changed and developed. We find the *Junones* merged altogether in the *Matronæ*, in accordance, possibly, with the idiosyncrasy of the people. No longer attendant on the individual, or restricted to the protection of the female sex, they are invoked for good or deprecated for evil, first probably for villages, and then, with a stronger and growing faith, more generally for towns, and cities. Little as we can learn of their supposed properties or powers, or of their rites, it is evident they had many worshippers in the Roman armies. These soldiers, wherever stationed, have raised monuments in their honour, and thus made the existence of the cult known over the world.

Still, with all this respect, it would scarcely seem that the *Matronæ* ranked as high-class divinities. We find dedicatory inscriptions to the “*Matres*” and “*Deæ Matres*” indiscriminately, but I do not call to mind any inscription in which the term *Deæ* is given to the *Matronæ*. The nearest approach is in one from Novara, given by Muratori (Thes. i. 94):—

MATRONIS
ET . DIS . DEABVS
T . MATVSIVS . // /// N
V . S . L . M

and these in the *Inscriptiones Gall. Cis.*:—

No. 5584. SANCTIS . MATRONIS, &c.
No. 7228. DIVIS . MATRONIS, &c.

Such plain dedicatory inscriptions as the preceding are sufficiently frequent in many localities, but not such sculptured monuments as this of Pallanza. We owe it to the wealth and policy—perhaps, indeed, to the unfeigned solicitude—of the imperial courtier Narcissus. Why he chose this remote region for its erection

^a St. Matthew, xviii. 10.

we cannot know. It may be that the altered cult found no favour at Rome, since we find no record of it there. It may be that Narcissus, though of Greek extraction, actually was a native of this region, or at least of Gallia Cisalpina. It may be that the imperial villa was adjacent, or that he inhabited his own villa on the Lacus Verbanus at this beautiful spot, as the two Plinys did theirs on the neighbouring Lacus Larius, near Como, and the poet Catullus on the peninsula of Sirmio, on the Lacus Benacus.

But, it will be asked, who was this Narcissus? The inscription tells us he was "of Cæsar's household," and we may fairly infer, from this monument of his, that he was an imperial favourite, and of high office. Beyond this we fail to trace him. But a Narcissus also appears at the Roman Court in the following reign of Claudius, and frequent mention of him, as a freedman of Claudius, appears in the pages of Dion,^a Juvenal, Suetonius, and Tacitus, but always for evil. He was, in truth, the prime mover in all the scandals in that unhappy Court. Dr. Labus, the editor of Amoretti's *Viaggio*, supposes this man to be the same with the dedicator of the monument, and to have passed into the service of Claudius on the death of Caligula. That this was so is very likely, but there is no authority to support it. But, although the name Narcissus was by no means uncommon, it is little probable that it was borne successively by two favourites of two successive Emperors. The assumption of Dr. Labus is therefore very possibly correct.^b

The vow to the *Matronæ* may have been fulfilled on the occasion of the recovery of Caligula from serious illness soon after his accession. He was then a favourite, and, in the general sorrow of the people for his illness, some of his friends, as we learn from Suetonius,^c distinguished their loyalty by offering to expose their lives on the Arena, while others offered to die outright, that is, they vowed their lives to the infernal deities in exchange for the Emperor's. Caligula, however, proved a stickler in such matters, and compelled them to fulfil these vows.^d

Before taking leave of our subject a few words may be permitted on the inveterate error which still exists of assuming the *Deæ Matres* and the *Matronæ* to be but synonymous and interchangeable terms. It is necessary to point this out, for the cults of the *Deæ Matres* and the *Matronæ*, though very analogous, were in truth perfectly distinct. The former cult is a very ancient one, and, I think,

^a Μέγιστον τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων δυνηθείς. κ. τ. λ. Dion. Cass. ix. 34.

^b Professor Hübner considers Narcissus to have been the imperial *villicus* here, which is probable enough. *Archäologische Zeitung*, Jahrgang xxxiv. 1876.

^c Lib. iv. 14.

^d Suetonius, iv. 27.

derivable from classical sources—certainly Grecian, probably Oriental. I am not aware that a direct mention of the *Matronæ* occurs in any classical writer, though, if my deductions be admitted, they may represent a metamorphosis of the *Junones*. The chief difference between them seems to have been the belief that the *Matres* were a higher and more powerful class of divinities—perchance more difficult to be propitiated.^a

Thus, while we see the *Matronæ* invoked for the protection and welfare of individuals, villages, and towns,^b the *Deæ Matres*, besides all this, appear in inscriptions as the ladies patronesses, not only of certain nations,^c but even of *all* nations.^d

The mistake, no doubt, has arisen from the circumstance of the sculptured representations of both classes of divinities, where they usually appear as triads. It is curious how the human mind is always attracted by the fatal number three.^e The female triads of the Syrens, the Graces, the Fates, and even the Furies have all in turn been put forward as the originals of the cult. Indeed Professor Rupert Jones once wrote a very good paper in support of his conviction that the *Deæ Matres* were none other than our old friends the classic Eumenides.^f Our Italian five-figured examples tend to dispose of the mysticism of the triads.^g But though the mistake may have been in some sense venial it cannot but be

^a In the Inscriptiones Gall. Cis. No. 6,594, is a dedication—

MATRONIS

INDVLGENTIBVS.

^b The dolphins sculptured on the Rödigen *Matronenstein*, already referred to, may be symbolical of a belief in their power over the sea as well as land.

^c

MATRIB

ITALIS GER

MANIS

GAL · BRIT.

From an altar from Winchester, now in the British Museum. *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. iv. pl. 14. Corp. Inscr. Rom. vii. p. 16. No. 5. See also the same work. No. 238.

^d

MATRIBVS

OMNIVM

GENTIVM.

From Cumberland. *Coll. Ant.* vol. iv. p. 42. Corp. Inscr. Rom. vii. p. 155. No. 887.

^e Ausonius, *De Tern.* Num. Idyl. xi.

^f *British Arch. Association Journ.* vol. ii. p. 315.

^g A rude sculpture on a rock found at Troinex, near Geneva, represents *four* female figures. It bears the name of "Pierre aux Dames." *Anzeiger für Schweizerische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii. p. 336. It would be of interest to know if any of the small bowl-shaped hollows which obtain for the rocks that bear

termed a very careless one. There are sculptured triads of the *Nymphæ* and *Sulevæ*, and it would have been quite as reasonable to have urged that these triads all meant one and the same thing, and might with accuracy be also termed *Matres*, or *Matronæ*—anything to the contrary in the inscriptions notwithstanding. If a difficulty exists it is not to be got rid of by assumptions tantamount to a declaration that the ancients neither knew their own purpose, nor one thing from another.

Sculptured stones, representing single female figures on horseback, are occasionally met with, and have been attributed to the *Matronæ* class—*reitenden Matronen*. In the absence of inscriptions we may more safely assume these to represent *Nehalennia*, or *Hippona*, both of whom were also favourite Romano-Keltic divinities, and always appear thus singly.^a

The triad examples of *Matronensteine* in Rhineland by no means affect uniformity in detail, as will at once be seen on comparison.^b

The more certain mode of proving the diversity of these cults will be to adduce sure evidence where the two will appear in juxta-position.

In 1824, among the ruins of a temple near Thun, in Switzerland, there were found six small votive bronze axes. On each of these was incised the name of a different divinity, as thus :—

IOVI	MERCVRIO
MINERVÆ	NEPTVNO
MATRIBUS	MATRONIS ^c

Here we have proof of a distinct offering to both classes of these divinities, which never could have occurred had they been looked on as identical.

them the name of *pierres à écuellen* or *schalensteine* had ever existed on this stone at Troinex. Such rocks are common in Switzerland, and especially so in Sweden, where they bear the name of *elfstenar*, or the stones of elves or fairies. M. Hans Hildebrand informs us that “la population actuelle de la Suède a encore aujourd’ hui beaucoup de vénération pour ces pierres, dans les écuellen des quelles les campagnards déposent de petites offrandes, par exemple, des aiguilles, des boutons, &c.” *Congrès International d’Anthropologie et d’Archéologie Préhistoriques*. vii. Session. Stockholm. 1874. *Compte Rendu*, p. 487.

On this curious subject also refer to Keller’s “*Schalensteine der Schweiz*,” being the second part of his *Helvetische Denkmäler* in vol. xvii. of the *Mittheilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft* in Zürich. 1874.

^a Lindenschmit’s *Alterthümer*. 2 Band. Heft 1. Tafel 6: also 3 Band. Heft 10. Tafel 3.

^b Compare the monuments from Rödigen, Embken, Wettweis, and others: also the Suabian example from Zazenhausen, near Cannstadt.

^c *Mittheilungen* of the Zürich Society, vol. x. 1854, under “*Inscriptiones Confederationis Helveticæ Latine*,” edited by Dr. Mommsen.

But the very important Lyons inscription ^a cited by Spon, and copied by him from the stone, appears to dispose of the question, and I will give it at full :—

PRO SALVTE DOM
N. IMP. L. SEPT. SEVERI
AVG. TOTIVSQVE DOMVS
EIVS AVFANIS MA
TRONIS ET MATRIBVS
PANNONIORVM ET
DELMATARVM
TI. CL. POMPEIANVS
TRIB. MIL. LEG. I. MIN.
LOCO EXCVLTO CVM
DISCVBITIONE ET TABVLA
V. S. .

This inscription is so precise in all its terms that it leaves no room to doubt that the military tribune Pompeianus, in thus discharging his vows to the *Matronæ* of Ofen ^b and the *Matres* of the Pannonians and Dalmatians, was under the full impression that the two classes of divinities were distinct and independent.

This *Matronæ* cult is a subject of peculiar interest. We can heartily reciprocate the wish of Professor Hübner, that a collection of the known examples of these memorials were made by some learned body, and published with abundant illustrations.^c If the editorship of such a work were committed to Dr. Hübner himself, there is little doubt that much light would be thrown on this obscure subject.

^a Spon, *Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*, p. 106. *Discubito* is an unusual word, referring to the Roman custom of reclining on a couch at dinner. This term, and the mention of the *tabula*, show this monument was inaugurated by a solemn formal feast. The inscription is at Fontaines, canton de Neuville-sur-Saône; see Comarmond, *Musée Lapidaire de Lyon*, p. 427.

^b The Aufanian *Matronæ* seem to have been in repute. Spon, p. 107, gives another inscription in their honour :—

MATRONIS
AVFANIABVS
T. ALBINIVS
IANVARIVS
S. L. M.

Ex Antiquit. Neomag.

^c *Archäologische Zeitung*, p. 66, Jahrgang xxxiv. 1876.

The advent of Christianity would gradually suppress the public cult of the various female divinities of heathendom, but it could not suppress private, and strange, results. Who can say when a deeply-rooted superstition may come to an end?

The legendary poems of the middle ages contain amusing notices of the *Matres*, *Matronæ*, or their congeners. This might well have passed for poetic fancy, but that bishops of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries complain of the superstition their people would persist in of setting apart a portion of the evening meal as a propitiatory offering to certain supernatural females, who, as they believed, visited their houses at night!

Can a wild reminiscence of this kind in the early writers have furnished our Shakespear with the grand idea of the "weird sisters" in Macbeth?

Those who care to follow up the subject will find very much condensed information in the *Deutsche Mythologie* of the learned Jacob Grimm, one time an honorary Fellow of our Society.

Believe me always,

Most truly yours,

W. M. WYLIE.

Blackwater, 5th May, 1876.

NORTH

SOUTH



J. Henry Middleton del.

C. F. Kell, Lith. London.

about 8 ft. to floor

CEILING & NORTH & SOUTH SIDES (IN PLANO) OF CHANCEL: KEMPSEY CHURCH.

about 8 ft. to floor