

IV.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF A ROMAN BOWL IN GLASGOW GREEN, AND ROMAN REMAINS FOUND AT YORKHILL. By JOHN BUCHANAN, LL.D., CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT., GLASGOW.

The Green of Glasgow is situated along the south-eastern part of the city, and is skirted by the River Clyde. It is popularly divided into two portions, known as "The Low Green" and "The High Green," the latter being opposite the suburb of Bridgeton, and commonly called also "King's Park." It was in this last division of the Green that the discovery now to be noticed took place.

In October 1876, during certain operations for laying water pipes across the High Green, in a direction towards the river at the great bend called "Peat Bog," the workmen, in cutting a deep trench in which the water pipes were to be placed, came upon a large Roman Bowl. It was lying flat on its mouth in greyish sand, about 4 feet below the present surface of the Green. The bright crimson colour of the rim round the raised bottom outside fortunately attracted the workman's attention before any damage was done, and he carefully scooped the bowl out of its ancient resting place uninjured, handing it over to his master, the contractor, who was on the spot at the time, and at once took charge of the relic.

The bowl is of the usual red ware, commonly called Samian, and is of a rich crimson colour. It measures 9 inches in diameter, and in depth $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The inside is of brilliant crimson, as fresh looking as if made yesterday, without any ornament. The outside is rather paler than the inside. The rim is artistically rolled over. Then immediately below this crimson rim there is a plain surface, about the breadth of two fingers, all round the outside of the bowl. Below this, the relic is rather profusely ornamented with raised figures of oxen, deer, rabbits, and other animals. These are inclosed in various sections, each section being defined by dancing female figures, perhaps intended to represent *genii*. The exterior bottom of the bowl is a neatly raised crimson circle, on which the vessel rested when in use. Something resembling the letter N has been rather rudely scratched on the bottom, in the centre of the circle, evidently done after the bowl was finished, and probably intended to indicate the initial letter

of the owner's name, if not a potter's mark. The whole bowl is in excellent preservation, without a scratch, save a little abrasion of some of the figures, evidently from use. From the general appearance the relic must have belonged to some person of note, perhaps a superior officer. It would have been too expensive for a common legionary soldier.

Herewith I send a photograph of this interesting memorial of ancient fictile art, taken from the original by Mr Thomas Annan, the well-known Glasgow artist. Being uncoloured, however, the effect is not so fine, wanting as the photograph does, the rich, beautiful crimson of the original.

The bowl has been permanently deposited in the Industrial Museum, Kelvin Grove Park, Glasgow.

For the sake of precision it seems desirable to state—1st, That the place of discovery was at the head of the slope of the Green, overlooking a flat alluvial portion of the right bank of the river, called "The Flesher's Haugh," about 200 yards back from the stream, and near the *Gymnasium*; 2d, The surface of the Green was formerly in a very rugged state, and has been repeatedly levelled and improved, so that it would be unsafe to assume that the distance of about 4 feet down, at which the bowl was found, corresponds with the original depth; on the contrary, the probability rather is, that the deposit was made shallower, the levellings alluded to necessarily causing more top soil to accumulate over the spot where the bowl lay; 3d, The precise date of discovery was the 7th of October 1876, the name of the contractor for the works is David Manwell, Pollokshields (a suburb), and that of his workman who actually discovered and lifted out the bowl, is Stephen Fox.

So much for the bowl itself.

But how did it come to be deposited where found? There are reasons for supposing that it was hidden there by the owner, in an aperture dug on purpose in the sand, and the object forgotten, or the owner slain. It was by no means uncommon for the Romans to hide in the earth coins, altars, slabs, and the like, various instances of which have been made apparent in the very neighbourhood of Glasgow; although it is remarkable that this bowl is the only Roman relic known to have been discovered on the site of, or close to this city. The district must have been, however, well known to that warlike people. It lay within the province of Valentia; and in the course of the Antonine Wall, some portions of which came within a very few

miles of what is now Glasgow. Moreover, a Vicinal Way branched off from the great central *Iter*, near Carstairs, and crossed the country in a north-west direction to, and joined the Roman wall near its western termination, at one of the wall-forts. This Vicinal Way was traced, in comparatively recent times, close to Glasgow district, particularly at Tollcross, which is only about two miles from the eastern suburbs of the city. Its course is to be seen on some of the old maps, and particularly that attached to General Roy's "Military Antiquities of the Romans," also in Stuart's volume, "Caledonia Romana." The road must have crossed the region now occupied by the city of Glasgow, and it is by no means improbable that what is now Gallowgate (one of the oldest streets) runs in the line of this Roman way. If so, the road would pass within a very short distance of the Green, mentioned at the outset.

There is no evidence of a Roman military post having existed at Glasgow. On the curious map of the country, constructed for the first printed edition of Ptolemy's geographical works, no marking of a station appears, although the great camp at *Vanduarra* (Paisley) is distinctly seen. This important station is about seven miles west from Glasgow, and it is believed that troops and military stores were conveyed to it by means of a sub-branch of the Vicinal Way alluded to, which became bifurcated about the area of what is now Old Glasgow. The right hand fork proceeded to, and joined the Antonine Wall, as already stated; while the left one ran in a south-west direction to one of the fords in Clyde, and continued on the opposite or south side of that river, traces having been recognised in recent times beyond the ford or point of crossing. Indeed, the termination of the road is still indicated by the name of one of the oldest streets in Paisley, called "The Causewayside." There are reasons for believing that the Trongate, Argyle Street, and the road westward to Old Partick, run in the lines of the left fork of this ancient Roman Vicinal Way.

While on this subject of the Paisley branch of the Vicinal Road, an interesting discovery was made a few years ago. The lands of Yorkhill adjoin the mouth of the river Kelvin, which rises in the Campsie hills, and enters Clyde at right angles, opposite what is now the small but ancient town of Govan. At this embouchure of the Kelvin there was a well-defined ford, passable on foot, and removed only lately in consequence of the artificial deepening of the Clyde. It was matter of doubt at what point in

the river the military road crossed. It would seem, however, that this doubt has been now, to some extent, if not wholly, removed by the following discovery, which has not hitherto been sufficiently recorded.

On Yorkhill lands is an eminence of considerable elevation, commanding the embouchure of Kelvin and a large sweep of Clyde, with the adjacent country. On the summit of this hill, which had remained almost undisturbed, faint traces of earthworks were visible, much crumbled down. But in 1867, the proprietors having resolved to make certain improvements, the remains of the earthworks were dug into, and the area trenched. These operations revealed a variety of Roman remains, embracing—1st, Fragments of several jars of the ware called Samian, in different colours; 2d, Portions of an ornamented vase of white glass; 3d, Two bronze finger-rings; 4th, A small quantity of wheat, for bread to the soldiers; 5th, Several Roman coins, much corroded, but one of large brass, which was of Trajan, in tolerable preservation.

These objects would seem to indicate that a small Roman fort existed on the Yorkhill eminence, probably to guard the ford from incursions by the natives, and this would tend to confirm the supposition that it was at this particular point that the Vicinal Way crossed Clyde. The soldiers of this smaller garrison, as well as supplies, would likely be drawn from the large camp at Paisley, only about 4 miles distant. If the existence of this minor fort is well founded, then soldiers from it may have deposited the bowl previously alluded to, in Glasgow Green, during some excursion.

But then it may be said, Why should such a fort have been necessary so far within the protection of the Antonine Barrier? To which it may be answered, that originally that Barrier consisted merely of a chain of forts across the isthmus between the Clyde and Forth, with open intervals of about two miles. These were not connected by a military curtain till the reign of Antoninus Pius, which thenceforth would prevent native incursions into the province, either on foot through the woods, or in canoes down the stream of the Kelvin, such as those found recently, at its mouth, silted up in the *alluvium*. As coins of the era of Trajan (two reigns prior to Antoninus), and none later have been found at Yorkhill, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that this small fort on the commanding eminence may have been constructed while the spaces between the wall forts were open; in other words, prior to the reign of Antoninus Pius.

But apart from all these conjectures, the main fact remains, that tangible proof has at last been obtained of the actual presence of the Romans on the area of Glasgow, by the interesting discovery of the bowl, forming the subject of this paper.