ARCTOS

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"*TITULUM NON REPPERI*": THE IDENTIFICATION OF AN *ALIENUM* IN CANTERBURY WITH A MISSING INSCRIPTION FROM MÉRIDA (*RIB* 2328* = *CIL* II 585)

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Introduction

Any visitor to the Canterbury Roman Museum with a keen interest in epigraphy will be rather disappointed by its collection. There are some fragmentary pieces containing a few letters, and only one fully preserved altar-shaped epitaph, which contains a commemoration to a young girl by her parents (*RIB* 2328*).[1] The altar itself is rather small as it measures only 36cm (height) by 15cm (width) by 6cm (thickness). It is made out of a single piece of marble. It

[1]   The scarcity of epigraphic evidence found in and around Canterbury is also noticeable in the *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (*RIB*). Only one other fully preserved inscription is mentioned, an epitaph of similar dimensions and typology, allegedly discovered in the small village of Petham (*RIB* 2324*) in the 1840s. There are strong indications that this altar is not Romano-British. It is quite plausible that there is a link between both *aliena* from Canterbury. *RIB* 2324* will be discussed in a forthcoming article by the same author. These new findings have been communicated to Roger Tomlin, who subsequently added them to the *addenda et corrigenda* for the inscriptions in *Britannia* (2015, 408).

has the shape of a traditional votive altar, but the inscription reveals its funerary use. The pediment has the form of a rectangular cuboid with a central triangular *tympanum*, accompanied by a rounded *acroterium* on either side, and contains the funerary formula *D(is) M(anibus) S(acrum)*. The actual base of the altar is ornamentally separated from the pediment and the plinth by mouldings with a pattern of half ovals. It contains the rest of the funerary inscription. The height of the letters varies between 1.6 and 2.5cm and all the words are separated by means of small triangular punctuation marks in the middle of the line. The back of the base suffered some minor damage. A rectangular opening has been cut in the plinth and the sides and the back of the altar do not contain any ornamental elements.

An Italian Connection?

The origin of this particular find has always puzzled scholars. The recorded archaeological details relating to the artefact can be described as scarce and vague at best. Only a general geographical indication ("Canterbury"), as well as an attempt at dating the find ("about 1860") have been recorded.[2] Although the altar had apparently come to light prior to the publication of the seventh volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) in 1873, it was not included by E. Hübner in this edition.[3] The Canterbury altar's first mention in a publication was by J. Brent in his 1875 guide to the collections of the Museum of the Philosophical and Literary Institution of Canterbury.[4] The altar was subsequently moved in 1898 to the newly formed Beaney Institute, and for a second time in 1994, when it was relocated to the Canterbury Roman Museum. Prior to its publication in the *RIB*, we find only three further references. The first of these was by R.F. Jessup in 1930, followed by its appearance in the

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[2] This is the information as it appears in the *RIB*, both in the printed edition of 1965, as well as in the updated version on the *RIB* website (*https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/*).

[3] The inscription's omission was due to the simple fact that the altar was unknown to Hübner at the time of publication.

[4] Brent 1875, 29. The epitaph is described – almost paradoxically – as a 'monumental tablet' and Brent provided a heavily erroneous transcription of the text, as well as a translation of his transcription and the exact location within the museum. There is no information on the altar's discovery, nor on how it came into the collections of the museum.

third volume of *The Victoria History of the County of Kent* (*VCH*) in 1932.[5] The altar also appeared in the 1948 *Quarterly Bulletin of the Canterbury Museum and Library*, along with a photograph.[6] Finally, in 1965 it was included among the so-called *aliena* in the first volume of the *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright.[7]

In all these publications there was to a certain extent a consensus on the altar's provenance. It was deemed a modern-day import from the continent, probably from Italy.[8] The grounds for such a claim are rather flimsy, because any substantial information about the archaeological context for the monument is lacking and there are no similar finds from the area around Canterbury.[9] If the hypothesis of an Italian origin is looked at more closely, a number of problems arise that render it rather unconvincing. First of all, an Italian provenance could not be confirmed by the presence of the inscription in *CIL*. Moreover, the material used – Luna marble – is not an irrefutable piece of evidence for its provenance, because its use was by no means restricted to Roman Italy.[10]

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[5] Jessup 1930, 199 no. 1; Mortimer Wheeler 1932, 80. Interestingly, the stone itself is described as calcareous limestone. There is also a reference to Brent's guide (cf. *supra*), highlighting his inaccurate transcription.

[6] Jenkins 1948, 26 (photograph) and 29.

[7] *RIB* 2328*. The entry contains details about the inscription's support, the diplomatic text as well as a supplemented transcription and the drawing made by Wright in 1948.

[8] Jessup (1930, 199 n.1) mentioned that Collingwood believed the altar to have been imported from Italy. Mortimer Wheeler (1932, 80) described it as being "of uncertain origin", offering Rome, Italy, Gaul or even a local production as possibilities. Jenkins (1948, 29) mentioned that it was found "about 1860" and that Collingwood had classed it as "an import from Italy in modern times". Finally, in the *RIB*, Wright (1965, *RIB* 2328*) reiterated Collingwood's hypothesis of an Italian origin based on the commemorator's *gentilicium* and *cognomen*, which are also found in *CIL* VI 24443. This presumption seems to have been further founded on the type of marble the altar has been carved out of. The claim of it being Italian Luna marble by Wright in the *RIB*, however, was purely based on the visual examination of the altar.

[9] There are twenty-five inscriptions mentioned in the *RIB* for Canterbury and the surrounding area, all of which are small fragments.

[10] The geochemical analysis of the stone using a portable XRF-scanner revealed that the material is marble, yet its provenance could not be ascertained through this method. Given the identification of the altar as originating from Lusitania (cf. *infra*), it is quite possible that the marble had been sourced locally (for a detailed study on the types of marble found in Mérida, see Lapuente *et al.* 2014, 333–353; for the geochemistry of local Lusitanian marbles, see Taelman *et al.* 2013, 2227–2236).

Finally, and most importantly, neither the linguistic elements of the inscription have been subjected to any comparative study, nor has there been a thorough onomastic analysis which could provide further leads with regards to the altar's provenance.

Identification with *CIL* II 585 from Mérida

In the 1833 *Annual Report of the Canterbury Philosophical & Literary Institution* it is mentioned that William Henry Baldock *Esq*.[11] donated a "Roman *cippus* found at Mérida with inscription as described in the *History of Mérida* 1633 page 57 which accompanies it"[12] to the Museum of the Royal Philosophical and Literary Institute. This '*cippus*' can be identified as the altar which is currently in the Canterbury Roman Museum (*RIB* 2328*). This vital information allows for the positive identification of the altar with a presumed lost inscription from Mérida (*CIL* II 585).[13] As a result, it is possible to merge the traditions of *RIB* 2328* and *CIL* II 585 and to examine both the inscription and the formal aspects of the altar in a new light.

The text of the inscription should be supplemented as follows:

On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that it is indeed Luna marble. Its use was by no means limited to Roman Italy, as this highly valued material was exported to the provinces, especially those with a high percentage of (descendants of) Roman colonists, such as Lusitania and Baetica (Russell 2013, 154–158).

[11] William Henry Baldock was director of the Institution from 1828 and patron from 1831. He was the nephew of William Baldock. The latter had obtained great wealth through real estate and smuggling (Bateman 1984, 81; Waugh 1985, 53). William Henry was the main beneficiary of his uncle's substantial legacy, yet his will (*National Archives* PROB 11/1540/198) does not reveal any information about the Canterbury altar. Therefore, it seems likely that William Henry purchased the altar prior to its donation to the museum.

[12] Masters *et al.* 1833, 15. The discovery of this report was made by Ken Reedie, the former curator of the Canterbury Museums. The donation was also recorded in the Kentish Gazette of Tuesday, July 16th 1833: "Amongst the objects that have recently been received [...] a marble with its inscription perfect, from the Roman City of Mérida [...] by [...] W.H. Baldock, *Esq.*"

[13] After having been included by Hübner in the second *CIL* volume, the inscription was later edited by Vives (1971, 393 no. 4106) and by García Iglesias (1973, 674–675 no. 377).

> *D(is) M(anibus) S(acrum) / P(ompeiae?) Val(eriae) Maxi/minae*
> *ann(orum) / VI Opp(ia) Vale/ria et S(extus) Pom(peius?) /*
> *Capratinus / filiae pienti/ssimae f(aciendum) c(uraverunt) s(it)*
> *t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)*

The altar itself is a typical example of a funerary monument from Mérida.[14] Its formal aspects and both the terminology and palaeography of the inscription allow for an approximate dating to late second or early third century.[15] Regarding the actual inscription, there are a number of observations that need to be made. The first one concerns the *cognomen* of the deceased girl. There is no doubt that this should be read as *MAXIMINAE*.[16] With regard to the abbreviated *gentilicia VAL* and *OPP*, it is unequivocally clear that these should be interpreted as *Val(eriae)* and *Opp(ia)*.[17] A more problematic question, however, is the way in which the names of both the deceased daughter and her commemorating father should be supplemented. Collingwood and Wright suggested *P(ublia)* for the daughter's *praenomen*,[18] whereas Hübner proposed *P(ompeiae)*. Although the *praenomen* '*Publia*' was used during the late Republic and into the Imperial

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[14] Small altars with a relatively narrow thickness are typical for Lusitania. The pediment in the form of a rectangular cuboid in which the decorative elements have been carved out, is not uncommon, especially for smaller altars. Decorative elements, such as garlands, or depictions of a *patera* and jug, although frequently found on this type of monument, are lacking on the Canterbury altar. On the typology of funerary altars from Mérida, see Vedder 2001, 105–120.

[15] A combination of the altar's typology (Vedder 2001, 119–120; Edmondson 2007, 463), the use of the superlative *pientissimus* (Curchin 1982, 179), and the formal characteristics of letters, e.g. the vertical and parallel strokes of the letter *M*, allow for it to be dated to the last decades of the second century or the first half of the third century C.E.

[16] In both the transcription and the drawing of the epitaph, the editors of the *RIB* incorrectly read *Maximina*, as did Mortimer Wheeler (1932, 80) and Jenkins (1948, 29). Autoptic analysis, however, clearly reveals a ligature of the *A* and *E* (a similar ligature of the *M*, *A* and *E* is visible in *pientissimae*). Hübner, on the other hand, offers the correct diplomatic text for *CIL* II 585.

[17] The deceased girl's second *gentilicium* is identical to that of the mother, i.e. *Valeria*. The mother's first *gentilicium* is to be supplemented as *Oppia*. Although this abbreviation is uncommon for the feminine form, it is frequently found for *Oppius*. None of the previous editors have raised any doubts on both these abbreviated forms.

[18] As did Brent (1875, 29) – although he believed the deceased to be a young boy called "*Publius Valerius Maximinianus* [*sic*]" – and Mortimer Wheeler (1932, 80), the latter claiming "irregularities in the nomenclature".

period, a feminine form of the father's gentile name seems more likely.[19] The difficulty, however, lies in the father's *gentilicium* which is abbreviated to *POM*. This seems to be intended for either *Pom(peius)* or *Pom(ponius)*.[20] Although the first gentile name is more common throughout the Roman Empire than the latter, there is not enough evidence to ascertain its precise identity. As a consequence there are also two possible names for the deceased girl, *Pompeia* or *Pomponia Capratina*.[21] As far as the *cognomina* in this inscription are concerned, *Maximina* is frequently found, whereas *Capratinus* is considerably less common.[22]

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[19] Kajava provides a number of examples for the use of the *praenomen* 'Publia', from both the Republican and Imperial period (1995, 63 and 181–188). For the Imperial period, however, half of the inscriptions with the *praenomen* 'Publia' are restricted to the *gentilicium* 'Aelia' (Kajava 1995, 220) and in 90% of all cases the *praenomen* is the feminine form of that of the father (*Id*. 226). Neither of these conditions is fulfilled in the case of this inscription. It thus seems less likely that *P* should be supplemented as *Publia*, especially given the fact that the father's *nomen* starts with *POM*, that the young girl also bears the *nomen* of her mother and that a *praenomen* for the mother is missing.

[20] Hübner (1869, *CIL* II 585), Mortimer Wheeler (1932, 80), Wright (1965, *RIB* 2328*) and García Iglesias (1976, 675) all suggested that *POM* should be supplemented as *Pompeius* rather than as *Pomponius*. Jenkins (1948, 26), on the other hand, proposed *Pomponius*, albeit with some doubt. Theoretically, any *nomen* beginning with *POM* is conceivable (Kajava 1995, 185 n. 385; for an overview of all the possible *gentilicia*, see Solin *et al.* 1994², 146). For all gentile names, with the exception of *Pompeius* and *Pomponius*, this inscription would be the only instance in which it is abbreviated to *POM*, as there are no cases where the concordance can be undeniably ascertained thanks to the presence of other onomastic elements. The fact that the father's *nomen* is abbreviated suggests that it was a common *gentilicium*.

[21] There are only two cases in which the abbreviation *POM* can be supplemented with absolute certainty to *Pompeius*, due to the presence of an unabbreviated *gentilicium* elsewhere in the inscription (*CIL* II 5795 and *CIL* VIII 8601; in *CIL* VI 24495 = *CIL* XI 7829 both *POM* and *Pompeius* are found for spouses). There are equally only two instances where *Pomponius* is undoubtedly abbreviated to *POM* (*CIL* VI 36150 and *CIL* VIII 12013; *CIL* XIII 1092 has both *POM* and *Pomponius* and refers to spouses). The abbreviation *P* can, without any doubt, be supplemented as *Pompeius* in four cases (*CIL* II 3617 = *CIL* II 3926; *CIL* III 2472; *CIL* X 8043 74 = *CIL* XV 1372; *CIL* XIII 65), whereas for the alternative *Pomponius*, there is one instance (*CIL* III 4234).

[22] Kajanto (1965, 113–114) notes that the suffix *-inus/a* is often found in *cognomina* of children, derived from those of the parents (which is not the case here), yet *Maximinus/a* is not to be considered a deminutive form of *Maximus/a*. There is no distinct geographical pattern for the use of these names, although there is a higher concentration in the Danubian and African provinces. With regard to *Capratinus/a*, Kajanto (1965, 220) lists eleven occurences in the *CIL*, eight men and three women. To this list should be added a *Murria Capratina* from Conimbriga in Lusitania (Etienne

The formulae *D(is) M(anibus) S(acrum)*, *F(aciendum) C(uraverunt)* and *S(it) T(ibi) T(erra) L(evis)* do not create any interpretational issues.[23]

From Mérida to Canterbury

The identification of *RIB* 2328* with *CIL* II 585 has allowed for a reconstruction of the altar's history going back as far as 1633. It was first described by Bernabé Moreno de Vargas in his *Historia de la Ciudad de Mérida* published in 1633.[24] Five years later, the epitaph was mentioned by Juan Gomez Bravo in his *Advertencias á la Istoria (sic) de Mérida*.[25] More than a century later, Luis José Velázquez de Velasco, the marqués de Valdeflores, recorded it twice in his notes.[26] Around the same time, it was mentioned by José Alsinet.[27] Furthermore, a 19th century copy of an apograph has survived, made by an anonymous hand in 1757 in which the inscription had also been recorded.[28] The next mention of the altar and the epitaph was by Agustín Francisco Forner y Segarra, between

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et al. 1976, 84 no. 60). In geographical terms, the occurrences are almost exclusively restricted to either Rome (*CIL* VI 975, *CIL* VI 6061, *CIL* VI 24443, *CIL* VI 35354 and *CIL* VI 37685) or the Spanish provinces (*CIL* II 585 = *RIB* 2328*, *CIL* II 2056, *CIL* II 3300, *CIL* II 4145 and the above mentioned inscription from Conimbriga). From this evidence it seems that the in origin 'Roman' *cognomen* had migrated along with Roman colonists to the Spanish provinces.

[23]   It is remarkable that these *formulae* have never triggered any hypothesis of a Spanish origin. Both *D(is) M(anibus) S(acrum)* and *S(it) T(ibi) T(erra) L(evis)* are typical 'Iberian' *formulae*. Of all the occurrences of both appearing in the same inscription, the vast majority are from Roman Spain. The Clauss-Slaby dataset (*EDCS*) offers 1,174 occurrences of which 1,079 (91.91%) are from the Spanish provinces.

[24]   Moreno de Vargas 1633, f. 57v and f. 58r. See also Morán Sánchez 2009, 68–76.

[25]   Bravo 1638, f. 11r. See also Morán Sánchez 2009, 77–79.

[26]   Velázquez mentioned the altar twice in his *Observaciones sobre las antiguedades de Extremadura de León* (*BAH* E-22, 64, f. 13 and 25). On his travels through Spain and their importance to the archaeology of Extramadura in particular, see Canto 1994, 499–516 and Morán Sánchez 2009, 91–94.

[27]   *BNE* Ms. 8729, f. 8v (no. 31). On the survival of Alsinet's apographs and their importance, see Hübner 1869, 54 and Hernando Sobrino 2005, 74–77. On the erudite Alsinet, see Morán Sánchez 2009, 90–91.

[28]   *Cod. Vat. lat.* 9760 f. 7 "*schedae Amati 8*". See also Buonocore 1988, 71.

1759 and 1770.[29] In 1778 the inscription appeared in the eighth volume of Antonio Ponz's (1725–1792) monumental *Viage de España*, with an indication of its location.[30] Subsequently, in 1782, Francisco Pérez Bayer recorded the epitaph still located in its original location.[31] It seems from the tradition that Bayer was the last person to have observed the inscription still *in situ*. It is quite possible that it disappeared shortly after this time, before re-emerging in 1833 in Canterbury.[32]

The period of forty-nine years for which there does not seem to be any trace of the altar, coincides with both the first systematic archaeological excavations under Manuel de Villena Moziño (1791–1794)[33] and the tumultuous years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. The city of Mérida and its population suffered terribly during the Peninsular War (1807–1814).[34] The inscription itself was only recorded again in 1825 by Gregorio Fernández y Pérez, but the errors in the transcription clearly reveal that he used an older publication rather than the actual altar.[35] This strongly

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[29] Forner y Segarra's manuscript was only rediscovered in 1842 and published for the first time in 1893. The dating of 1759–1770 is based on a number of references present in this work (Morán Sánchez 2009, 95–99).

[30] Ponz 1778, 137. On his travels through Extremadura, see Morán Sánchez 2009, 102–106.

[31] Pérez Bayer's *Diario del Viaje que hizo desde Valencia a Andalucía y Portugal en 1782* is preserved in two manuscripts (*BNE* Ms. 5954 and *RAH* Ms. 9/5498). The Canterbury altar appears on f. 280v and f. 281r. On his travels, see Salas Álvarez 2007, 20–21 and n. 21 and Morán Sánchez 2009, 106–108.

[32] It should be noted that none of the subsequent authors writing about Roman antiquities, were aiming at editing all the inscriptions still visible in Mérida. Fernando Rodríguez (1794–1797), Alexandre de Laborde (1800–1805), Hermógenes Galavís (1810), Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez (1832) and Richard Ford (1832) all opted for a selection in line with the aim of their works (Morán Sánchez 2009, 113–147). The absence of the Canterbury altar in all of these anthologies might be due to the fact that the inscription was no longer *in situ* as early as the end of the 18th century.

[33] On Manuel de Villena Moziño and his excavation, see Morán Sánchez 2009, 108–113.

[34] Daly 2013, 77. As a town with many Roman remains it was beloved among the British officers, and as such it was described in many diaries of veterans of this war. In none of these accounts, however, is there any mention of the Canterbury altar. In fact, inscriptions are hardly ever mentioned, let alone transcribed. In most diaries the remnants of great Roman buildings take the centre stage, not the smaller objects.

[35] Fernández y Pérez 1857, 85 n. 11. His transcription reveals that he did not observe the inscription himself, but that he had copied Moreno's version (and not Ponz's, as Hübner claims). This is clear

suggests that the Canterbury altar was no longer in its original location at that time.

The abovementioned series of publications started by Moreno y Vargas in 1633, allows for a reconstruction of the altar's whereabouts in Mérida until 1782. Its formal characteristics and its precise location have been recorded five times during that period. In 1633,[36] Moreno de Vargas described the epitaph as:

> "en la Calle de la Concepción, en la pared de la casa del doctor Suarez de Azebedo, que aora es de Albaro de la Peña, piedra pequeña"[37]

Over a century later, in the early 1750s, Alsinet included the following indication in his manuscript:

> "In vico de la Concepción, in domo quae format angulum coram Arco Traiani in pariete circa fenestram residet fixus laspis [*sic*] in formam arulae cum sequenti inscriptione."[38]

Writing between 1759 and 1770, Forner y Segarra supported Alsinet's claim:

> "Permanece este pequeño y hermoso cipo en la calle de la Concepción, en la pared de la casa que hace esquina á la calle del Arco de Santiago."[39]

In 1778, according to Antonio Ponz, the building had a specific function:

> "In una pared de la casa donde esta el correo."[40]

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from the *CAPRATINV* and *PIENTISSIME* (*CAPRATINVS* and *PIENTISSIMAE* in Ponz).

[36] This is the date *post quem* when the inscription was in the location mentioned by Moreno de Vargas. A native of Mérida, he returned in 1615 to his hometown after his father's death. Therefore, the actual observation of the epitaph was made somewhere between 1615 and the publication of his *Historia de la Ciudad de Mérida*.

[37] Moreno y Vargas 1633, f. 57v.

[38] *BNE* Ms. 8729, f. 8v.

[39] Forner y Segarra 1893, 100.

[40] Ponz 1778, 137.

And in 1782, Pérez Bayer had made it clear that it was still the same building:

> "Siguiendo nuestro camino en la calle de la Concepción en la casa
> de los correos vi y copié lo siguiente."[41]

Moreno, Alsinet and Forner clearly mentioned that it was a small altar. In regard to its location, all five records refer to the fact that the altar was located in the outer wall of a building. Moreno, Alsinet, and Bayer provided the indication that the house was located in the *Calle de la Concepción*, which is indeed, as Alsinet stated, close to the Arch of Trajan (also called the *Arco de San Jago* or *Santiago*). Both Alsinet and Forner specified that the house was on the corner of the *Calle de le Concepciòn* and the present-day *Calle de Trajano,* and Alsinet even provided details in regards to its location around a window, possibly a part of a stone frame.

The vicinity of the Arch of Trajan was deemed worthy of being mentioned by both Alsinet and Forner. This monument had attracted the attention of travellers and artists. A number of drawings of this monument and its surroundings were made in the late 18th and early 19th century. Unfortunately, there is no trace of the altar in any of these.[42] At present, the original building is no longer extant as the topography around the Arch of Trajan completely changed during the 19th century.[43] With regard to the building itself, Moreno included the names of the current and former owners, and Ponz and Bayer specified that the building was used by the royal Spanish postal services in the last decades of the 18th century.

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[41] *BNE* Ms. 5954 f. 280v–281r.

[42] A number of drawings were made at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century that are of interest (Pozzi 2008, 26–33). Alexandre de Laborde's drawing (1811, 114; plate CLX) seems the most accurate representation, but the buildings of interest are not visible as the point of view is oriented to the south, rather than to the southeast.

[43] To my knowledge, there are no drawings or photographs of the building made after 1833 of the house in which the altar had been built. The nearby *Convento de las Concepcionistas* was seriously damaged during the several occupations of Mérida by the French imperial forces (1809–1812) during the Peninsular War (Checa *et al.* 1998, 109–128). The municipal archives of 1816 mentioned that the convent was one of the many destroyed buildings in the city (Lozano Bartolozzi 1997, 146). It is likely that the adjacent houses did not survive this tumultuous period in the city's history unharmed. For this reason and given the perfect condition of the Canterbury altar, there is a strong indication that by the time of this event the artefact had been relocated.

These valuable reports provide indisputable evidence that the altar remained in the same location between 1633 and 1782. With regard to its subsequent whereabouts, there still remain a number of questions. It would be tempting to conjecture some answers, but the lack of any evidence allows for no credible hypotheses to be formulated. One element is certain, however: the altar itself had sufficient inherent appeal for it to be removed from its original location and ultimately to make its way to Canterbury.

Conclusion

It is beyond any doubt that *RIB* 2328* can be positively identified as the missing *CIL* II 585 from Mérida in Spain. This identification amends the date of the apparent discovery, as the altar had been in Britain since at least 1833. This is over a quarter of a century earlier than previously assumed. Furthermore, the hypothesis of a local or Italian provenance can, for once and for all, be dismissed. The long tradition mentioned by Emil Hübner in the second *CIL* volume takes the history of this piece back into the early 17th century. Based on the *formulae* used, the small altar should be considered a local production from Mérida. It obtained a new function when it was reused inside the outer wall of a building close to the arch of Trajan. It remained there at least until 1782, after which time there is no longer any record until it resurfaced in Canterbury in 1833. In that year, William Henry Baldock donated the altar to the predecessor of the present-day Roman Museum in Canterbury, the city in which it has been residing ever since.

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Fig. 1: 'Canterbury Altar' (*RIB* 2328* = *CIL* II 585) Image Lloyd Bosworth
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