

II.

NOTICE OF TWO PIECES OF ROMAN SCULPTURE FOUND AT ARNIEBOG,
DUMBARTONSHIRE, IN JUNE 1868. (WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SCULP-
TURES.) BY JOHN BUCHANAN, ESQ., LL.D., BANKER, GLASGOW.

The small farm of Arniebog, in the parish of Cumbernauld, Dumbartonshire, about one mile west from Castlecarey, is traversed by the line of the Antonine barrier. The great ditch which formed part of that military defence, is at this point in excellent preservation, being 30 feet wide, and

upwards of 12 feet deep. Indeed, one of the best sections left, stretches from Castlereary westward to the Barhill, near the centre of the isthmus between the Clyde and the Forth, embracing about six miles, and the sites of the wall-forts of Castlereary, Westerwood, Croy, and Barhill, along the whole of which distance the fosse is broad, deep, and little injured. In Roman times, an extensive swamp existed outside the barrier, and may have afforded some additional strength to the fortification. It was about two miles long, and its eastern termination was at Arniebog farm. The name was "Dullatur Bog." It was completely drained many years ago. Faint traces existed of what seemed a small *castellum*, or watch-tower, on the line of the barrier at Arniebog farm, perhaps for overlooking the end of the great swamp.

Now, in June 1868, the Arniebog farmer, in trenching a field close to the supposed watch-tower, resolved to root out two large flat stones, which were embedded about one foot under the surface, and had long interfered with his field work. They lay a few feet apart, and about 34 yards from the south or Roman side of the fosse. He found the lowermost faces of both sculptured, and the figures represented occasioned no small degree of local gossip.

Hearing of the discovery, I soon after visited the farm, and recognised on the one stone a representation of Neptune, and on the other, of a captive Briton. (See the accompanying woodcut). Both are well preserved, arising no doubt from the sculptured faces having been lowermost in the soil. On placing the one stone vertically upon the other, Neptune being uppermost, I found that they fitted exactly, and it is obvious that they had formed, unitedly, part of a much larger slab, probably a legionary one, the remainder of which may yet be discovered, if the farmer continued the trenching, now postponed or abandoned.

The figure of the captive is particularly interesting, for it affords a portrait, by Roman hands, of a native Briton. He is naked, on one knee, with his arms tied behind his back, as if ready for decapitation. The countenance is that of a young man of about twenty-two years of age; the features not at all savage; the nose good, slightly aquiline; no beard or moustache; the hair rather short, and apparently plaited round the brow; the body plump and muscular; the whole figure exhibiting a strong, well-built man. The head is turned a little to one side, as if to receive on the neck the fatal sword-stroke more effectively.

I need not comment on the Neptune sculpture.

Herewith I send two photographs, taken from the originals.



The one represents the fragments united above each other, from which the general design may be better seen than from description. The dimensions of the originals thus united are 34 vertical inches; breadth of the moulding, 2 inches; and the stones are 7 inches in thickness, formed of the common yellowish sandstone of the district.

The other photograph is an enlarged view of the captive alone, so that his countenance and figure may appear to more advantage. The original figure measures 10 inches. Both sculptures are in *altorelievo*. No letters appear. The style of sculpture resembles that of the era of Lollius Urbicus, judging from other specimens found at different points along the barrier which we

know from inscriptions belong to that period.

The probability is, that the large legionary slab, to which the fragments now described belonged in all likelihood, was broken into pieces by the Romans themselves, and hid in the earth when they finally retreated from the district. That they were accustomed so to hide such objects has been conclusively shown by Dr Bruce of Newcastle, in his interesting description of the discovery close to the great Roman Fort of Maryborough, in Cumberland, two years ago, of no less than sixteen altars, in a series of pits about six feet deep, carefully deposited with the inscriptions lowermost. Similar instances occurred at certain places along the Antonine wall, one in particular at the wall fort of Auchendavie, a few miles west from Arniebog, where four altars by a centurion of the Second Legion, and other Roman objects, were revealed in a pit during the formation of the Forth and Clyde Canal last century, and are represented in Stuart's "Caledonia Romana," plate xi. second edition, 1842.

Assuming that the Arniebog sculptures belong to a legionary slab placed there, but since broken up, and the greater portion lost, the question arises, to which of the three legions engaged in constructing the barrier did this slab belong? Now, various circumstances seem to indicate the Second Legion, *Augusta*.

The design and style of the sculptured fragments closely resemble those on other margins of slabs extant, and known from their inscriptions to have been set up by that particular legion at different places along the barrier. One leading feature in their marginal sculptures was a predilection for representing human figures and animals. The other two legions, the Sixth and Twentieth, seldom, if ever, did this. Their margins are generally very plain, the Sixth Legion particularly so. Examples of the contrasts among the three may be seen by consulting "Caledonia Romana." In short, the sculptures connected with the Second Legion were more demonstrative in regard to *marginal* objects than those of the other two.

But more particularly, the artist of *Legio Secunda* had a fancy for representing naked captives. Of this, two remarkable examples exist. Both are slabs by vexillations of that corps, found, widely separate, at opposite ends of the wall. The first was discovered many years ago at the small wall fort of Castlehill, Dumbartonshire, near the Clyde. It has two sculptured margins, with the inscription between. On the *left*

margin appear two natives in the foreground, naked, with their arms tied behind their backs. One is sitting, the other is on one knee, just as at Arniebog. Between them lies a poniard. Behind is a Roman cavalry soldier, armed with shield and spear, the latter of which he is brandishing; while in the rear is a priest in his robes, holding a *patera*. On the right margin, a third native is in a sitting posture, naked and bound, as in the other instance. Above him is a marine creature like a seal, and behind, an eagle flapping his wings. The whole seems to symbolise a defeat and capture of natives, with an intended commemorative sacrifice. This interesting slab is in the College of Glasgow, and represented in "Caledonia Romana," second edition, plate ix. fig. 1.

The other slab is the very fine one in the Society's possession, discovered in the same year as the Arniebog fragments, on the property of Mr Caddell, at Bridgeness, Linlithgowshire, near Carriden, the supposed eastern termination of the wall. This slab has also two sculptured margins very elaborately executed, with the inscription, as usual, between. The *left* margin represents, in the foreground, a group of four captives, one of whom is a woman. All are naked. Behind is a Roman soldier on a stallion, fully armed, with helmet, shield, and brandishing a spear. He is galloping among, and slaying, the captives. One has been decapitated, the head lying beside the body; a second has been thrown on his back with his feet in the air; a third has been knocked partially down, and is trying to recover himself. The female is sitting with her hands screening her bosom and person. On the right margin is a very curious and interesting representation of a solemn sacrifice, including figures of robed priests, and animals in charge of an attendant playing on the double-pipe. (See Proceedings, vol. viii. plate vii.)

The same general idea of captives and a sacrifice seems to have actuated the sculptors of both the Castlehill and Carriden legionary slabs. Now, compare these with the Arniebog stones, part of a supposed *left* margin, and observe that it is on the *left* margins in all the three that the naked captives chiefly appear.

The artist of the Second Legion seems to have been partial to the representation of *marine* creatures. Thus, on two of their slabs in Glasgow College, found near Castlehill, and on the Castlehill slab itself, are figures of what appear to be seals or capricorns.—*Vide* "Caledonia Romana,"

second edition, plate viii. figs. 1 and 6; also plate ix. fig. 1. No marine objects, however, appear on any of the slabs of the other two legions. *That* idea seems to have been confined to the *Legio Augusta*. Now, on the Arniebog fragment, the marine deity Neptune is represented. He is placed uppermost, and this uppermost position occurs on all the three slabs at and near Castlehill, last referred to.

The *presence* of the Second Legion close to Arniebog is distinctly proved. Thus, at the great wall fort of Castlecarey, which is about a Roman mile only from Arniebog farm, *per lineam valli*, an altar was found, now in Glasgow College, dedicated to Fortune, by vexillations of the Second and Sixth Legions respectively. This goes to show that the Second Legion was actually in the immediate vicinity of the spot where the fragments were found, and thus had the opportunity of setting up there, the supposed, but now missing slab. No doubt, this altar also proves the presence at the same time of the Sixth Legion at Castlecarey. But the altar was not, as the legionary slabs were, intended to be a lapidary record of the quantity of work done, and by a particular corps. Moreover, from what has been already said, the style of the Arniebog marginal sculpture is by far too exuberantly demonstrative to have been executed by the Sixth Legion, whose general slab-style was tame and unimpressive.

There are reasons for conjecturing that for about eight miles westward from Arniebog, viz., from the vicinity of the large wall fort of Auchendavie, eastward, the barrier was constructed by alternate detachments of Legions Second and Sixth; the westmost and the eastmost sub-divisions of that eight-mile section being probably executed by working parties of the former, and the centre portion by a vexillation of the latter. For, in the first place, there is undoubted evidence that a strong detachment of the Second Legion was posted at Auchendavie, by the discovery there, already referred to, of several inscribed altars, in a pit, dedicated to various deities by one of their centurions. The situation of this fort is on level ground, and had thus no natural protection. Therefore, it was one of the largest on the line, with triple ramparts and ditches, and consequently garrisoned by a large body of troops. *Catapultæ* had been placed on the ramparts to defend the fort, as indicated by a number of stone-bullets about the shape and size of a melon, found within the area of the fort, evidently part of the ammunition to be discharged against an enemy by these

military engines.¹ In the second place, at this point of the barrier, a large section of it running *westward* was executed by another legion altogether, viz., the Twentieth, as proved by one of their slabs discovered a short distance west from Auchendavie, at a small farm called Easter-Mains, whereof a representation appears in "Caledonia Romana," plate x. fig. 4. This shows that the work which the Second Legion at Auchendavie had to perform must have been *not westward*, but *eastward*, in the direction of Arniebog and Castlecarey. In the third place, the usual length of the work done all along the line by the vexillations of each of the three legions, was from three to four Roman miles of 1000 paces, besides fractions. Now, this would lead the working party from Auchendavie eastward till near the small wall station at Upper Croy, and it might therefore have been expected that a legionary slab by the Second Legion detachment, recording the quantity of work done, would have been found thereabouts. It is a remarkable circumstance, however, that the legionary slabs which had been discovered pretty regularly near the ends of the three and four miles-sections, from the brink of Clyde eastward to near Auchendavie, suddenly cease there, and until the very recent turn-up of the Carriden stone, no Roman legionary slabs recording work have been met with, from Auchendavie eastward, till the very eastmost termination of the barrier. Altars chiefly, only. But I venture to think that a piece of such a slab did come to light near Croy, although it has not hitherto been recognised as of that character. Soon after leaving Auchendavie, the range of the wall ascended, and for several miles was conducted along a high and rocky district, in some places quite precipitous. This was its character all the way to Croy. It was in this difficult region, I think, that the Sixth Legion came to take their share of the heavy work; and, accordingly, their presence at Croy is shown by altars. Now, in the beginning of the present century, there was discovered at the bottom of one of the precipices near

¹ I beg to send herewith impressions in wax, from a Roman intaglio in my possession, picked up beside the bullets in the text. It is composed of a piece of *lapis lazuli*, oval in shape, and of a deep azure blue colour. On it is incised the figure of a naked man standing at an altar, from which the flame ascends. He holds in one hand a *palera*, and in the other a small branch or a bunch of grapes. Perhaps it had been the stone of a finger-ring belonging to a Roman officer, from which ring it had accidentally fallen. It is in good preservation, as the impressions show.

Croy, under a mass of rubbish and rock-splinters, a well executed piece of Roman sculpture, which I am of opinion formed part of a legionary slab, and, curiously enough, a *left margin* too, just as at Arniebog. This sculptured fragment is represented in "Caledonia Romana," plate xiii. fig. 1. A nude female figure appears; and another, also naked, apparently a male captive, is on one knee, in a crouching posture, with an expression of suffering, and looking upwards, as if in dread of a coming blow. A broad wreath of laurel is partially shown, under which the captive is lying. This wreath has a close resemblance to one on a fine piece of sculpture well preserved, built into the front wall of Cadder House, the inscription on which records that it was made by the Second Legion.—*Vide* "Caledonia Romana," plate x. fig. 1. Compare the workmanship of this Cadder slab with the Croy fragment, and the style will appear almost identical. Unfortunately, the rest of the Croy sculpture is lost. There is an ornamented pillar outside, resembling that on the Carriden stone. Here, the same dominant idea prevails, of a naked prostrate foe, which actuated the sculptor of the Second Legion, at, and near, Castlehill and Carriden, as well as at Arniebog. This interesting bit of sculpture, found, as I have stated, under a mass of rubbish, was very likely thrown over the precipice when the slab, of which it probably formed part, was broken up. There is no mistaking the style and character of the workmanship of this fragment. Both seem to indicate the *Legio Secunda*, and it may not unreasonably be assumed that this supposed slab was set up to record the extent of work *they* had done from Auchendavie to this point. That the work must have been very laborious, is obvious from the mass of trap-rock which they had to encounter; and silent corroborative witnesses survive in two ponderous iron hammers, very much battered with hard usage, which were found at Auchendavie, in the altar-pit before referred to.

Then, with regard to the central portion, conjectured to have been executed by the Sixth Legion, eastward from the point where the Second left off, *it*, too, must have been heavy work. The trap, there, is peculiarly tenacious, as tested by the contractors in recent times, while cutting the railway through, at Croy station. In fact, two miles of the barrier, executed at Croy would be equal, in point of labour and time, to double that length through soft ground.¹ The probability, therefore, is, that a

¹ I can personally testify that this Croy section presents more difficulties for

shorter section among the trap-rocks was assigned to the Sixth detachment than usual (perhaps only two miles), and the remaining eastmost portion of the eight-mile section was proceeded with, by vexillations of the Second Legion, till they finished at or near the spot at Arniebog, where they placed the next record of their work, the fragments of which are now under consideration.

It has been stated, that no legionary slabs have been found farther east than about Auchendavie, except the one at Carriden. But it is proper to state, that one slab, by the First Cohort of Tungrians, was discovered within the area of the Castlecarey wall fort, recording that they had made *one mile* of the barrier. But this is not a legionary slab, in the proper sense of the term, which applies only to slabs by soldiers of a Roman legion, whereas the Tungrians were merely auxiliaries. This is the only instance known of work done on the line by other than Roman troops, although there is little doubt auxiliaries lent some aid. The quantity of work performed, too, by this Tungrian Cohort is unprecedentedly small, only, one mile. There is no instance recorded of any of the legion-detachments executing such a very short distance. There must have been some peculiar reason for causing the Tungrians to construct this diminutive portion. I have said that Arniebog farm is just about one mile west from the Castlecarey great fort, in which we have seen were quartered at the same time two detachments of the Second and Sixth Legions, as well as these Tungrians. Now, could the *one mile* done by the Tungrians, and commemorated on their slab, have been *the mile* between the point where the Second Legion finished and *left off* their work at Arniebog, where the sculptured fragments were found, and Castlecarey fort; and may it have been the case that the short one-mile gap thus left had been ordered to be executed by the Tungrians, by way of relief to the legionary detachments, which had done so much hard work in, and about, the Croy district?

Finally, bringing all the foregoing circumstances and reasons to bear on the question, to which Legion did the Arniebog fragments belong?

trench work than any other point of the barrier, for I have twice walked along the whole line, from sea to sea, on one of these occasions in company with the lamented author of "Caledonia Romana," when he was engaged writing that volume, and I noted the peculiar physical obstacles in the Croy district, and the immense labour which the formation of the fosse must have cost the soldiers there.

perhaps it is not an overstrained inference, that these were chiselled by an artist connected with the *Legio Secunda, Augusta*.

NOTE.—It is much to be regretted, that the Arniebog fragments are exposed to the risk of being destroyed. Notwithstanding repeated and urgent applications to the nobleman, guardian to the minor-owner of the farm, to have these interesting relics deposited in a public institution, where their preservation would be ensured, and the sculptures rendered accessible to archæologists and others, they have been allowed to lie uncared for, in an outhouse at Arniebog, liable to rude handling, which indeed has already caused damage. The stone of which they are composed is sandy and soft, and will not stand any thing but gentle usage. An accidental fall would split the sculptures into pieces.