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978-1-108-07557-2 - Ancient Cambridgeshire: Or, an Attempt to Trace Roman and Other Ancient Roads that Passed Through the County of Cambridge

Charles Cardale Babington

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### Ancient Cambridgeshire

This work, first published in 1853, grew from a paper describing the crossing of two Roman roads at Cambridge, and the small Roman fort at Grantchester. However, other Roman sites were added to the investigation, and the book came to encompass all the Roman and other ancient roads of Cambridgeshire, as well as the locations where Roman coins and other remains had been found. The author, Charles Cardale Babington (1808–95), is best remembered as the pupil and assistant of John Stevens Henslow and as his successor in the chair of botany at Cambridge. However, Babington was also keenly interested in archaeology, and this fascinating work of local history is the first substantial account of Roman Cambridgeshire, describing not only the courses of the various roads but also finds such as the Roman villa at Comberton, the Roman cemetery at Trumpington, and large numbers of individual coins and other artefacts.

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# Ancient Cambridgeshire :

OR AN ATTEMPT TO TRACE

ROMAN AND OTHER ANCIENT ROADS

THAT PASSED THROUGH

THE COUNTY OF CAMBRIDGE;

WITH A RECORD

OF THE PLACES WHERE ROMAN COINS  
AND OTHER REMAINS HAVE BEEN FOUND.

BY

CHARLES CARDALE BABINGTON, M.A., F.R.S.,

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following treatise has gradually increased to its present bulk from a very small origin. It was intended to have consisted only of an account of the Roman roads, which crossed each other at Cambridge to the extent of a few miles on each side of that place; and of a description of the small Roman station or fort at Grantchester. In that form the paper was read to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and together with a small and imperfect map, would have been immediately issued to the members, had not circumstances occurred which caused delay. It was then determined to describe all the ancient roads that pass through the county of Cambridge, and slightly trace their farther course to their destination. This led to an examination of the authority upon which some of them were supposed to be ancient, and caused an extensive search to be made for records of the discovery of Roman remains within Cambridgeshire. The whole has resulted in the following treatise, in which an attempt is made to trace all the roads in the district that appear to have been used in early times, pointing out their probable origin; to name all the places where Roman antiquities or coins have

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been found, with their authorities; and to describe the ancient ditches, camps, and other earth-works.

The position of Cambridgeshire on the frontiers of East Anglia and Mercia, and its consequently disturbed state during much of the Saxon period, has unfortunately caused it to be very deficient in records of those centuries, during which we might reasonably have expected to find the ancient roads and sites mentioned in charters: as an illustration, reference may be made to the proof that the so-called "*Cnut's Dyke*" is older than the time of King Cnut, derived from its mention, under another of its names, in a charter of a date anterior to his reign.

Very small pretensions are made to originality, but in all cases the quotations have been taken from the works themselves; and by far the greater number of the facts recorded are now brought together for the first time. Let it not however be supposed that all those which exist are here collected; for although, no labour has been spared in looking for them, it is highly probable that many have escaped notice. What has been done, will, however, shew that, in this part of England, there are few parishes in which Roman coins may not be found, and that in a very considerable number there are traces of Roman occupancy in the form of remains of their fictile manufactures.

The plans which accompany this treatise have been made with care, and are, it is believed, correct.



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The modern parts of the plans of the stations at Cambridge and Grantchester are reduced from Baker's large map of Cambridge; the plan of the station at Bury is derived from an eye-sketch and measurement made by pacing the ground; the villa at Comberton was carefully measured and laid down to scale by my friend the Rev. J. J. Smith.

The general outline of the accompanying map, and the positions of modern places in the county, have been derived from Walker's Map of Cambridgeshire. No modern villages are marked upon it that do not tend in some way to point out the position of sites mentioned in the treatise; but all places are inserted, and their names underlined, at or near to which Roman remains or coins have been found. No modern roads are introduced. An attempt has been made to point out by a different mode of drawing the supposed origin, more or less certain antiquity, and the course of the several ancient roads: the expense of colouring being one which it has been thought better to avoid on account of the small amount of funds at the disposal of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society under the auspices of which body this treatise is published. Only such of the watercourses are given as appeared to be necessary for the purpose of shewing the ancient state of the country or the position of places.

British antiquities, such as celts of stone, palstaves, spear-heads and swords of bronze, beads of glass, &c.,

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have occurred, spread over the country in such a manner as not to connect themselves with the modern or Roman sites of habitation, and they are rarely noticed in the following pages, the contents of which are intended to refer to the four centuries of the Roman rule in England.

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,

*April 20, 1853.*

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