

THE SARCOPHAGUS OF VALERIUS AMANDINUS.

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THE principal characteristics of this object, by means of which we may hope to determine the questions that arise regarding it, are—the cross on the lid, the inscription on the cist, and the fragments of brick and stone that were found within. The cross, and the locality in which the object was found, suggest the opinion that the coffin contained the remains of a Christian, who was probably a monk of the adjoining monastery; and the peculiarities of the cross are such as to produce the impression that its date should be assigned to the middle ages. This impression is supported by the fact, that the earliest example of this symbol¹ (not monogrammatic) on Christian sepulchral stones, of which the date is known, is of the year 407 A.D. See De Rossi, *Inscript. Christianæ*, n. 576, and Christian Epitaphs of the First Six Centuries, p. 45. It is also strengthened by the following statement (if correct), given by Grose (Supplem. to Antiqu. of England and Wales, Addenda to the Preface, p. 29). “At first they [gravestones] were only inscribed with the name and rank of the person there buried; the figure of the cross was not engraved on them, to avoid the indignity of its being trampled under foot. Afterwards Kenneth, King of Scotland, is said to have issued an order for cutting the cross on all gravestones, but directed that care should be taken not to trample on them. Some regulation of this kind might possibly take place in England.” Additional force is given to this supposition by the fact, that the usage—if not the rule—in England in

¹ Viz. a Latin cross without any addition. There seems to be an example of a Greek cross inscribed within a circle of

the date 345 or 346 A.D. in the inscription given from Marini by De Rossi, note, p. cix.

the eleventh and twelfth centuries was, that monks should be buried in stone coffins, as appears from the regulations made by Anselm on the subject, and the Statute of Warin, Abbot of St. Alban's.² See Walcott's *Sacred Archæology*, p. 166, and *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Albani*, i. p. 198, edit. in the series of *Chronicles, &c.*, under direction of the Master of the Rolls. And yet—as to the peculiarities of this cross—there are approaches to its form in the fifth and sixth centuries. See De Rossi, n. 879 of the date 482 or 461, n. 893 of the date 490, and n. 1013 of the date 527; and a coin of Placidia of the date *circa* 417 or 462, in Akerman's *Roman Coins*. And there are examples, as I am informed, of crosses *pattées* on coins of the fourth and fifth centuries. With regard to the extraordinary length of the lower limb of this cross, it may be ascribed to the elevation that was on the original lid, and that thus fixed the place for the transepts. See examples of this form of lid in Wellbeloved's *Eburacum*, plate xi., fig. 3. Nor is the coping of the lid peculiar to the Middle Ages; similar ridging was used in the Roman period. See Wellbeloved's *Eburacum*, p. 108, and Smith's *Roman London*, plate iv. On the latter, I may remark, *obiter*, that it is more like a Christian sarcophagus than that which we are considering, excepting the cross. See Christian *Epitaphs*, plate II., fig. 2, and the woodcut representing the making of a Christian sarcophagus in Fabretti, *Inscript. Antiq.* p. 578. Again—as to stone coffins—the cist of this has not the peculiar characteristics of those in which monks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were buried; and we know that the use of receptacles of this material for the dead was not uncommon in England in the seventh century. See Bede's *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 11, 19, 30. Nor is there any reason for doubting the at least occasional use of stone coffins between the Roman period (in which they were common) and the seventh century.

It appears, then, that, so far as the material of the sarcophagus and the form of the cross, the object may have been of as early a date as the fourth century; but our in-

² In the statement referred to above, we must limit the words *antea cunctis temporibus* to the monks of St. Alban's, and the meaning of *in lapideis sepulcris* is not clear. The reference may, possibly,

be not to coffins made of one block, but to sepulchres formed of several stones, resembling the primitive kistvaens. See *Archæologia*, v. p. 224.

quiry now must be—how does this supposition agree with the evidence of the inscription? In this case fortunately there can be no doubt as to the text or the interpretation of it. The words are plainly: *Memoriae Valer. Amandini Valerii Superventor et Marcellus patri fecer.*—i. e., “To the memory of Valerius Amandinus. Valerius Superventor and Valerius Marcellus made (this) for (their) father.” The only terms in this that are rare are the names *Amandinus* and *Superventor*. I have never before met with either of them. *Amandinus* (probably originally *Amandianus*) is the masculine form of the name *Amandiana* found in Gruter; and both *Amanda* and *Amandus* are not uncommon—examples of them have been found in Britain. *Superventor* is a *cognomen*, like *Tutor*, *Adjutor*, *Viator*, *Cunctator*, *Subventor*, &c. On *cognomina* see Maffei, *De Nominibus Romanis*, p. 15; Zaccaria, *Istituz.*, p. 81, xxix. The meaning was probably equivalent to “surpriser,” and the name appears rather suggestive of a German or Gallic origin of the family. It seems probable, however, that the persons named in the epitaph were Romanized Britons, and that their *gens*—*Valeria*—indicates a prevailing taste for this *nomen*, derived from the Imperial family, e. gr., *Valerius Diocletianus*, *Valerius Maximianus*, *Valerius Constantius*, *Valerius Severus*, *Valerius Licinianus*, *Valerius Constantinus*, *Valerius Constantius*. Thus we have the *nomen* “*Aurelius*” prevalent in Dacia, derived from the Imperial family. See “Die Römische Inschriften in Dacien,” by Ackner and Müller. Thus also the *nomen* “*Junius*” prevailed in Spain, derived from *D. Junius Brutus*, who was victorious in that country. See Reinesii *Syntagma*, p. 137; and Hübner’s *Inscript. Hispaniæ Latinæ*. This conjecture relative to a partiality for the *Valeria gens* in Britain is countenanced by the fact that both *Valerius Constantius* and *Valerius Constantinus* resided for some time in the island. The former Emperor died there in 306 A.D., and his son, the latter (subsequently the Great), whilst living there at the time was proclaimed Cæsar. It is also supported by the following inscription³ given by Horsley, *Brit. Rom.*, p. 314. *Titia*

³ The copy of this as given by Horsley from Gale’s *Antonini Itinerarium* presents the rare use of points, in the form of a comma, at the top of the letters. From

this and other characteristics it may be conjectured, with some reason, that the inscription is not older than the fourth century.

Pinta vixit ann xxxviii et Val Adiutori vixit ann xx et Variolo vixit ann xv Val Vindicianus coniugi et filiis F. C. i. e. Titiae Pintæ—vixit annos triginta octo, et Valerio Adjutori—vixit annos viginti, et Variolo—vixit annos quindecim, Valerius Vindicianus coniugi et filiis faciendum curavit. There is a remarkable similarity in the character of the names—*Adjutor* corresponding to *Superventor*, *Variolus* (a diminutive) corresponding to *Marcellus* (a diminutive), and *Vindicianus* (from the maternal *Vindicia*) corresponding to *Amandinus* = *Amandianus* (from the maternal *Amanda*).

But to return to *Superventor*. I have no doubt that it does not indicate that the person was one of the *Superventores* (or *Præventores*) mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, and noticed in the *Notitia* as serving both in the east and the west. See Bocking, i. p. 446; and Vegetius, v. 7.

The commencement of the epitaph with *Memoriæ*, without D.M. preceding it, is not rare in Pagan inscriptions. See Gruter, CCCL. 6, DCCLXIII.; Orelli, 850; Henzen, 6833; Morcelli, *De Stilo*, i. p. 176; Renier, *Inscript. de l'Algérie*, 3333, &c. On the other hand it is not common in ancient Christian epitaphs without an adjective, such as *bonæ*, and in the genitive case. And yet I have no doubt that the form was used by Christians, even as early as the fourth century. For examples of it contracted into M.M. or M. see Henzen,⁴ 7354 of the date 397; Renier, 3440; and Orelli, 4460: and of it *in extenso*, see Renier, 3441, 3442, 3447, 3448. The use of *FECER* instead of *F.C.*, however, is rather characteristic of Christian usage. See *Christian Epitaphs*, p. 45. But it is often found in Pagan epitaphs; and in both it may sometimes denote actual making. See *Christian Epitaphs*, p. 45. Thus here it may possibly mean that *Superventor* and *Marcellus* themselves cut the coffin, whence it might be inferred that they were stone-masons or manufacturers of stone coffins. The word *fecerunt*, however, seems to have been often used in the sense, *faciendum curaverunt*.

Let us now consider the lettering and the ornamentation of the cist. From the good shape or cutting of the letters

⁴ Henzen regards M as standing for *Memoriæ*, but De Rossi, p. 193, for *Memoria*.

On the distinction see *Brit. Rom. Inscript.*, p. 214.

I am afraid to draw any inference as to the age, such as whether the inscription is of the second, third, or fourth century. My experience leads me to regard this criterion of date as often fallacious. There are cases, I doubt not, in which such deductions are warranted; but Maffei's remarks on this subject (*Art. Critic. Lapid.* iii. 2, 3) are, I think, generally true. See also Morcelli, ii. p. 309.

The absence of ligatures is, in my judgment, a more certain indication of antiquity; and here we find, not merely well-formed characters, such as—if we cannot determine their date within the Roman period—certainly differ widely from mediæval letters, but the absence of ligatures, even where they might have conveniently been used, *scil.* instead of SVPERVEN followed by a vacant space, SVPERVENTR or SVPERVENT® which could have been brought into the second line. Nor must we omit noticing the triangular point uniformly placed after each word, whether contracted or not, and the use of the tall I even for the single letter.

These characteristics seem to me to support the opinion of those who have regarded the inscription as of very early date, and to justify our placing it certainly within the Roman period, and not improbably in the second century. This, moreover, is strengthened by the ornamentation of the cist. The division into three panels, the middle one bearing the inscription, and the two at the extremities filled with crescent-like decorations (*peltæ*), closely resembles the treatment of inscribed stones of the age of Antoninus Pius, such as those given by Gordon (*Iter Septentr.*), also by Horsley (Scotland, *Britannia Romana*), and Stuart (*Caledonia Romana*). So far then as the inscription, the cutting of it, and the ornamentation of the cist, it may, I think, be safely said, that no one would hesitate in pronouncing it, *per se*, as Pagan, especially as it has not one single feature peculiar to Christian gravestones or sepulchres, or usually found on such,—I mean single names, the use of the terms *depositus*, *depositio*, *in pace*, or of the symbols a fish, an anchor, a dove with a branch, &c., &c. And yet we must beware of pushing these arguments too far. There are certain epitaphs that have no characteristics whereby we may distinguish them as Christian or Pagan, some of which, from the locality in which they were found, or accidental circumstances, have

been classed among the former or the latter. Again, the ornamentation, although used in the second century, may have been and probably was continued through the Roman period, especially in coffins in which a style, once adopted, would very probably remain for a considerable time. Nor is it necessary to suppose that the coffin and the inscription were cut by the same person. The coffin may have been made by a Pagan and the inscription cut or ordered by a Christian, as in De Rossi's n. 118. With regard to the lettering, I have already stated my opinion, in which I have the support of both Maffei⁵ and Morcelli,⁵ that the good shape and cutting of the characters (*literæ quadratæ* I mean) are fallacious tests of the date within the first four centuries. The absence of ligatures may be explained by the necessity for clearness in such an epitaph as this composed almost wholly of names, and we are not without examples of similar points and tall I's in inscriptions after the time of Constantine. Moreover, the space left vacant after N (if not caused by some defect in the stone), as manifesting attention to syllabic division, indicates a late rather than an early date. Before leaving the consideration of the cist, we must notice a peculiarity in its form that appears to distinguish it from those of the Roman period, viz., the bevelling at the foot. In this it somewhat resembles the stone coffins of the Middle Ages. It is possible that this peculiarity may have distinguished Christian sarcophagi at an early period; but I know no authority for this. Neither have I seen any example of the form in a Roman coffin. The peculiarity may, possibly, have been caused by some defect or break in that part of the block that prevented the mason from continuing the sides in parallel lines.

But we must consider the cover and cist not only sepa-

⁵ I subjoin extracts from the passages to which I refer. "Illud primum est, Scripturæ argumentum minime certum et indubitatum esse, it aut ex eo tantum de sinceritate lapidum possumus decernere, nam ea quidem quandoque est in lapidibus Scripturæ facies, ut validum aut vetustatis aut novitatis indicium faciat; ut æpissime ita ambigua est, ut argui nihil possit. Secundo haberi pro certo velim, aberrare toto cœlo, qui e literis, num sub Trajano, an sub Commodo; num secundo, vel tertio, vel alio quodam sæculo; num

Romanis, vel Longobardis, aut Gothis Italiam tenentibus inscripti lapides fuerint, decidi posse opinantur." Donati *Supplem.* i. p. 177.

"Neque a Maffeo dissentio, quem verissime scripsisse puto lapidas singulis ætatibus exstitisse, qui rectas, quique distortas literas facerent; titulosque ab iis modo accurate atque eleganter modo negligenter atque inconcinne inscriptos esse, ut ii omnino fallantur, qui plerumque a scriptura ætatem inscriptionum certe se nosse dictitant." Ed. Padua, 1818.

parately, but together ; and here the first question that presents itself is—are they made of the same kind of stone ? Of this there is, I believe, no doubt. They are both cut from the soft shelly oolite, probably obtained in Oxfordshire. I have already suggested some reason for believing that the cover was the original one ; and here we have an additional argument in favor of this opinion. We must bear in mind, however, that this stone may have been usually selected for such purposes on account of the facility of working it or getting it ; and we may urge in confirmation of this the fact that another sarcophagus, found in London (see Mr. Roach Smith's *Roman London*, p. 459), was made of oolite, designated by Mr. Smith as “Barnack rag.” An objection may also be advanced against the supposition that the cover was the original one, drawn from the facts that it is not bevelled as the coffin is, and that it does not fit the cist well. The strongest inference, however, from these facts seems to be that the present lid is not that which was made for the coffin by the manufacturer. It may, notwithstanding, be that which was originally used.

But another and a very important particular in the object as found remains to be noticed. In the cist, along with the remains of a man, viz., the skull and bones, were fragments of bricks believed to be Roman, and of a peculiar volcanic stone used for mill-stones, and commonly met with on the sites of Roman stations in all parts of Great Britain. The presence of these fragments—especially when we remember that no Roman memorial has been found in this locality—seems to indicate that the remains were those of the original occupant of the coffin, who was placed there during the Roman period. It is possible, indeed, that on the occasion of introducing the second corpse the bones of the first occupant were thrown out and the fragments left, but to me it seems highly improbable that Pagan objects would be permitted to remain in the coffin with a Christian corpse. What the object of placing such fragments of brick and stone there was can only be conjectured, and I am almost afraid of indulging in suppositions, as I have no information as to the size or appearance of the fragments. It may be that they were placed there as emblems or indications of the trade or occupation of the deceased, as we find symbols cut on Pagan and Christian gravestones with this object.

This supposition derives some countenance from interpreting *fecerunt* as actually "made." It may be that the deceased was stoned to death,⁶ and that these were some of the missiles thrown at him. It may even be that he committed suicide, and that these fragments were thrown in, as in later times shards were. See Akerman's *Remains of Saxon Paganism*, p. xvii. Finally, it may be that they were used merely for arranging or straightening the corpse.

It now appears that the theories regarding this object should be formed relatively to the suppositions that the remains found in the coffin were or were not those of the original occupant. On the latter of these suppositions we may regard (1) the case as an example of the use of a Pagan coffin, from which the original Pagan occupant had been removed, by a Christian of a period as late as the eleventh or twelfth century, whilst, on the other, it may be (2)⁷ that a Christian of the fourth century was placed in a coffin made by and for a Pagan, but with the inscription and cross added; or (3) that a Pagan and his coffin were christianized by cutting a cross on the cover, or by substituting a crucifer lid for the original one, as it may not improbably have borne the letters D.M. ET.

On the use of Pagan coffins or *arcae* by Christians, see De Rossi's notes on nn. 118 and 12; and on the cutting of a Christian inscription on slabs bearing Pagan epitaphs, and the application of such stone to close the *loculi* in the Catacombs, see *Christian Epitaphs*, p. 65. In all these cases, however, there is a Christian epitaph, or there are both a Christian and a Pagan.

I must also add that we have an example in England of the use of a stone coffin as the receptacle of a corpse different from that which had originally been placed in it. See Wellbeloved's *Eburacum*, p. 111, where we have the inscription on a sarcophagus found near York. From it it is certain that the child placed in it was ten months old;

⁶ Walcott, *Sacred Archaeology*, p. 191, in speaking of the cross, says,—“The martyr's tomb bore it;” and in p. 86, under the term “Burials,”—“The instruments of passion,”—“were often interred in the tomb.” I have seen these statements elsewhere, but I do not remember ancient authority for them in the cases of martyrs of the first four cen-

turies.

⁷ In this hypothesis it is not supposed that the cover which was found is that which was intended for the cist, but that that was rejected on account of Pagan characteristics, and another lid of an ordinary sarcophagus selected on which the symbol of Christianity was carved.

but, on removing the lid, "the skeleton of a child of a much more advanced age than the inscription indicates was found within."

The theory marked (3) is based on a conjecture, that on the consecration of a churchyard the coffins of Pagans were allowed to remain if Christianized ; but I know no authority for this. Nor does it seem probable, for we know that in the case of a church, Pagan corpses were "pulled out" of their coffins. See note, p. xix., Akerman's Remains of Saxon Pagandom.

The choice then seems to lie between (1) and (2), and on the whole I now incline to the latter. I am unable, however, to supply authority for the use of this form of cross on sepulchral monuments of the fourth century, nor can I prove that such a use was peculiar to the British church at that time.