ON THE DATE OF THE FOUNDATION OF URIOCONIUM AND OF CAERLEON-ON-USK, WITH SOME REMARKS ON THE SITE OF THE OVERTHROW OF CARACTACUS.

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THE foundation of the city of Urioconium in Shropshire, which has of late attracted attention by the remains which excavations have brought to light, may probably be fixed in the times of the campaign of Ostorius Scapula against the British chief Caractacus, about the middle of the first century of the Christian era. The situation of Urioconium, on the borders of the Cornavii, and adjacent to the Silures and Ordovices, placed on the east bank of a noble river navigable up to the walls, together with the extent and importance of the city in after times, gives the impression that it must have been very early chosen as the spot from whence operations could be carried on against that chief, who held the country immediately to the westward. Moreover, the hill within sight of the ancient city still bears the name of Caractacus, being called Caer Caradoc, having been probably held by him as one of the frontier strongholds.

As some doubt attaches to the spot where the last battle was fought between Ostorius and Caractacus, and as much has been written on the subject, I would venture to put forth some arguments, not to prove the precise spot where the British chief was defeated, but to point out the probability that the city of Urioconium may have owed its origin to that campaign. We are told by Tacitus that Publius Ostorius, proprætor in Britain, having found affairs in a distracted state, took care by prompt action on first coming to his command in Britain, to rout and disperse his enemies, and then to form a line of fortified camps between the rivers Antona (Aufona?) and the Severn,—"Cinctosque castris Antonam (Aufonam) et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat."[1] By the celerity of his movements he left the Britons no time

[1] Tacitus, Ann. lib. xii. 30—35.

to combine against him. In the seven years preceding the appointment of Ostorius, Plautius and Vespasian had subdued the southern and western counties, as far as the Bristol Channel and along the valley of the Thames, comprising the territories of the Cantii (Kent) and the Regni (Surrey, Sussex, parts of Kent and Berkshire) ; the Belgæ and Damnonii (Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset) were reduced to the form of a province, and a colony of veterans was placed at Camulodunum. This new colony was planted on the borders of the country of the Trinobantes, to protect the eastern frontier of England against the Iceni. Mr. Leman, in his MS. notes to Horsley's Britannia Romana preserved in the library of the Bath Literary Institution, considers that the site of the British city at Lexden in Essex, where there was a deficiency of water, was then exchanged by the Romans for the preferable situation on the banks of the Colne at Colchester.

The line of fortified posts drawn by Ostorius has been a subject of much discussion ; it was this act which seems to have roused into open hostilities the Iceni, the inhabitants of Norfolk and Suffolk, who were before friendly to the Romans.

Mr. Leman says—"The rivers Antona and Sabrina have been by some supposed to have been the Bath Avon and the Severn : but, in this case, how would the fortifications on the first of these rivers have anything to do with the Iceni ? By others the Antona has been imagined, and indeed with more probability, to be the Avon which runs from Warwickshire, and falls into the Severn near Tewkesbury, as this might have served as a line of defence against the lately conquered Dobuni, and against the incursions of the Cornabii ; but still it would be no use against the only enemy Ostorius had to fear, the great and powerful nation of the Iceni ; for this reason Lipsius, followed by Camden, seeing the absurdity of the first hypothesis and the impossibility of the second, proposed amending the passage by substituting Aufona in the place of Antona. Now, as we know from Richard of Cirencester that the Aufona was the *Nen*, which, rising on the borders of Warwickshire, runs easterly by Boston Flats, I examined, with my friend the Bishop of Cloyne, this line attentively in the year 1795, and found the remains of fortifications of Ostorius completed on the eastern

side, almost as far as the Watling Street; while, on the Avon, which I before mentioned as running from Warwick to Tewkesbury (where this officer did not fear the enemy so much), the greater stations only were finished, without the chain of connecting fortified posts between them."[2] The line of fortified posts would thus extend from Boston Flats to Tewkesbury.

It seems that while making preparations to draw this line of forts the Iceni took alarm, and having hazarded a battle with the Romans, they were defeated and brought under the Roman power. No doubt after this the line of forts was completed, by which the conquests of the Romans to the south of the rivers above mentioned were secured. If we look to the map of Roman Britain, we shall see that there is a continuous line of strong Roman posts to be traced from near Peterborough, across the island to the Severn at Tewkesbury. We read further in the narration by Tacitus, "ceterum clade Icenorum compositi .... ductus in Cangos exercitus." Here therefore we find Ostorius at the opposite or western side of the island, having constructed his line of fortified stations.

The Cangi, or Cangiani, says Mr. Leman,[3] were a small tribe, who possessed the westerly parts of Caernarvonshire, under their capital, Segontium, and lying immediately opposite to Ireland. This statement is confirmed by the fact that the extreme point of the promontory which forms the northern limit of Cardigan Bay, now Braich y Pwll, is called by Ptolemy "Ganganorum Promontorium," and also by the discovery of a number of leaden pigs near Chester, inscribed DE CEANG.

Camden, in his notices of Runcorn and Halton Castle, in Cheshire, records the discovery of twenty pigs of lead on the coast of Cheshire, inscribed with the names of Vespasian

[2] See Leman's MS. notes on Horsley's Britannia Rom., in the Library of the Bath Lit. Inst. Sir R. Colt Hoare, in his Giraldus Camb., Introd., p. xcix, points out that Richard of Cirencester, (De situ Brit., lib. i. c. vi. 30,) describing the rivers on the eastern coast, says, "Fluminum notissima sunt Garion (Gare), Surius (Stour) et Aufona, in Sinum Metorin sese exonerans." As we know that the Sinus Metoris was Boston Deeps, we have every reason to suppose that the Aufona was the river Nene; and from the unusual number of fortified camps on its eastern banks, we might almost conclude that Tacitus had mistaken the Antona for the Aufona." Whatever we may think of the authenticity of Richard of Cirencester, there seems no reason to doubt that his work was compiled from authentic sources, as his statements are confirmed by subsequent discoveries.

[3] Horsley's Brit. Rom., c. 2, p. 25.

and Domitian. On the latter were the words—DE CEANG, and Camden, discussing the question of the locality of the Cangi, inclined to place them in Cheshire.[4]

Pennant observes that the ore which produced this lead was dug and smelted either in that part of Flintshire anciently called Tegangle, the summer residence of the Cangi, or from the residence of the same people in Derbyshire, or some neighbouring county.[5]

Tacitus, after describing the reduction of the Cangi, says—"Jamque ventum haud procul mari quod Hiberniam insulam aspectat."[6] This corresponds exactly with the locality in which the lead was found, and we may conclude that the Cangi occupied the country extending betwixt the promontory which bears their name and the River Dee, and probably also parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire.

It seems that at this time Chester must have been selected as a point of military occupation where the twentieth legion was quartered. We have thus the southern part of the island cut off from the northern, and a line of communication existing from sea to sea, the two extreme points of which are accessible from the sea, by which the fleet could communicate with the army on either side of the island.

Since the foregoing observations were written, I have received a copy of Notes on Roman Inscriptions found in Britain, by the Rev. Dr. McCaul, LL.D., Principal of University College, Toronto.[7] Speaking of the inscriptions on the pigs of lead which bear the mark CEANG, Dr. McCaul observes—"these seem to be the Cangi of Tacitus (Ann. xii. 32,) ductus in Cangos exercitus." Different opinions have been formed relative to the position of the Cangi. Camden,[8] Gibson, Gough, and the author of the Index to the Monumenta Historica, place them in Somerset. Camden subsequently altered his opinion, and was inclined to place them in Cheshire. Thus also Dr. Latham regards North Wales as a likelier locality than Somerset.[9] In this opinion Dr.

[4] Camden's Britannia, edit. 1607, p. 463; Gough's edit., 1806, vol. iii. pp. 45, 61. A pig of lead with the same mark was found in Staffordshire, and is now in the British Museum. See Mr. Albert Way's inventory of pigs of lead found in Great Britain, given in this Journal, vol. xvi. p. 28.

[5] Pennant's Tour through Wales, vol. i. p. 57.

[6] Tacitus, Ann., lib. xii. 32.

[7] These valuable notes appeared first in the Canadian Journal, and have been published subsequently in a collected form. Toronto, H. Rowsell; Lond., Longmans, 1862, 8vo. See pp. 9, 36.

[8] Britannia, edit. Gough, vol. i. p. 82.

[9] Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography, by Dr. Smith, *v.* Cangi.

McCaul concurs. "The position," he observes, "suits better the description of Tacitus—'jam ventum haud procul mari quod Hiberniam insulam aspectat.' It accords also with the situation of Cancanorum, or Ganganorum, Promontorium of Ptolemy; and Flintshire, in which, and the adjoining counties of Cheshire and Denbighshire, I would place the Cangi, was probably even then noted for its lead-mines, at present the most productive in the island. Horsley, and the author of the Index in the Monumenta Historica Britannica, identify the 'Canganorum Promontorium' as Brachy pult Point in Caernarvonshire, which suggests that the Cangi may have occupied that county also."[1] I am, however, inclined to suggest the Great Orme's Head.

We are informed by Tacitus that, after the subjection of the Cangi, the Brigantes gave the Roman general some trouble—"ortæ apud Brigantes discordiæ retraxere ducem;" but this rising was soon put down. The Roman general was thus taken further north, probably into Yorkshire; he was from thence obliged to march against the Silures; and here a difficulty is supposed to have arisen in the account of the Roman historian. After mentioning the Silures as perfectly intractable, and requiring the strength of the legionaries to bring them into subjection, Tacitus says—"Id quo promptius veniret, colonia Camulodunum valida veteranorum manu deducitur in agros captivos, subsidium adversus rebelles, et imbuendis Sociis ad officia legum."[2] The mention of this need, does not, however, necessitate that the Roman general should have returned to Camulodunum, and settled the garrison there himself, or marched his whole army back thither out of Cheshire. It was a wise proceeding to place a strong garrison at Camulodunum, where the Iceni might have given trouble, while he marched against the Silures at the opposite side of the island. The expression—"id quo promptius veniret"—would rather lead us to suppose that he marched at once against the Silures from the north, probably by way of Chester or Manchester, and it may be taking the road which led from Mancunium to Urioconium.

The fact that Caractacus "transferred" the war into the country of the Ordovices, would rather lead us to think that

[1] Dr. McCaul's Brit. Rom. Insc., p. 36.

[2] Tacitus, Ann., lib. xii. 32.

the Romans attacked him on their march out of the country of the Brigantes. Caractacus is not said to have been driven out of the country of the Silures: the expression is as follows —"transfert bellum in Ordovicos," probably knowing that country to be the most defensible.[3] Operations had probably been carried on against Caractacus also from the south, and he may have abandoned to the Romans the country about Caer-went—if Caer-went was really his capital, as some antiquaries think—but the main body of the Roman army appears to have been with Ostorius marching from the north.

This is not, however, the general view. Thus Sir Richard C. Hoare, in his Introduction to Giraldus Cambrensis, says—"The private road between Caerleon, Abergavenny, Kenchester, and Wroxeter, was the line on which the main body of Ostorius' army acted, and Brandon Camp, in Herefordshire, the place from whence he made the attack and carried the fortified entrenchments of Caractacus at Coxall Knoll."[4] In another note he says—"Many different situations have been ascribed to the scene of action between Caractacus and Ostorius; but none rest on such strong grounds of probability as the stations of Brandon Camp and Coxall Knoll. The first of these is situated a little to the west of the great Roman road leading from Magna or Kenchester to Uriconium, or Wroxeter, and between Wigmore and Leintwardine. Its form is square, and the fragments of Roman pottery which may still be picked up within its precincts, evidently prove its origin. The second is within sight, and distant from the Roman camp about three miles, and a little above the village of Brampton Brian. It crowns the summit of a lofty hill, well covered with oak trees, and is (like the generality of British fortresses) very irregular in shape. The river Teme runs through the vale near the foot of the hill."

This is the spot supposed by many antiquaries to have been the site of the battle so graphically described by the Roman historian. A little further to the north-west, on a

[3] Moreover there seems to have been a good understanding between the Silures and the Brigantes. They seem to have been in one mind as to the necessity of opposing the Roman power; and now that the Brigantes had been put down, the Silures must make their defence as strong as possible, and give the invading force no advantage. Hence Caractacus probably met them on the borders of Montgomeryshire.

[4] Hoare's edit. of Giraldus, Introd. note, p. ci.

hill, is a very perfect camp, called "The Gaer Ditches," evidently British, fortified by a double ditch and rampart; here it has been supposed that the wife and daughter of Caractacus may have been captured. The same opinion as to the locality was held by Mr. Leman. A writer in the Archæologia Cambrensis[5] adopts the same view, and argues in favour of this site with some ingenuity; while Mr. Leman, in his Notes to Horsley, supposes Caractacus to have marched along the road from Caerleon to Urioconium, when, as Tacitus states,—"transtulit bellum in Ordovicos;" and he observes that "the territories of the Ordovices, mentioned by Tacitus, were separated from those of the Demetæ and Silures by the Teme and the Dovey. It was probably upon the banks of the former that Caractacus placed himself to oppose the force of the invading enemy; having retreated before the Romans by the road which led, and which indeed still remains, between Caerleon and Wroxeter, and must then have been only a British trackway." Mr. Leman also would fix the site of the celebrated battle at Coxwall Knoll, on the borders of Herefordshire. Although it may appear presumptuous to differ from such high authorities, after carefully inspecting the site, I cannot agree with their conclusion —as the Roman general Ostorius seems to have been advancing from the north, and coming from the country of the Brigantes—unless we are to suppose that an interval of time elapsed between the conclusion of his expedition against that people and his commencing the war with Caractacus, of which no intimation is given by the historian. I am therefore inclined, with Mr. Ffoulkes, to fix upon the Brydden Hill as a point answering better with the circumstances of the battle recorded by Tacitus. The Severn flowing at the foot of that mountain, answers better to the character given of the river,—"Et præfluebat amnis *vado incerto.*" It is a far more serious impediment than the Teme, especially if at all swollen. Mr. Ffoulkes, in his paper read before the Cambrian Archæological Society, supposes the Roman camp, the head-quarters of Ostorius, must have been at Clawdd Coch, within sight of the Brydden, and about

[5] New Series, vol. iii. p. 203, 1852. Mr. Wynne Ffoulkes, in an able paper in the same publication, considers that the Brydden, in Montgomeryshire, answers better to the description of Tacitus.

five miles distant—which would be the point occupied by them if coming from the north.[6]

Another site has also been suggested for this battle, as may be seen in Mr. Hartshorne's Salopia Antiqua, where the subject is treated at length, and the same view taken as that of Sir Richard Hoare, namely, that Ostorius was marching from the south-east; not having, however, personally examined any other sites than those I have here considered, I would not at present venture any further opinion.

If the Brydden Hill be the point, the distance from Urioconium would be about ten or twelve miles, and to this point supplies would be readily brought from the country to the east of the Severn, then in the possession of the Romans.

In an enquiry into the first rise of Urioconium, the question necessarily suggests itself, at what period was the second legion first stationed at Caerleon-on-Usk? This seems to have been one of the points from whence the war against the Silures was carried on. The second legion, under Vespasian, had conquered the country south of the Bristol Channel, where he had thirty conflicts with the enemy. Suetonius states that Vespasian having been sent by Claudius into Germany as legate,—"in Britanniam translatus, *tricies* cum hoste conflixit; duas validissimas gentes, superque viginti oppida, et insulam Vectem Britanniæ proximam, in deditionem redegit."[7] All the coast of the Bristol Channel being under Roman power, supplies could most conveniently be drawn from thence to that point on the river Usk where Caerleon is situated, and the establishment of a Roman garrison there, composed of the second legion, may in all probability be assigned to the commencement of the war with the Silures, A.D. 50. Horsley, however, conjectures that the Romans did not settle there till the reign of Antoninus Pius. If Caerleon became a Roman station as early as I suppose, there would be three principal points by which the conquered part of the island would be held at that period,—namely, Camulodunum or Colchester, Deva or Chester, and Caerleon in Monmouthshire,—it may be also Glevum or Gloucester.[8] We are not told what were the

[6] Archæol. Camb., vol. ii. New Series, p. 122.

[7] Suetonius, in vit. T. F. Vespasiani, cap. iv. 1.

[8] Sir R. C. Hoare seems to think that the Leg. II. Aug. was stationed at Caerleon previous to A.D. 53.

legions sent over by Claudius, or the amount of the numbers that formed his army, but the command of the second legion had been conferred on Vespasian [9] when in Britain; and we find from subsequent history that the second, the ninth, the fourteenth, and the twentieth legions, with their auxiliaries, were serving in Britain.[1] From the account of the battle with Boadicea, it appears that these legions were here in the time of Nero. According to Tacitus, the ninth legion was surprised and cut off; the fourteenth and the vexillarii of the twentieth were in the battle; and the second, though in Britain, and probably stationed at Caerleon, was absent, through the fault of the commander, Pœnius Postumus.

These circumstances induce the belief that the second legion was first stationed at Caerleon-on-Usk, at the time when Ostorius began his campaign against Caractacus.

The Roman road from Caerleon to Urioconium is to be traced with great certainty, and is accurately laid down in the maps of Roman Britain. Along that line we have several important towns, which no doubt were of later growth, and probably had their rise in camps formed to subjugate the Silures. Thus the principal stations on the Roman road from Caerleon to Urioconium are,—Burrium (Usk), Gobannium (Abergavenny), Magna (Kenchester), and Bravinium (near Leintwardine); but of these by far the most important seems to have been Urioconium. Six ancient roads seem to have centred there, three of which passed into Wales. From this it would appear to have been a central point, from whence supplies had been drawn for the war against Caractacus, and probably a point in which fresh levies were concentrated. Again, in the march of Suetonius for the conquest of Anglesea, it must have taken an important part, as well as in his march from thence to suppress the revolt of Boadicea; and when Agricola, A.D. 78, finally reduced Mona, Urioconium must have been a point of primary importance. It could hardly in later times have held the same position, as the Roman arms were more occupied in the north of England, but it probably became a place of traffic for the produce of the mines of Shropshire and North

[9] Tacit., Hist., lib. iii. ch. xliv.

[1] Sir R. C. Hoare says, "The second legion came into Britain during the reign of the Emperor Claudius, under the command of Vespasian, and continued in it as long as the Romans. History does not inform us if it was employed by Ostorius in his memorable battle with Caractacus, or by Suetonius in his expedition against Mona."

Wales. Situated in the heart of a rich and fertile valley, with a noble river available for navigation, it must have ranked as one of the most flourishing mercantile cities, until, abandoned by the Romans, and having subsisted for nearly a century and a half under Romano-British rule, it fell at length, as seems most probable, under the sword of the invading Saxon.[2]

It is to be regretted that the funereal inscription to a Roman soldier, lately found, adds nothing to the knowledge already obtained from the inscribed stones discovered at Wroxeter, the number of the legion being partly obliterated; but so large and promising a field of investigation remains, that if the explorations so successfully commenced be pursued vigorously, we shall doubtless hereafter obtain what may confirm the truth of previous history, if it does not extend its limits and clear up its obscurities.

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE EXCAVATIONS AT WROXETER, THE ROMAN URIOCONIUM, SINCE JULY, 1860.

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At the meeting of the Institute at Gloucester, in July, 1860, I had the pleasure of bringing before the members an account of the discoveries which had been made at Wroxeter up to that date.[1] In the three years which have elapsed since that time the excavations have been continued, but they have not been confined to the same ground where the first discoveries were made. It was considered by the Excavation Committee that enough had been done for the present in ascertaining the form of the buildings and the direction of the streets, shown in the excellent survey by Mr. Hillary Davies engraved for this Journal,[2] and that the cemetery on the east side of the city was more likely to yield new matter of interest to the antiquary.

[2] See Dr. Guest's Memoir, Archaeol. Journal, vol. xix. p. 215.

[1] Printed in the Archaeol. Journal, vol. xvii. p. 240.

[2] Archaeol. Journal, vol. xvi. p. 266. See also the Guide to the Ruins of Uriconium, by Mr. Thomas Wright, Shrewsbury, 1859.