

ANNALS OF CAMBRIDGE.

FABULOUS HISTORY.

“I humbly conceive the credit of either University is sufficiently established, without the advantage in point of time. There's no need of torturing a text, catching at bare possibilities, and applying almost to romances for belief. They are both of 'em, without contest, the most illustrious seats of learning in Europe; and since they are thus well founded in merit, *what occasion is there to strain for antiquity, to have recourse to questionable records, and run as it were into the dark for light and evidence.*”

JEREMY COLLIER.(1)

THE improbable statements of our older writers respecting the early history of Cambridge having been frequently appealed to in the disputes as to the relative antiquity of Oxford and Cambridge, some notice of these legends seems necessary.

According to some of these statements, Cambridge owes its origin to one Cantaber a Spanish Prince, who being banished from his native country, was hospitably received by Gurguntius King of Britain, who gave him the hand of his daughter Guenolena, and with her the eastern part of Britain. Cantaber built a large city on the river Cante, where he placed and maintained at his own charge, a society of astronomers and philosophers brought from Athens, in which city he had himself been educated.

(1) Ecclesiastical History, i. 169.

With respect to the *time* of Cantaber's foundation there is some difference. Nicholas Cantalupe, (a Carmelite who died about the middle of the fifteenth century,) ⁽¹⁾ assigns the date of A.M. 4321; John Lydgate, ⁽²⁾ the poetical monk of Bury, that of A.M. 4348; and Dr. Caius, ⁽³⁾ the still earlier one of A.M. 3588. Holinshed ⁽⁴⁾ refers to a statement of Caxton, that Cambridge was first built by Gorbomen, or Gorbonian, who was king of Britain from A.M. 3676 to 3686.

It were needless to relate all the incidents which are said to have occurred in this University or City of Scholars (as it is termed) subsequent to Cantaber's foundation; but it may be observed, that the eminent Grecian philosophers Anaximander and Anaxagoras are asserted to have been Tutors here, and that King Cassibelan is said to have granted privileges to the Scholars, several of whom were removed to Rome by Julius Cæsar!!!

The list of the Rectors or Chancellors of this University commences with Amphibalus the Martyr, in A.D. 289.⁽⁵⁾

It is stated that about A.D. 303, a party of British cruelly and inhumanly massacred all the Christian Students in the University; the utter destruction of which was effected about a century afterwards by Pelagius, whose heresies when a student here had been vehemently opposed by the orthodox Doctors. It must, however, be observed, that the first of these events is stated by some writers to have happened at Winchester, to certain monks of that place; whilst the monks of Westminster are said by others to have been the victims of this barbarous ebullition of Pagan zeal.⁽⁶⁾

Some authors, whilst they completely disregard the preceding fables, relate that the University owes its origin to Sigebert or Sigberct, King of the East Angles, by whom it was founded, in A.D. 637; whilst those who support its claim to a still greater antiquity allege that it was then restored by him. The authority for Sigebert's supposed foundation rests entirely upon a statement of the venerable Bede,⁽⁷⁾ that this monarch at the period referred to, instituted a school in his kingdom for the instruction of youth. There is nothing, however, to show that this school was established at Cambridge; and although the University yet commemorates King Sigebert as its founder, his right to that distinction appears very little stronger than that of the ideal Cantaber.

(1) Sprotti Chron., ed Hearne, 238—280. R. Parker, Hist. of Cambridge, 1—23.

(2) MS. Baker, xxiv. 249. Retrospective Review, (new ser.) i. 498.

(3) Caius, Hist. Cantabr. Acad., 4.

(4) Holinshed, Historie of Englande, ed. 1577, i. 30.

(5) R. Parker, Hist. of Cambridge, 188. (from MS. Cott. Faust. c. iii. fo. 81.)

(6) Fuller, Church History of Britain, 8vo. edit., vol. i. p. 34.

(7) Bedæ Hist. Ecclesiast. Gentis Anglorum, lib. iii., cap. 18. See Fuller, Church History of Britain, 8vo. edit. vol. i. p. 111.

The claim of the University to a royal founder and a remote origin, has been supported by Royal Charters and Papal Bulls. These however are palpably fictitious.

By one of the Charters, dated at London, the 7th April, A.D. 531, King Arthur exonerates the Scholars of Cambridge from public taxes and burthensome works, in order that the Doctors and Scholars might pursue the study of literature undisturbed, as had been decreed by King Lucius, who had embraced Christianity by the preaching of the Doctors of Cambridge.⁽¹⁾

Another Charter is dated at Cambridge, A.D. 681: by it King Cadwald grants to Almericus, Rector of the Schools of Cambridge, power to punish all crimes, (high treason excepted,) together with all such privileges as had been granted by his ancestors Asclepiodorus, Constantine, Uterpendragon, Arthur, and by his father Ceadwal.⁽²⁾

A third Charter is stated to have been given at Grantchester, A.D. 915, by the hands of Frithstanus, Chancellor of the City of Scholars of Cambridge. It purports to be granted by King Edward the elder, (who is said to have restored the University after the burning of Cambridge by the Danes,) and by it he confirms to the Doctors and Scholars of Cambridge, "*quamdiu vertigo Poli terras ac æquora circa æthera siderum justo moderamine volverit,*" all such privileges as had been granted them by his ancestors.⁽³⁾

The Bulls are ascribed to Honorius I. and Sergius I., and are dated respectively A.D. 624 and 689. They prohibit the interference of all Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers in the affairs of the University, more especially in any suspensions or excommunications by the Chancellor or Rectors.⁽⁴⁾

In 1430, the originals of these pretended Bulls were stated to have been lost or destroyed upwards of 70 years, but copies of them were received in evidence on a judicial investigation which then took place relative to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the University, their validity being recognised by the Pope's Delegate, whose sentence was duly confirmed at Rome.⁽⁵⁾

The Bull attributed to Pope John X.⁽⁶⁾ was in reality granted by John XXII., in 1318.

(1) Sprotti Chron., ed. Hearne, 268. R. Parker, *Hist. of Cambridge*, 6 & 16. Dyer, *Privileges of Univ. of Cambridge*, i. 55.

(2) Sprotti Chron., ed. Hearne, 272. R. Parker, *Hist. of Cambridge*, 9 & 17. Dyer, *Privileges of Univ. of Cambridge*, i. 56.

(3) Sprotti Chron., ed. Hearne, 279. R. Parker, *Hist. of Cambridge*, 15 & 18. Dyer, *Privileges of Univ. of Cambridge*, i. 57. Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, 8vo. edit., vol. i. p. 190. Collier, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 173, 174.

(4) Sprotti Chron., ed. Hearne, 253, 255. R. Parker, *Hist. of Cambridge*, 19, 21. Dyer, *Privileges of Univ. of Cambridge*, i. 58, 59.

(5) *Hist. of Barnwell Abbey*, App., No. xiii.

(6) Sprotti Chron., ed. Hearne, 256. R. Parker, *Hist. of Cambridge*, 22. Dyer, *Privileges of Univ. of Cambridge*, i. 60.

THE BRITONS AND ROMANS.

CAMBRIDGE, situate in the country anciently inhabited by the tribes called the Simeni or Icenii, is conjectured to have been the British city denominated CAIR GRAUNTH⁽¹⁾

From the remains discovered or discernible at and in the immediate neighbourhood of Cambridge, there is every reason to conclude that here was a Roman station.

This station was, no doubt, situate on the north bank of the river, a spot likely to have been fixed upon, as being sheltered by the ground rising to the north, and gently declining to the southern sun.

Dr. Stukeley thus describes the site of this station (which he terms the city of Granta):—"I have, in company with Mr. Roger Gale, traced out the vestiges of that city, without any difficulty; being an oblong square which was walled about and ditched, the Roman road which comes in a strait line from Huntingdon hither, runs through the midst of it, and so in a strait line through the town by Christ's College and Emanuel to Gogmagog Hills where it passes by Bartlow and Haverhill in Essex, probably to Colchester, the *Camulodunum colonia*. In the garden of Pythagoras's school, south and west of that building, the trace of the ditch of the Roman Granta may easily be discerned; and the turn or angle of it, to which the angle of that building corresponds. Then the west side of the ditch runs on the outside of the late Mr. Ketil's house, and turns quite on the outside of the town on the north, so round the outside of the Castle through Magdalen College close which is the south side of it. The terrace walk in that college,

(1) Nennii *Historia Britonum*, ed. Gale, 115. *Collectanea Curiosa*, ii. 413.

is the vallum whereon the Roman wall stood. then it runs by the south side of St. Giles's church-yard to the garden of Pythagoras's school. the longest side of this city from east to west was 2500 Roman feet. the shortest side from north to south 2000 so that the road cuts it in the middle." (1)

Dr. Mason thought some of the works at the Castle might perhaps be British, especially the mount, though the latter has been usually supposed to be Danish. He considered the Castle was the Prætorium of the Roman station. (2)

The ancient fosse appears to have been from 10 to 12 feet deep and 39 feet broad, both sides having a slope. Of the wall, on the interior edge of this fosse, some remains were discovered in March, 1804; the materials in the foundation consisted of flinty pebbles, fragments of Roman brick, and ragstone, very firmly cemented. (3)

Roman coins have been found within or near the Castle at various periods. (2) In 1802, and the seven following years, there were discovered a great number of ancient coins on this spot; 41 of the first brass, 25 of the second, 86 of the third, and 16 of silver, besides others which fell into the hands of bystanders, and as many destroyed on account of their legends being worn away. Three of the coins were British, the rest Roman. (4)

In digging the foundations of the present County Gaol, and in works at or very near the same place, in 1802 and 1803, many other remains of the Romans were discovered: namely, urns of great variety of colour, shape, and decoration, some very elegant; (5) pateræ and other sacrificing utensils, embellished with figures, on some the hunting of a hare, others the chasing of a stag, others the figures of rabbits, like those on the coins of Hadrian; querns, lacrymatories, a celt or spear-head, one foot in length but corroded by time; an armilla or bracelet of brass, encircling two small bones of a human arm; a variety of amphoræ, some with two ears some with one only and others without any; and several fragments of green and blue glass. (6)

Between October, 1805, and April, 1806, several broken Roman vessels were found at the Castle, together with four urns of dark brown clay nearly entire, and one of white marl unbroken, a cinerary urn of black earth, and many fragments of beautiful red pottery. (6)

(1) Stukeley, *Palaeographica Britannica*, No. II., p. 36.

(2) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 310

(3) MS. Bowtell, ii. 96, 98, 166.

(4) *Ibid.*, 191, 71. One of the British coins was similar to that represented in Gibson's Camden, tab. 2, fig. 5. Amongst the Roman coins was one of Vespasian, in fine preservation.

(5) See *Archæologia*, xix. 409, pl. XLII.

(6) MS. Bowtell, ii. 166, 167, 179. The account in the Gentleman's Magazine for November, 1802, of a Greek Olla having been found here, is said to have been a "glaring imposition." (MS. Bowtell, ii. 160.)

Dr. Stukeley says that he and Roger Gale, in walking about the ploughed fields on the outside of the Castle, took up great quantities of fragments of bricks, tiles, and Roman pottery ware; and that Dr. Warren, of Trinity Hall, shewed them many Roman coins found in the gardens belonging to the Castle, and by a house there belonging to Mr. Ketil, together with Roman vessels of fine red earth, with figures on them, and of glass.⁽¹⁾

Mr. Gough informs us that he had picked up fragments of urns amongst the corn in the adjoining fields.⁽²⁾

In March 1804 there was dug up, about a hundred paces from the north-west side of the Roman ditch and on the west side of the turnpike gate leading to Huntingdon, an ancient cornelian intaglio (set in a finger-ring of silver) representing Mercury, with the caduceus in his left and a purse in his right hand; and near the same spot was found a bronze figure of Mercury, only two inches high, with wings issuing from his bonnet as well as his feet, and holding a purse in his left hand.⁽³⁾

There are, or were, Roman bricks or tiles within the walls of St. Peter's Church, which Mr. Essex, an architect of celebrity in his day, was of opinion had been erected on the site of a Roman temple.⁽⁴⁾

Where the Great Bridge is situate, Dr. Stukeley considers the Romans had a ford across the river;⁽⁵⁾ and near here many Roman coins have been found.⁽⁶⁾ Mr. Essex, in rebuilding the Great Bridge, is said to have discovered the foundation of a bridge which had been erected at that spot in very early times, and which he conceived to be of Roman workmanship;⁽⁷⁾ there was at the same time found a bronze bust, the ornament of a standard, which Dr. Stukeley fancied to represent Oriuna the wife of the Emperor Carausius.⁽⁸⁾

Dr. Edward Daniel Clarke, in 1820, communicated with the Society of Antiquaries on the subject of an ancient signet discovered in Cambridge. He describes it as an intaglio, executed in a very singular variety of jasper, of the hardest kind he had ever seen, striped reddish and yellowish brown, not unlike the hydrate of Silica found in India, which goes by the name of petrified tamarind tree. From the conjunction of certain symbols, (viz. 1. the *præfericulum*, 2. the *patera*, 3. the *quirinal* or

(1) Stukeley, *Palaeographica Britannica*, No. II. p. 37. See Sir Egerton Brydges's *Restituta*, iv. 388 (from MS. Cole.)

(2) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 218.

(3) MS. Bowtell, ii. 175.

(4) *Ibid.*, iii. 742.

(5) Stukeley, *Itinerarium Curiosum*, i. 78.

(6) Gale, on Antoninus, 92.

(7) Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 41.

(8) *Reliquiæ Galeanæ*, 53 n.

tendrill-shaped lituus, 4. the *secespita*, 5. the *pedum*;) Dr. Clarke inferred it was the signet of one who was Pontifex Maximus, which, after the subversion of the Roman republic was always held by the Emperors; and he was of opinion, that the letters A V appearing on this signet signified Augustus.⁽¹⁾

On making the turnpike road from Cambridge to Huntingdon, a barrow near Howe's House was removed, which contained several Roman coins.⁽²⁾

At Arbury, in the parish of Chesterton, was a large squarish camp in which Roman coins have been found, particularly one of silver, with the head of Rome on one side and Castor and Pollux on horseback on the reverse.⁽³⁾

On Gogmagog Hills was a camp called Vandlebury, triple trenched with two ditches, rudely circular, and of 246 paces diameter. This has been supposed to be British, and it was on the hill, as the British manner was.⁽⁴⁾ Dr. Gale, however, considered it Roman notwithstanding its circular form, there being several instances in which the Romans did not confine themselves to a square, but consulted the nature and convenience of the ground.⁽⁵⁾ Dr. Stukeley conceived it was called Vandlebury from its having been the camp of the Vandals and Burgundians whom Probus transported from the Continent into Britain.⁽⁶⁾

In 1685 many Roman coins were dug out at this place. Dr. Gale had several of them, all of the Emperors Valentinian I. and Valens.⁽⁷⁾ In 1730 several large brass Roman coins and a silver ring were found, and in 1752 a small brass coin of Nero, inscribed "NERO CLAVD. CAES. DRVSVS GER. IVVENT," and having on the reverse a globe.⁽⁴⁾ On digging the foundation of Lord Godolphin's house there were found a knuckle-ring, with coins of Trajan and Antoninus Pius.⁽⁸⁾

In 1778, one of the tumuli on the Gogmagog Hills was destroyed. At the bottom were found deposited seven skeletons, six of them were laid close together in a parallel direction, their heads pointing due north; the seventh lay in a different direction, the head pointing due west and the feet pointing to the side of the nearest of the six, forming a right

(1) *Archaeologia*, xix. 401., p. xi. Dr. Clarke states this signet to have been recently discovered in Cambridge, under circumstances rather of a remarkable nature, but which do not appear.

(2) Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 44.

(3) Gale, on Antoninus, 92. Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 226. (from MS. Aubrey.)

(4) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 226.

(5) Gale, on Antoninus, 93.

(6) Stukeley, *Medallic Hist. of Carausius*, i. 58.

(7) Gale, on Antoninus, 93. Bowtell mentions coins of Cunobeline found here. (MS. Bowtell, ii. 96.)

(8) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 227. See a curious legend respecting Vandlebury, cited from Gervase of Tilbury, in Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*, Note 2, II; and Cambridge Portfolio, 114.

angle therewith, and so composing a large T with six tops. The tumulus was composed of a fine light brown soil, which must have been collected purposely and from some distance, as the natural soil or earth of the hills consists first of a thin stratum of light soil, then gravel, then chalk, to a considerable depth. The earth immediately enclosing the bones was distinguished from the rest by a blueish tint, imagined to have been communicated to it by the putrefaction of the fleshy parts of the body. The tumulus was situated about 60 yards from the Roman road across the hills.⁽¹⁾

On the 3d August, 1816, some labourers employed in lowering the road from Cambridge towards London, upon the top of a small eminence, called Huckeridge Hill, near Sawston, discovered the remains of a human skeleton lying about three feet below the surface. At the feet of the skeleton stood two vessels of ancient bronze; the larger of these was ornamented on the rim by chase work in bosses all round the circumference; it measured 15 inches in diameter. The other had a place on one side with a hole in it, as if there had been receptacles for a semicircular handle; it measured 10 inches in diameter. On the left side of the skeleton were found some fragments of the coarsest black terra cotta half an inch in thickness, also an iron sword two feet seven inches and a half in length, in a state of advanced decomposition. There was, besides, a massy bronze ring, which proved upon examination to have been the foot of the larger vessel. There were also part of the umbo of a shield of iron and a bronze brooch or buckle, formed so as to resemble an Amphisbœna or double-headed serpent. Dr. E. D. Clarke was of opinion that there were circumstances which seemed to refer these antiquities to an earlier period than the time of the Romans in Britain, otherwise the situation of this sepulchre so near to the public road, added to the vicinity of the old military station at Gogmagog Hills, might induce an opinion of its Roman origin. A few years before several lance heads and celts were discovered near the same spot.⁽²⁾

Many Roman antiquities have been found at Trumpington. In 1719 Mr. Thompson of that place had a great many vases, some of metal curiously cast, and others of several sorts of earth, all found between Trumpington and Cambridge. Lord Harley (afterwards Earl of Oxford) offered £30 for them, but that sum was refused.⁽³⁾ They were perhaps, however, purchased by his Lordship subsequently, as he had several beautiful vases and pateræ found here. A vase discovered at this place has been engraved.⁽⁴⁾ Mr. Gough had a drawing by Beaupre Bell of a

(1) Letter from Rev. Michael Tyson to Gough, in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, viii. 631.

(2) *Archæologia*, xviii. 341., pl. xxiv & xxv.

(3) *Reliquiæ Galeanæ*, 120.

(4) *Camden, Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. pl. v. fig. 6.

patera found here, having in the centre a griffin tearing a stag, surrounded by a border of dogs, bears, hares, &c., and an outer one of flowers.⁽¹⁾ About the middle of the last century, there were found in a gravel pit near the Vicar's brook, against the first mile-stone from Cambridge, many curious pateræ of fine red earth, a large vase 3 feet long, brass lagenæ, a brass dish embossed, the handle of a sacrificing knife, the brasses of a table-book, some large bones, and Roman coins, all of which were deposited in Trinity College Library.⁽²⁾

In April 1803, a labourer dug up at Trumpington, near the first mile-stone, a coin of the first brass, inscribed "IMP. CÆS. NER. TRAIANO OPTIMO. AVG. GER. DAC. P. M." having a fair laureated bust of the Emperor; the reverse illegible.⁽³⁾

In 1817, some labourers digging on Fulbourn Common, discovered two swords, a spear head, and two ferrules (supposed to have been the feet of spears) all of bronze. Dr. E. D. Clarke considered the swords, however, were after the Grecian model, differing essentially both as to shape and material from the swords in use among the Romans. A similar sword was found many years previously in the river Cam between Cambridge and Ely.⁽⁴⁾

A tumulus called Hay Hill, standing by the remains of the old Roman road westward of Cambridge, beyond the village of Barton towards Wimpole was opened by Dr. E. D. Clarke in the summer of 1817. Near this spot had been previously found a chain with six collars for conducting captives, and a double fulcrum intended to support a spit for roasting meat, the coals being placed under the spit, illustrating a well known passage in Virgil :—

"Subjiciunt verubus prunas et viscera torrent."

On opening the tumulus there were found upon the floor of the tomb, about nine feet from the summit, the remains of a human skeleton; the head, separated from the body, was lying upon the right ear north and south, the top of the skull pointing to the south; the bones of the body were lying east and west.

In April, 1818, some labourers digging gravel near the same tumulus, discovered at the same distance and on the same side of the Roman road, fourteen inches below the surface of the soil, a rude stone slab, covering the mouth of an Amphora. Upon raising the stone, there were found within the Amphora, which was full of water, a black terra cotta vase

(1) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough, ii. 229.

(2) *Ibid.*, 219. These seem the same antiquities as those mentioned by Carter (*History of Cambridgeshire*, 288) to have been discovered at Dam Hill, near the River Cam. Bowtell conjectures that there was a manufactory of pottery at this place, and mentions some bricks, with curious scriptural devices, supposed to have been found here. See MS. Bowtell ii. 171, 179;—*Cambridge Portfolio*, i. 264.

(3) MS. Bowtell, ii. 189.

(4) *Archæologia* xix. 56, pl. iv.

of elegant form, half filled with human bones; also two other smaller vessels of red terra cotta with handles.⁽¹⁾

Armillaë were discovered in digging gravel near Harston, in March, 1802.⁽²⁾

The Roman road from Colchester to Chester, passed through Cambridge, from Gogmagog Hills, towards Huntingdon.⁽³⁾

At Gogmagog Hills there appears to have been a branch road to Grantchester, and perhaps another to Chesterton. These Horsley thinks it probable united again afterwards.⁽⁴⁾ Dr. Bennett, Bishop of Cloyne, considered, however, that the Grantchester branch fell into the Roman way from Cambridge to Sandy, at Barton; but his lordship remarks, "It must not be concealed, however, that some antiquaries of the present day are not convinced of the existence of this vicinal road; and though they confess it to have all the marks of a trackway used in ancient times, are inclined to account for these appearances by the supposition that, when the Roman bridge and causeway were destroyed by the barbarians, travellers naturally looked on each side of the ruined station for the nearest fords, and passed the river Cam at Grantchester and Chesterton, as they did the Ouze at Offord and Hemingford; and as no signs of a raised causeway appear in this line, the idea is by no means destitute of plausibility. Of this, however, any one who traces it may judge for himself."⁽⁵⁾

Another road, leading from the north-east coast of Norfolk to St. David's, passed through Cambridge. The course of the road from Ely was by King's hedges (within a short distance of Arbury camp, to which it seems to have thrown off a road) to the north-east gate of Cambridge Castle, whence it passed by Barton (where was a tumulus, the usual attendant on ways of this sort) to Sandy.⁽⁶⁾

Dr. Mason traced a branch road from the above at Orwell to Ashwell, pointing towards St. Albans.⁽⁷⁾

The communication between Chesterford and Cambridge, Bishop Bennett considered was by a military way, which probably proceeded in the course of the present turnpike road by Sawston and Great Shelford, in the latter of which villages, very near the road, on the east side of it, on a farm called Graham's, is or was a very complete Roman camp, with a square vallum and fosse.⁽⁸⁾ Horsley was assured that the

(1) *Archæologia*, xix, 56. pl. iv.

(2) MS. Bowtell, ii. 167.

(3) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough ii. 219.—Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 44.

(4) Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, xxix. 431.

(5) Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 45.

(6) *Ibid.*, 45, 46.—Stukeley, *Medallie Hist. of Carausius* ii. 135, 142, 144. Dr. Stukeley makes this road lead to Bath.

(7) Camden, *Britannia*, ed. Gough ii. 219.—Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 46.

(8) Lysons, *Cambridgeshire*, 46.