

# A Temple of Isis

---

A temple to the great Egyptian goddess Isis was tantalizingly suggested by the discovery of an earthenware jug at Southwark on the opposite side of the Thames from the Londinium settlement, close to the line of the Watling Street through Cantium. This object was inscribed with the words LONDINI AD FANVM ISIDIS or "From London at the temple of Isis", and has been dated to the latter half of the second century. It was not until the mid-1970's that a Roman altarstone dedicated to the goddess was finally discovered (vide RIB 39b infra).

IN H D D M MARTIANNIVS PVLCHER V C LEG AVGG PRO PRAET TEMPLM ISIDIS  
C...TIS VETVSTATE COLLAPBSVM RESTITVI PRAECEPT

"In tribute, a gift donated by Marcus Martiannius Pulcher, most honourable of men, propraetorian legate of the emperors, who restored this temple to Isis, which had collapsed through old age and lay in ruins."

(RIB 39b; altarstone; dated: c.3rd century; Britannia vii (1976), p.378-9, no.2)

Altar to the Mother Goddesses from Across the Sea

DEA • MATRIBVS TRAN[s] MARINIS

PATRIS AVRELIVS IUVENALIS • S[acrum]

"To the holy Mother Goddesses

from his fatherland across the sea

Aurelius Juvenalis (makes this offering)."

(RIB 1318; relief of Mother Goddesses)

NGRef: SO9904

OSMap: LR163

Type: Substantial Roman Buildings

Roads

NW (14) to [GLEVVV](#) (Gloucester, Gloucestershire)

SE (2æ) to [CORINIVM](#) (Cirencester, Gloucestershire)

There are two Latin inscriptions recorded in the R.I.B. for Daglingworth, a religious text dedicated to the Mother Goddesses and the Local Spirit (vide RIB 130 infra), and a 'gabled relief of figures' with an inscription reading CVDAE LO...V... (RIB 129; relief).

Dedication to the Matres and the Genius Locorum

MATRIBVS ET GENIO LOCI ...ILIA...

"For the Mother Goddesses and the Guardian Spirit of this place [...]π"

(RIB 130)

Unfortunately, the dedicators name is damaged and the trailing portion of the text missing.

Carved Relief from Coventina's Temple

This image may represent the goddess in triple-form,

a common occurrence in Celtic mythology

Noted by Horsely in 1786 and excavated in 1876 by John Clayton, this forty foot square temple housed a natural well-spring, situated in the centre of the building and enclosed by a low stone receptacle with an interior dimension of about seven feet square. The temple building was roofed-over and contained a large number of carved stone altars, which were presumably arranged against the inside walls of the structure.

There are ten altarstones to the water-nymph Coventina, including those dedicated by four auxiliary infantry units; Coh V Raetorum (vide RIB [1529](#) supra), Coh I Batavorum (vide RIB [1534 & 1535](#) supra), Coh I Cugernorum (vide RIB [1524](#) supra) and Coh I Frisiavonum (vide RIB [1523](#) supra), plus two other undefined stones (RIB 1527 infra & [1534](#) supra) and two clay incense burners (RIB 1530/1531 etiam infra).

Altarstones Dedicated to the Goddess Coventina

Inscription

Togo-Translation

RIB

DEAE CONVENTINAE BELLICVS VSLM

"To the goddess Coventina, Bellicus willingly and deservedly fulfills a vow."

1522

DIE COVENTINE ARELIVS CROTVS GERMAN

"For the goddess Coventina, Arelius Crotus the German [made this]."

1525

DEAE NIMFAE COVENTINE MADVHVS GERM POS PRO SE ET SVIS VSLM

"To the goddess, the nymph Coventina, Maduhus the German, placed this for himself and his family, willingly and deservedly fulfilling a vow."

1526

DAE COVEN VINOMATHVS VSLM

"For the goddess Coventina, Vinomathus willingly and deservedly fulfils a vow."

1528

DEAE COVETINE CROTVS VT LBES SOLVI PRO M SA

"For the goddess Coventina, Crotus and his freedmen, fulfilled for the health of the soldiers."

1532

DEAE SANC COVONTINE VINCENTIVS PRO SALVTE SVA V L L M D

"For the most-holy goddess Coventina. Vicentius, for her well-being, an offering freely, gladly and deservedly given."

1533

Two Earthenware Incense Burners Inscribed by Saturninus and Gabinius

GABIVNS IF EL CSI SATVRNI

COVETINA AGVSTA VOTV MANIBVS SVIS SATVRNINVS FECIT GABINIVS

"On this side of the Infernal (region) and the Elysian (fields).π Gabinius. Saturninus."

"Coventina Augusta. Offering to your shades. Saturninus and Gabinius have made this."

(RIB 1530)

(RIB 1531)

Based on the tentative expansion I[n]F[erni] EL[ysii] CIS (sic).

A Dedicatory Inscription to the Nymph Coventina

NIMPHAE COVENTINAE ...TIANVS DECVRIO ...SLE...V ... M

"To the Nymph Coventina [...]tianus the decurion [...] a vow [fulfilled freely and] deservedly."

(RIB 1527)