

NOTES ON ROMAN BRITAIN.

By F. HAVERFIELD, M.A.

A. THE FOUNDING OF VIROCONIUM.¹

The military operations of Ostorius Scapula, in Britain (*circa*, A.D. 50) are described by Tacitus in some detail, but with that fatal want of precision which ruins nearly all the Roman historian's military descriptions. One passage, which might otherwise be comparatively clear, is unfortunately corrupt. "As soon," says Tacitus,² "as Ostorius perceived signs of coming trouble, he disarmed the suspected tribes." Then—to quote the MS. reading—*cunctaque castris antonam³ et Sabrinam fluvios cohibere parat*. I propose to consider the emendation and interpretation of this passage.

It has usually been held that Ostorius erected a chain of forts from the Severn to the river denoted by the corrupt word *antonam*. Almost every river in the Midlands, has at one time or other, been pressed into service, but assent has been given generally to Mannert's conjective *Avonam*. Thus Nipperdey and Müller—the latest editors—read *Avonam inter*. Ostorius, on this view, erected forts from the Severn to the Warwickshire Avon. Some writers have, indeed, talked of the Bristol and Salisbury Avons, but these ideas require no refutation; they are geographically absurd. If *Avonam* is correct, the Warwickshire Avon must be meant.

There are, however, several objections to this view. (1) The military significance of the operation is not very clear. Why should a chain of forts have been drawn

¹ This, not Uriconium, seems to be the correct spelling.

² Annals, xii, 31.

³ The reading *antoam*, given in the English translation of Mommsen, *Roman Provinces*, i, 178 n, is a misprint.

along this particular line? There is not a word in Tacitus to confirm or explain such a proceeding. Again, the Avon is not a large river; it is of no strategic importance, and a line drawn from the Severn to it, simply ends in the air. Nor is the difficulty less if we assume, as one authority does, a line of forts "along the course of the two rivers," reading, I suppose, *ad Avonam*, not *Avonam inter*. Ostorius would not be at all likely to fortify the line of the Avon. (2) Besides this, no one has been able to point out these forts with any definiteness, nor is there much agreement among those who suggest sites. I do not, however, attach great importance to this point; forts might vanish in the lapse of years. (3) A more serious difficulty, and one which cuts at the root of all previous explanations, is supplied by the latin itself. We have really no warrant to translate *castris* "forts." The singular *castrum*, though often used by modern antiquaries in England and abroad, is rare in latin unless coupled with a proper name, like *Castrum Inui*. The plural *castra* denotes two things, (i) "a camp," and (ii) where the context implies plurality, "camps." I do not know any passage in any good writer where *castra* is simply the plural of *castrum*; certainly, as the index of Gerber and Graef shows, there is no such passage in Tacitus. The latin for "fort" is *castellum*, for forts *castella*. Now, in the passage before us, there is no implied notion of plurality, and we must therefore render "camp" and give up our "line of forts." Indeed, the best editors of Tacitus, tho' they accept *Avonam*, correctly render *castris* "a camp."

This rendering has also been adopted by Mommsen in his *Roman Provinces* (*Römische Geschichte*, v. 162.) He supposes that Ostorius fortified the site near the junction of the Tern and the Severn, which we know as Viroconium, making *Antonam* represent the otherwise unknown name of the Tern.¹ I think this view deserves general assent. Viroconium was certainly founded about this time, and "near Tern and Severn" is a good description of its position. It is, indeed, just the description given by the foreigner

¹ I think my friend, Mr. Searsh, in his remarks on this point (*Arch. Journal*,

xliv (1887), pp. 355-6, has misunderstood Mommsen's view.

Hübner sixteen years ago, before Mommsen's view was thought of.

I believe that a simple conjecture will greatly strengthen Mommsen's view, and I propose to read *castris ad Trisantonam*. The palaeographical alteration is very slight, far slighter than is involved in any rival hypothesis. The name *Trisantona* is well known as a British river name. Ptolemy mentions one in the south, which is probably the Sussex Avon. Now the name *Trisantona* would regularly pass into "Tryhannon" or some similar form,¹ and from Tryhannon to Tren—the older name of the Tern—is but a little step.

B. ROMAN ROADS IN SUSSEX.

It usually assumed, indeed it is an article of faith amongst Sussex Archæologists, that a Roman road ran along the south east coast of Sussex from Chichester to Pevensey, and Hübner has admitted it to his map of Roman Britain, marking it as *certa sed non explorata*. I have lately ventured to deny that this road is proved, and, as I have been told I am unreasonably sceptical, I should like to briefly state what I believe to be the facts.

The arguments for the road are *a priori* and *a posteriori*. It is contended, (1) that the road must have existed, and (2) that we have evidence of its existence.

(1) It is not unnatural to suppose that there was some communication between Pevensey and Chichester. The former may, I suppose, be assumed to be Anderida; the latter represents the capital of the Regni, whatever exactly that capital was called. The district between the two towns was also occupied by the Romans, or by civilized Britons, to an extent which, if not so great as has been thought, was certainly considerable. But it does not follow from this that there must have been a road. First, there was no great need of communication between Chichester and Pevensey. Chichester was, an important town, but nearly all the coins and other datable remains found in it belong to a period before 270 A.D. Pevensey on the other hand, belongs to the 4th century. The *Notitia*, as Mommsen has pointed out, represents the military condition of Britain, as it was about 300 A.D.,

¹ Rhys, *Celtic Britain* (ed. 2) p. 80, H. Bradley, in *Academy*, May 19, 1883.

and is perhaps connected with the reforms of Diocletian.¹ Anderida then must have risen as Chichester declined—a fact which would be suggested by the coin finds alone.² Secondly, as to the civilized inhabitants of the intermediate districts, Avisford, Clayton, Duncton, Eastbourne and so forth. It seems not impossible that these people may have communicated with one another, and with the outer world, over the treeless downs or along the shore in coasting vessels. We know that, 1500 years ago, the estuaries of the Sussex rivers, Adur, Arun, Ouse and so forth, were very much larger than they now are and General Pitt-Rivers has pointed out that the arrangements of the pre-Roman fortresses, Chanctonbury, Cissbury and the rest seem based upon this fact. Southern Sussex was, in fact, broken up into several pieces by these rivers, and the probabilities are rather against land communications. It is not difficult to construct, from the evidence supplied by Dixon and Dallaway, a map of Sussex as it was before the Norman Conquest, and anyone who will do so, will, I think, admit that the Chichester and Pevensey road does not look so very probable. The fortress of the "Saxon Shore" *portus Adurni* belongs, of course, to the same date as Anderida. It is usually placed at the mouth of the Adur, but without real grounds. It is almost certain that the river was called Adur only after and because the *portus Adurni* had been located by Camden near its mouth.

(2) An examination into the evidence for the existence of the road, will I believe, equally lead to scepticism and a verdict of non-proven. There are a vast number of statements in print relating to this road, but, so far as I can judge, nearly all these statements are simple statements. A Roman road is a definite thing; it is not any old trackway which will serve as a specimen of Roman work. And what I miss in the statements about the "road" is just the evidence required to prove it Roman. The facts amount to the following. Between Chichester and Shoreham there is no trace of a road. A good many

¹ It is to be regretted that English antiquaries have so far ignored Mommsen's settlement of the question, and go on referring the British chapters of the *Notitia* to 400 A.D. The main bulk of

the *Notitia*, no doubt, belongs to the later date.

² The coin finds at Chichester range (roughly) between A.D. 50-270, those at Pevensey between A.D. 280-380.

assertions have been made, but no one really pretends to have discovered a Roman way. For the section from Shoreham to Brighton the ultimate authority is a remark in Relhan's *History of Brighton* (p. 8 in the 1st ed.), but this remark is just one of those assertions which cannot be accepted untested, and it gives no indication of the course of the alleged road. East of Brighton the case is somewhat different. Near Ditchling and Glynde there are undeniable remains of old trackways, but it is uncertain whether these are British or Roman. General Pitt-Rivers decides in favour of the former, but it is quite possible that the Romans used the roads. From thence to Pevensey, the statements are most conflicting. The supposed road has been traced in many places, but these places do not fit in. A map of them would shew parallel pieces, gaps, and a general direction by no means straight. Besides, there is, here too, a distinct want of proof. An old way can be traced through certain fields, says one writer; it is, therefore, assumed to be Roman, and yet it is most uncritical to make the assumption.

I shall be asked why, with all this lack of evidence, the road was ever conjectured to have existed. I am afraid that "Richard of Cirencester" (*i.e.* Bertram), and the false reputations of Arundel and Lewes are most to blame. Bertram saw, no doubt, that a road from Chichester to Pevensey joined together what seemed two points of a V. He therefore, for the edification of Stukely and to the confusion of real research, drew the road and put into the 15th *iter* the details

Regno

ad decimum x

anderida portu mp . . .

Clearly he saw that Arundel would form a convenient station, so he inserted it, unfortunately giving it a name which is—in form—unparalleled in the itineraries of Britain. He did not, however,—nor did anyone till 1852—know for certain the site of Anderida, so he omitted the distance from Arundel, and left a gap between Anderida, and the next entry, *Ad lemanum*. Most unfortunately, his forgery was not detected for nearly 100

years. Antiquaries went on believing in the road, and naturally they "saw" it—the wish was father to the thought. Naturally enough they saw it at Arundel and Lewes, for there they believed Roman stations to have existed. But it is a literal fact that no Roman remains of any sort have been found in Arundel; the importance of the place is first apparent in Domesday Book. At Lewes something has been found, but nothing to prove a settlement,—an urn or two, a few coins, a fibula. Such things occur round Lewes; they are traces of the time when the Roman armies stormed the hill forts on the neighbouring heights, and they occur most abundantly on Mount Caburn and the earthworks connected with it. Of a Roman settlement in or near Lewes there is no trace.

C. EPIGRAPHICA.

1. In the *Archæological Journal* for 1886, (xliii. 286) Mr. W. T. Watkin gives a new description "recently found built up into a wall at the Bishop's Palace, Chichester." The inscription runs thus:—

<p>RIAM NVMAT</p>
<p>XV</p>

At first sight it is obvious that the reading is suspicious. The first line of a Roman inscription could hardly end with RIAM. A modern enquirer, thinks, of IN or AD MEMORIAM. This phrase does occur, usually abbreviated (e.g. Wilmanns 82, from Aquileia), but, so far as I know, seldom at the commencement of sepulchral inscriptions. I was therefore tempted to examine the stone myself. I found it in a corner of the Bishop's garden but not "built into a wall": indeed, so far as I could find out, it never had been built into a wall. As far as could be deciphered, it read.

<p>M</p>
<p>IIV.....AT</p>
<p>S</p>

The letter M is larger than the letters below it, the down-

strokes being $2\frac{1}{3}$ inches high. It was also plain that there were no letters immediately before it; the first line of the inscription must have read I.O.M. or D.M. the latter being the more likely. It is, indeed, no new inscription but simply one discovered in 1809 in the S.E. part of the walls, published by Dallaway and Horsfield, and reprinted by Hübner (C.I.L. vii, 14). In 1809 more of the stone was surviving than now. The inscription was then, as Hübner gives it

M
 NVSAT
 ARIVS
 LXXXV

Of course the fragment is not, in itself, of any importance, but inscribed stones are so rare in Southern England, and indeed in any part of England except the four northern counties, that it is doubly necessary to be correct in dealing with them. This inscription, then, is not, as the archæologists thought in 1885, a new find, but a stone published half a century ago.

2. In the Chichester Museum are to be seen some fragments of a marble inscription from Densworth, which were copied by Hübner (C.I.L., vii, 17). It has not been noticed that these fragments are almost certainly the fragments alluded to by a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 1858 i, 532.

3. It may be convenient to print here the names of potters on the so-called "Samian ware" preserved in the Chichester Museum.

ABII from the "East walls" Hübner 1336, 501.

I should read FABII, as there are traces of a letter before A. "Fabius" has been found in London.

CESORINI This stamp is not given by Hübner, but is quoted by Mr. Roach Smith from the Allier valley (Coll. Ant., vi, 71), and the Compiègne district (vii, 26). CENSORINI is commoner.

COCVRO . F quoted by Hübner (331) from London, Colchester, Castor and York, by Mr. Roach Smith from France (*l.c.*) vi, 72).

CRACVNA . F Hübner No. 358, Roach Smith *Roman, London*, p. 106.

IVLLINIM *ib.* 530.

ÆCVL'ARISF *ib.* 823.

REBVRRIE - OF *ib.* 898.

SIIXTIM *ib.* 1062.

TAVRICIM Hübner has TAVRICVSF and TAVRICIF (1110-1).

4. Mr. W. T. Watkin (*Roman-Lancashire*, p. 187) quotes among the potters' marks found at Lancaster the name IMANNI, and the same mark is given by Mr. Roach-Smith (*Roman-London*, p. 104), IMANN. Hübner who saw the piece read IMAVA and puts it beside a supposed IMBAN from Aldborough (No. 515). IMAN is quoted from the Allier valley (*Coll. Ant.* vi, 72). I suspect these marks, mostly imperfect, are really variations of CINNAMI. The name very often appears with letters reversed: thus CINNAWI occurs in the Pesth Museum, CINNVMI is said to have been found in London and IMANNIO is quoted from Picardy. These last three facts I borrow from Descemet (*Inscriptions Doliaries Latins*, Paris 1880), who (pp. 138-154) discusses the meaning of these inverted letters. His conclusion is that they are sometimes errors, more often distinguishing marks of different or rival factories.