

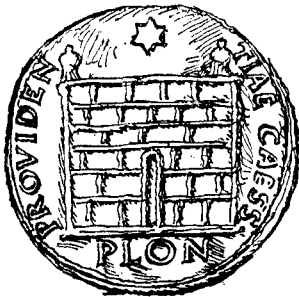
THE EARLIEST VIEWS OF LONDON

BY

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BY way of supplementing the early pictorial representations of London which appeared in the last Part of the *Transactions* of our Society (N.S. Vol. iv, Part v) reference should be made to a Roman coin which Professor Lethaby suggests is illustrative of Roman London and the Roman Wall. In addition, the information which has come to hand concerning the medallion, discovered near Arras in 1922, may also be given; while as regards Holbein's Glimpse of London, also described in the previous Paper, two illustrations here accompany a further note.

CONSTANTINIAN COIN.—When discussing the Roman Wall round London, Prof. Lethaby suggests that a point of evidence for the date of its erection may be found in a Constantinian coin of which he gives an illustration (*Londinium*, 1923, pp. 74-5, fig. 37).¹ The coin shows a completed



length of a wall of squared ashlar with a narrow vertical opening, or arched gate-way and statues at each end of the wall. There appears the inscription PROVIDENTIAE CAESS and the lettering P LON—the mint-mark of London. "This device" says Prof. Lethaby "was not invented for London, but I cannot think that at such a time it could have been adopted

if Londinium still remained an open city The coin was issued between 320 and 324, and I suggest that it may

¹ Thanks are due to Prof. Lethaby and to Messrs. Duckworth and Co. (*The Builder*) for their kind permission to reproduce the illustration of the Constantinian Coin.

be accepted as a record of the walling of the City, or, perhaps more probably, the beginnings of the works." Prof. Lethaby submits that the restoration of the mint at London by Valentinian in 368 is a probable date for the completion of the river-wall.

Although it is possible that the adoption of the coin with its mural device would not have taken place if London had still been without its wall, yet the appearance of the device upon coins struck at several Continental mints raises a doubt as to its special significance with respect to London. The coin differs therefore from the gold medallion of Constantius, described below, which seems to be special to London.

MEDALLION; LONDON, A.D. 296-306.—A postscript upon page 375 of our *Transactions* announced a newspaper report of the discovery of a hoard at Arras and the representation upon one of the specimens of the entry of the Emperor Constantius Chlorus into London.¹

The medallion was found at Beaurains near Arras, in September 1922, in a hoard of some three hundred of which only sixty have been recovered. The hoard also contained jewels. The medallion is of gold, weighs 53 gr. 10, and measures 42 mm. in diameter. According to the *Daily News*, February 28, 1924, the market value of the medallion would probably be £5,000. It was struck to commemorate the return of Britain to the Roman Empire, A.D., 296, after the revolt of Carausius.

As may be seen from the illustration, which is twice the size of the original, the triumphant Emperor Constantius Chlorus is being welcomed by the kneeling figure of Britannia. Above, there appears the inscription, *Redditor Lucis Aeternae*—restorer of the eternal light. In the exergue are the

¹ By the courtesy of the Editor of *Arcthusa* (Paris) permission has been given to reproduce here the illustrations which appeared in the January number of that Review, 1924, and to utilize information contained in the article by MM. Babelon and Duquesnoy, which accompanied the illustrations. To these gentlemen, thanks are tendered. To Mr. O. S. Crawford, F.S.A., I am indebted and also to the Editor of *The Observer*.



HOLBEIN CARTOON; DELIVERY OF CHARTER TO THE BARBER-SURGEONS, 1335.

latters PTR (percussa Treveri) indicating that the medallion was struck at the mint of Trèves, the capital of Gaul. At the lower right hand are the letters LON (Londinium). In the foreground there is a stretch of water bearing a non-masted galley with a single bank of rowers and steersman. Upon the deck is seen a row of helmeted soldiers while at the poop a covered cabin is depicted.

The obverse of the medallion gives a vivid portrait of the Emperor who is better known as the father of Constantine the Great. The inscription is FL(avicis) VAL(entius) CONSTANTIUS NUBIL(is) CAES(ar).

For present purposes, the interest in the medallion lies in its representation of what can be taken to be the Wall of Roman London with the Thames at its foot together with the boat that brought the triumphant Emperor to our shores. The Wall, with ashlar depicted in much the same manner as in the coin instanced by Prof. Lethaby (*supra*), is shown with capped towers flanking the Gate from which the kneeling figure has emerged. Above the wall there seems to be an attempt to indicate tiled roofing or possibly a continuation of the wall in perspective, together with a finial or statue somewhat as in the Constantinian coin.

Granting that the Wall of London is shown, we have then a reliable date when the Wall was in existence viz., between A.D. 296 and the death of Constantius Chlorus in 306. For an earlier date when the Wall had not been built, we may cite Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A. Mr. Reginald Smith is of opinion that a burial in Moorfields with a coin of Salonina, wife of Gallienus, A.D. 253-268 (V.C.H. *London*, Vol. I, p. 23), shows that Moorfields at that time was not the marsh which developed as a result of the erection of the Wall with the consequent partial damming of the Walbrook, the Walbrook entering the City at this place.

HOLBEIN'S GLIMPSE OF LONDON, 1535.—By the kindness of the Royal College of Surgeons, a reproduction is here given of the Holbein cartoon, which, in the possession of the

College, commemorates the delivery of the charter to the Barber-Surgeons by Henry VIII. The full view of the cartoon may be compared with the view of the picture which illustrating the same event hangs in the Hall of the Barbers' Company, Monkwell Street, *Transactions* (Vol. vi, pp. 132-3). As mentioned in *The Earliest Views of London* (p. 370), the window in the Holbein Cartoon, unlike that in the Barbers' picture, is unobscured, affording as it does a glimpse of contemporary London. From the illustration of the window which is here given, an idea of the buildings in Old London as they are dimly to be seen outside, can be obtained. As stated previously, it is doubtful however what buildings apart from the spired structure of Old St. Paul's are intended to be represented.

CORRIGENDUM.—The printing below the plates which face pages 353 and 364 respectively of the last *Transactions* (N.S. Vol. iv, Part v), should be transposed.