

VI. *Part of a Letter from Mr. Halley at Chester, October 26th, 1696. giving an Account of an Animal resembling a Whelp voided per Anum, by a Male Greyhound, and of a Roman Altar found there, &c.*

THE Account the Society had from Dr. Wallis about a Year since of a Greyhound Dog, that voided an Animal, resembling a Whelp *per anum*, as strange and incredible as it may seem, is yet here steadfastly believed; and the Creature was kept for some time in Spirit of Wine, having lived for some short time after it came into the World: and it was seen alive by Mr. Roberts of the Society, then in *Chester*. They say it exactly resembled a Greyhound-Whelp, and had on its side a large spot, in the same place as the Dog it proceeded from, had such another; and that with it was voided a whitish mucous Matter, so that the People here will not permit me to question the truth thereof. Mr. Roberts who saw it at first, can best judge what Credit this uncouth Story Merits. But this is certain, That it cost the Dog his Life, to gratifie the Curiosity of some Gentlemen here, who Dissected him, but were disappointed of their Expectations. For my own part, as I am determin'd *nihil temere credere*; so on the other hand, as I dare not pretend to limit the Powers of Nature, I suspend my Opinion, laying only before you what credible Witnesses do assert.

I this Morning got a sight of an Altar-piece, dug up here about three Years since, and took the Inscription thereof which is pretty entire, but roughly cut in the Stone of the place, which is soft and moldring

molding, nor capable of long continuance when it is exposed to the Air: It has the following Inscription.

PRO. SAL. DOMIN  
 ----IM • N N INVI  
 CTISSIMORVM  
 AVGG. GENIOLOCI  
 FLAVIVS LONG—*I suppose VS there*  
 TRIB. MIL. LEG XX. *not being room*  
 LONGINUS FLA *for INVS.*  
 VIVS DOMO  
 SAMOSATA  
 V. S.

By the Title of *Domini nostri* given to the Emperors, it appears, that this Inscription was of the *Bas Empire*, not before *Dioclesian*, nor yet so late as *Theodosius*, it being Pagan. The Stone it self is about Thirty two Inches high, Sixteen in breadth, and Nine thick; On the one end is Engraven, not very curiously, the Resemblance of a Genius, holding a *Cornu Copia*; on the other is a Flower-pot somewhat better performed, but a little endamaged by the softness of the Stone. The backside opposite to the Inscription, is adorned with a pretty sort of *Feuillage*, designed to fill up the vacant space. On the top in a pretty deep Cavity, is a full Face of a Man, almost such as they Paint the Sun or Full Moon withal, with a Cap upon his Head, of which as yet I cannot comprehend the Design; I submit it to the Disquisition of the Society; and if it be thought requisite, I will more particularly inspect and describe this Stone, which is in the Custody of one Mr. *Prescot* here, a great lover of Antiquity, and who has several Curiosities by him, which I am promised to peruse.

The Stone of this place, which is soft, reddish, grit, and very friable, with shining Particles intermixt, is very apt to decay with the Weather. so that all Old Buildings are very much defaced thereby, and the Walls which are Built thereof, are so frequently out of Repair, that they have Officers on purpose, whom they call *Murengers*, who do gradually reset them, where they are most worn out; in some places the Stone is in a manner moulded away like Sammel Bricks in a Wall, leaving the Mortar standing. In these Stones, and the Quarries from whence they came. I have diligently sought for Shells, or other Animal Substances, such as are often found in other places, but hitherto have found no such things: But the Stone is generally intersperst with Pebbles and small Flints, which, as the Stone decays, do discover themselves within it, as if they had been lodged in the Sand, whereof the Stone consists before its Induration.

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