

## ROMAN ROADS IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND.

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As the Itinerary of Antoninus is the principal basis of calculation and speculation with reference to the direction of Roman roads and the position of Roman stations, it may not be amiss to say a few prefatory words about that book. The name which it bears is that assumed by Bassianus, son of Severus, better known as Caracalla or Caracallus.

A stone<sup>1</sup> preserved at Vienna records the fact that Severus and Caracallus restored the dilapidated milestones along the Roman roads. With this work would probably be associated that of correcting and improving previous *Itinerary*, the new book bearing the name of the Emperor in its title. The text as it has come down to us is not free from traces of a later date, such as the name *Diocletianopolis*, but on the whole there is a presumption in favour of a date early in the third century for the bulk of the work. Those who are interested in the history of the text will find much to gratify them in the edition published by Nicolaus at Berlin in 1848. The editors, Parthey and Pinder, have left nothing to be desired in the execution of their task.

The British portion of the Itinerary contains fifteen routes, of which two relate to the eastern counties of England. These are the Fifth, from *Londinium* to *Lugvalium ad Vallum*, i.e. from London to some place on Adrian's wall, probably Carlisle; and the Ninth, from *Venta Icenorum*, Caister near Norwich, to London.

Before treating of the Fifth route we must dismiss from our minds the idea of its being that in ordinary use for communication with Carlisle. This was more expeditiously carried on by the Second route, coinciding with the Fifth only from Carlisle by Catterick, *Cataracto* and Aldborough, *Isurium s. Isubrigantum* to York, and then working westward by Manchester, *Mancunium*, Chester, *Deva*, Wroxeter, *Uriconium*, and Mancetter, *Manduesedum*, to St. Alban's and London. The Second route is 395 Roman miles (481 between *Blatum Bulgium*, 12 miles past *Lugvalium*, and *Portus Ritupis*, or Richborough, 74 miles past London) between London and Carlisle, while the Fifth is 443 miles. The absence of a more direct road between the great centre on the Thames and the western termination of the wall may be due to the difficulties presented by the Pennine Range on one side and on the other by the marshes through which the sluggish Welland, Nene and Great Ouse trickled to the Wash.

In the Fifth route the first station is *Cesaromagus*. With this arises our first difficulty. To begin with, the two routes do not agree as to the

<sup>1</sup> Scipio Maffei, *Mus. Veron.* p. 241.

distance between *Londinium* and *Cesaromagus*. The Fifth route gives 28 miles, the Ninth 31.

Perhaps the solution to this apparent discrepancy may lie in the mention of an intermediate station, *Durolitum*, in the Ninth route. It may be that this last station lay a mile or more off the main road, and that the increased distance is due to this cause. The distance from *Londinium* to *Durolitum* is 15 Roman miles, which appears to confirm the theory of Reynolds<sup>1</sup> and Mannert,<sup>2</sup> that the true position of the latter is Romford. Jenkins's<sup>3</sup> Barking and Bishop Gibson's<sup>4</sup> Leytonstone are too near London. Each left-bank tributary of the Thames near London seems to have had its own camp: the Lea at Old Ford, the Rodling at Barking; and the Rom (if that be really the name of the little stream) may well be supposed to have been defended at Romford. If this theory commend itself to the reader, we must take the true distance from *Londinium* to *Cesaromagus* to be 28 Roman miles, or about  $25\frac{3}{4}$  English miles. Chelmsford, the choice of Reynolds and Mannert, is distant 29 miles from London, and it appears to have first become a main thoroughfare in the reign of Henry I. Billericay, Jenkins's choice, has plenty of Roman remains, but it is only about 10 miles in a straight line from this place to Romford, which requires a very large divergence to account for the 16 miles given in Antonine's Itinerary, and in that of Richard of Cirencester. There are no manifest natural difficulties to suggest such a divergence. I regret that my ignorance of the locality prevents my offering any but general consideration as to this route. Butsbury does not suit badly for the distance of *Cesaromagus* from *Durolitum*, and the name is auspicious. On this hypothesis the road would cross the Chelmer just above Little Bad-dow, where the valley is narrow. Here would be a likely position for *Canonium*, the camp on the Can, so far as etymology is concerned. But the distance from any point on the Chelmer to Butsbury does not correspond with our authorities, and all that I can do is to hope that some one with more leisure than falls to my lot will carry out a careful measurement of the proposed route, which occupies an intermediate position between Jenkins's and that usually received.

It is with a feeling of relief that we recognise in Colchester the undoubted *Colonia* of Tacitus, but even in this certainty a difficulty presents itself.

From *Cesaromagus* to *Colonia* by the Fifth Route is 24 miles, without an intervening station. But in the Ninth Route it is 21 miles from *Camulodunum* to *Cesaromagus*, with one intervening station, *Canonium*. Our Romford theory is no help to us here. But though we read in Tacitus words that at first sight lead us to suppose that *Camulodunum* and *Colonia* are the same place, yet the placing of the former three miles nearer to London than the latter in the Itinerary tends to the abandonment of a rigidly literal interpretation of the historian's words, and the adoption of Prebendary Scarth's view, who places *Camulodunum* at Lexden, a British camp in Mr. Errington's grounds.

I will now confine myself to the Ninth Route in Antonine's Itinerary, leaving the enormous difficulties of the Fifth for the present.

<sup>1</sup> *Iter Britanniarum*, Cambridge, 1799.

<sup>2</sup> *Geogr. der Griechen und Römer*, Leipzig, 1788-1829.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Brit. Archæol. Association*, Dec. 1863.

<sup>4</sup> Additions to Camden.

The next station to *Camulodunum* is *Ad Ansam*, distant 6 Roman miles. Jenkins's speculations in Celtic as to the origin of this name seem very wild. It is not at all likely that the Romans would have inflected a British word and governed it by one of their own prepositions, and the position of the place, gathering up a number of Essex and Suffolk tracks at a convenient crossing of the Stour, affords a rational interpretation of the name in Latin, *Ad Ansam*, at "the handle or clamp."

The formation of this camp may be due to Aulus Didius Gallus, in whose time some rather feeble attempts were made to extend the range of country commanded by the fortresses of his predecessor, Ostorius Scapula.<sup>1</sup> The distance is confirmed and the position indicated by Richard of Cirencester: "*Ad Sturiam annem mpm. vi et finibus Trinobantum Cenimannos advenis.*" The road would seem to have passed to the north of Colchester through Mile End to Dedham, where Mannert places the station. The name of Stratford [S. Mary] is of itself full of meaning, and in this parish early in 1877 a man who was digging a hole for a post came upon a ridge of hard gravel presenting all the appearance of a road. Near this spot were found several cinerary urns, of which all except the smallest were broken in getting them out. They are now in the Colchester Museum. My attention has been directed to the fact that in the meadows between Stratford S. Mary and East Bergholt stands a stone much resembling a *milliarium*, which is thought to indicate the position of a disused road.

On the hypothesis that this is the sought Roman road the ford over the Stour would be below Stratford bridge, and the route would fall in with the Colchester and Ipswich road at Latinford bridge (another well-sounding name) coinciding with it as far as Washbrook Lower Street and Copdock Street, then crossing the river Gipping at Bramford and reaching Whitton Street. At Whitton the pavement of a Roman villa has been discovered. It is now in the museum at Ipswich. Hence the course seems to go to Burgh-near-Woodbridge, named from the extensive earth-work hard by. This I would identify with *Combretonium*. Reynolds and Lapie, in defiance of figures, place *Combretonium*, the one at Stratford S. Mary, the other at Ipswich. Mannert's choice is Woodbridge. The distance from Dedham to Burgh-near-Woodbridge corresponds very nearly with that from *Ad Ansam* to *Combretonium*, 15 Roman miles. There is now but one station between us and *Venta Icenorum*, Caister-near-Norwich, but the distance to be traversed is 54 Roman miles. The intervening station is the much-disputed *Sitomagus*, for the locality of which I would suggest Dunwich, which harmonises well with Antonine's Itinerary, 22 Roman miles from Burgh-near-Woodbridge, and 32 from Caister-near-Norwich, being to all appearance the actual distance. The road passes from Burgh through Wickham Market, Stratford S. Andrew's (the third Stratford we have lighted upon), Kersale, where Roman coins (1st brass), pottery, cinerary and domestic, &c. have been found, and Westleton, whence there is a straight course across the heath to Dunwich. The enclosure of the Gray Friars at Dunwich abounds in fragments of Roman tile and other debris. Many Roman coins have been found here.

<sup>1</sup> "Mox Didius Gallus parta a prioribus continuit, paucis admodum castellis in

ulteriora promotis, per quæ fama aucti officii quæreretur."—*Tac. Agricola*, cxiv.

Jenkins, following Camden, places *Sitomagus* at Thetford, a place little known for Roman remains, though of great note at a later period. He fixes the site of *Combretonium* at Brettenham, a theory favoured alike by etymology and discovery; but this district appears to have been traversed by the Fifth Iter, and this influences me in preferring the "Oriental" party to the "Occidental," in determining the course of the Ninth.

From Dunwich the course in the main coincided with the road to Halesworth. The angle at Hinton Lodge may not have been so large as now, but it is impossible to determine the extent of salt marsh at this place fourteen or fifteen centuries ago. We then cross the Blyth at Blythburgh, pass the well-known field of Bulcamp, where the Union now stands, and skirt the river as far as Blythford. Hence I suggest that the road ran through Holton and Wisset to Rumburgh, an auspicious name, where the ruins of a small Benedictine priory stand within what appears to have been a considerable earthwork. About six miles further on we come to the very large earthwork at Bungay, partially utilised by Roger Bigod for his castle, and as yet very imperfectly investigated. Here the road would cross the Waveney and pass into the parish of Ditchingham, where in September 1862, some labourers in making a roadway from Belsey Bridge to the Orphanage, came upon some dozen cinerary urns, of which they saved three, which were preserved at the House of Mercy. They are described in a paper by the late Mr. Graystone B. Baker, in the proceedings of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society.

At this point my information ends, but I am influenced by the position of this place of burial, to assign to the rest of the road a course through Thwaite and Mundham, before bearing to the left for *Venta Icenorum*.

The circuitous nature of this journey was undoubtedly amended after the compilation of Antonine's Itinerary. Nearly two centuries of Roman occupation elapsed since the days of Caracalla, and parties of explorers in this later period, no doubt succeeded in making a nearly straight road to Caister through the dense forest of Mid-Suffolk and South Norfolk, which had presented an insurmountable obstacle to their predecessors. To their efforts, as it would seem, we owe what is called the "Great Road," which now runs to Norwich by Stoke Ash and Long Stratton.

This later road appears to have diverged from the Ninth Iter at Bramford, passed through Great Blakenham, and crossed the Gipping three or four furlongs below Bayleham Mill. The circumstances for crossing are here most favourable. An elbow is formed by the river which would not cause to the road the slightest deflection from a straight line, though the general directions of road and river are nearly parallel, the valley is narrow and firm, and the river-bed lies deep in the meadows. The breadth of the Gipping is insignificant, and the crossing would be made more probably by a wooden bridge than by a paved ford. As soon as we are over the Gipping, in the parish of Coddtenham, the road may be clearly traced in a field to the north-east of Bayleham Mill by the colour of the growing wheat, and hard by the road Mr. Watling of Earl Stonham found the ruins of an apparently burnt dwelling. "The tiles," he writes to me, "were as if they had not suffered from the fall, and were as regular as if on the roof before the fall. I found part of the lid of a sarcophagus, a knife and fragments of pottery." Proceeding northwards from this spot we soon find ourselves on the "Great Road," and pass a likely spot for a beacon just above the lodge at Sir George Broke Middleton's park

at Shrubland. Now relics come thickly on us, each side of the road. At Crowfield is a spot where the tenant has made some discoveries (*inter alia*, a fine Constantine the Great) which Mr. Watling hopes to follow up. Mickfield is sprinkled over with fictile debris. On the west, the valley between Needham Market and Stowmarket seems to have had quite a Roman settlement, and Stonham must have been a town. Coins ranging from Augustus to Constantine have been found on Earl Stonham glebe, a spindle whorl, pieces of querns, earthenware in great abundance and variety, much of it Samian, one piece marked SEVERI, and most likely made in one of the Colchester kilns discovered by Mr. George Joslin in March, 1877. There is every prospect of extensive discoveries being made here, if sufficient local interest be shown. About six miles further on, still following the "Great Road," Stoke Ash is reached, where coins and other Roman remains have been found. Conspicuous amongst these is a fine fragment of Samian ware, representing a hunting scene, as it seems, and marked with the name of a not unknown potter, Albucius, ALBVCI. Between Stoke Ash and Caister lie Long Stratton and Tasburgh, the former a suggestive name, the latter known by an earth-work.

It would have been much to the purpose to have added a detailed list of the coins found in these several localities, but this may yet be done. Enough has been brought forward, I hope, to show the probability of the Ninth Iter taking a westward course, and the general direction of a later road connecting Colchester with Caister-next-Norwich, and to encourage us in following up the traces of the difficult Fifth Iter, the *Via Devana*, and the coast-road from *Gariannonum*, now Burgh Castle, southwards