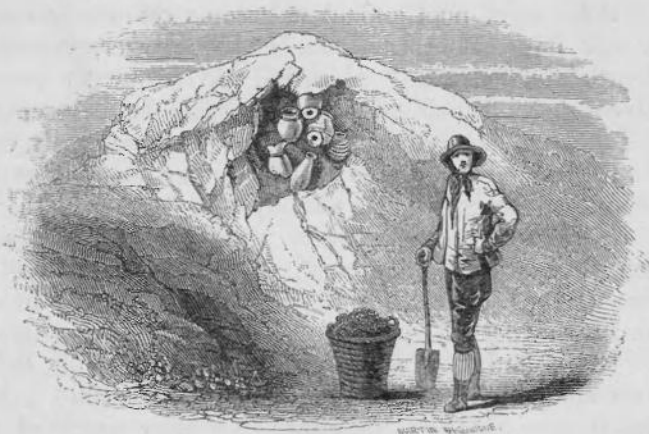


ICENIA : NOTICES OF ROMAN REMAINS, AND EVIDENCES OF
OCCUPATION, DISCOVERED IN NORFOLK.

*Communicated by the REV. JOHN GUNN, in illustration of Roman remains, and drawings,
representing fictile vases, exhibited at the Annual Meeting in Winchester, September, 1845.*

BURGH, near AYLSHAM.



Discovery of Roman urns, at Felmingham.

THIS parish is generally held to have been a Roman station. The late Samuel Woodward, in his map of "Roman Norfolk," places one here, and also a Roman road, as in actual existence. It is remarkable, however, that no coins, urns, or any other Roman remains, have ever, so far as I can learn, been discovered in it. After searching and inquiring in the parish an entire day, I found only one piece of pottery which bore any resemblance to the Roman ware, but this was by no means conclusive evidence. A perfect urn and coin of Faustina were discovered some years since on the borders of Burgh, in Oxnead; but I cannot learn that any vestige of ancient Rome has ever been traced in the parish, except its name.

The absence of Roman memorials is rendered very remarkable by the fact, that sepulchral urns in great abundance, and occasionally coins, are found in almost every adjoining parish, and, on the north and south, through an extent of two or three parishes.

Brampton and Buxton to the south, and Oxnead on the east, furnished Sir Thomas Brown, mainly, with materials for his *Hydriotaphia*.

In 1820, Mr. John Adey Repton wrote an account of the sepulchral urns discovered by him in opening several tumuli upon Stowheath, in Tuttington, to the north^a.

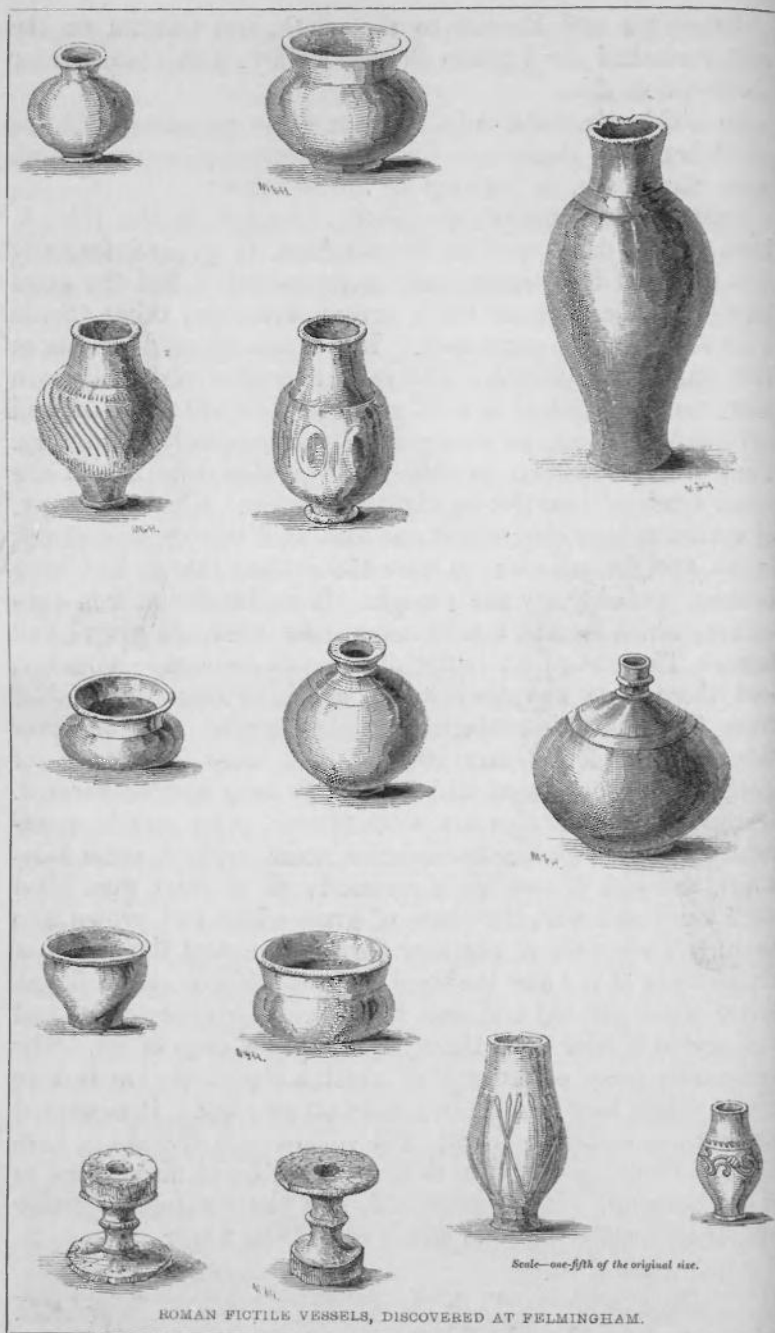
Last year the unique specimens described by the Rev. A. Hart^b, were discovered in Felmingham, in ground formerly also a part of Stowheath; and more recently I had the good fortune to be present when several urns and other vessels were found on the same spot. It is a natural sand-hill, about 150 yards in diameter. The sand had been carted away in part, and the sides of a sand-pit so formed had fallen in, and left them exposed, as shewn in the accompanying drawing. They were seventeen in number, deposited together in the small space of two feet by eighteen inches. The uppermost, of common blue clay, about one foot in diameter, was placed in an upright position, so near the surface that it had been broken, probably, by the plough. It contained an iron substance, which formed a solid mass with indurated gravel and sand. There were no bones or ashes to be seen. Possibly, had there been any, they would not have been discernible, from the oxidization which had taken place. On breaking this mass, I found one coin, a first brass, I believe, of Severus, but the legend had been clipt away and obliterated. Immediately under this urn were fifteen^c other vessels, apparently thrown together in disorder, some upright, some sideways, and one or two quite reversed; all of them were filled with sand and with the roots of grass which had grown into them. They were of ordinary dark clay, except three, two of which were of red and the third of light-coloured earth. These latter were painted red and black, with an ornamented and variegated border upon them, of a very low class of art. The remaining piece of pottery, of which a representation is here given, might have served as a lamp on an altar. It measured about three inches in height. The smaller end appears to have been the base, as the other is more smooth, and discoloured as if by burning. It is perforated, and the aperture at either end is sufficiently large to admit one's little finger.

^a Arch., vol. xvi. p. 354.

^b See his interesting Lectures on the Antiquities of Norfolk and Norwich.

^c One was broken. I found half of it

lying at the bottom of the pit, and the remaining half with the others. The representations here given are drawn to one-fifth of the size of the originals.



There is a striking difference in point of art, and the quality of manufacture, between this deposit of Roman remains, and that described by Mr. Hart. The latter are evidently of a more costly character, and indicate higher rank and dignity. At the same time they agree in other respects. In both there were no remains of bones or ashes—there was a single coin, a brass in the one, and a silver coin of Valerian in the other—and, probably, there were the implements of the individual craft or profession; in the one, apparently a quantity of nails, in the other the utensils of a Soothsayer or of a Flamen.

Mr. Wright, of Buxton Hall, who takes a lively interest in the antiquities of the neighbourhood, lately employed some workmen to excavate the soil in one of his fields in Brampton, on the borders of Buxton and Oxnead. It was a perfectly level spot, near to the place where the discoveries mentioned by Sir Thomas Brown were made. I was present, and witnessed with astonishment the profusion of fragments of sepulchral urns, human and other bones, that were uncovered. The soil was black from frequent interments, and resembled that of a metropolitan church-yard. We noticed the rude attempt to protect the remains by layers of flint stones, measuring about four feet by two feet, and two feet beneath the surface. We found no entire urns, although we were informed that they were frequently met with in this, and also in the parish of Marsham. There were other specimens of pottery besides sepulchral vases.

Mr. Wright has traced an ancient way, leading from this field, through the marshes to the river at Burgh, near Oxnead, which would fall in with a line of road, pointed out to me by the Rev. James Bulwer of Aylsham, to Stratton (*i. e.* “Stratum or Street”) on the south, and to Burgh on the borders of Oxnead; thence direct to Stowheath, and the Tuttington and Felmingham depositories on the north; this line of road will account for the extension of Roman remains to the north and south, rather than to the east and west. It deviates a little to the east from that marked out by Mr. Woodward.

CAISTER, near YARMOUTH.

Spelman placed Garianonum here, where the mouth of the Garienis formerly was; Camden considered it to have been at Burgh, in Suffolk, near the confluence of that river with the Waveney. Spelman urges, in support of his opinion, that the position at Caister is better adapted for the movements of horse,

"Stablesianorum equitum," (which are recorded to have been stationed at the mouth of the Garienis,) than the more insulated and aquatic situation of Burgh. According to Woodward's map of Roman Norfolk, the balance of dry land is very little in favour of either; but, from examinations of the country, I am inclined to believe that there was a free passage along the coast, from Caister to Happisburgh, and that, so far from the sea having receded in that line, it has nearly swallowed up two parishes, viz., Little Waxham and Eccles, and greatly encroached upon others since the Roman period. The finding Roman coins at Eccles, which I have done, and some remains at Horsea, as I am credibly informed, prove that there was such a communication and access along the sea coast. But, however this might be, in one respect Camden decidedly has the advantage. The grandeur of the remains of the camp at Burgh favours his opinion; and, probably, this was the reason why, as Spelman says, "Camdeno Burgh arrisit;" whereas the existence of the walls of a camp at Caister near the sea, mentioned by Spelman, has been questioned, and it has been hinted that he confounded the comparatively modern dwelling-house of the Fastolfes, called Caister castle, with a Roman camp.

Now, in justice to Spelman, I will mention a few facts which I have observed. Fragments of sepulchral urns, of pottery, and of glass, are found very extensively and in great profusion in the parish; I traced them in a line from a quarter of a mile to the north-east, to three quarters of a mile to the south-west. They are found in the greatest abundance in a field on the west of the church, where tradition has fixed the Roman camp. In this spot one can scarcely use a spade without meeting with foundations of buildings, and broken pieces of Roman tiles lie scattered on the surface. The vault, or building of Roman tiles, described by the Rev. Thomas Clowes^a, was discovered here: Roman coins are found in different parts of Caister, but most abundantly in this field. As far as my observation goes, those found at Caister are more ancient than those found at Burgh, which are chiefly of the period of Constantine, whereas coins of M. Antoninus and of Commodus Antoninus are very common at Caister. Among them one of John Zimisce, who succeeded to the empire in A.D. 961, may deserve especial notice, as it appears remark-

^a Gent. Mag., November, 1837.

able that a coin of that period should find its way into this country, at least in accordance with the generally received notion of the entire extinction of the Roman name in this island at that time. Pottery of various descriptions is also found here; a fragment of fine "Samian" ware, on which a hare hunt is represented, is in my possession; also a perfect urn, which was taken from a clay pit on the north-east of the church, half filled with earth and bones: it was covered with a tile, and buried about two feet deep. On the same spot were discovered a large quantity of burnt wood, decayed wood, nails with wood adhering to them, and also a human jaw: the latter is partially fossilized; and the dryness of the soil, similar to that remaining in the urn, will account for its preservation. This may serve to exemplify the well-known fact of the occasional burial of the dead among the Romans, as well as cremation, which appears, however, to have been the more usual, although not the invariable practice.