I.

SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING THE SITE OF BEDE'S ANCIENT CITY, GIUDI. By PETER MILLER, F.S.A. Scot.

Various opinions have been held by learned antiquaries respecting the identity of the site of Bede's ancient city Giudi, mentioned by him in his *Ecclesiastical History of England*.[1] Those of them who support the opinion that this city was situated on the island of Inchkeith appear to do so chiefly because of that island answering in some measure to Bede's notice of the city as being situated in the midst of the eastern inlet of the sea, which runs in far and broad into the land of Britain. But this argument is equally applicable to other three islands in the Firth of Forth, namely, Inchcolm, Cramond Island, and Inchgarvie, so that little or no importance can be given to it unless supported by some other and more specific evidence. Before entering upon the evidence I am about to submit in support of another site that has never, so far as I am aware, been suggested, it will be as well to give Bede's account of the city, and also the only two other incidental notices of the same place, by two other ancient writers. Bede, in the passage quoted, is speaking of the inroads made by the savage foreign nations upon the Romanised Britons south of the Roman wall constructed between the Forth and Clyde, about the year A.D. 140, by Lollius Urbicus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius. " We call these

[1] Macpherson and Skene both express the opinion that this city may have been on Inchkeith, while Camden supposes it to have been on the Roman Wall at Kirkintilloch. Roy, in his *Military Antiquities*, places it at Camelon. Gordon, in his *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, and Stuart, in his *Caledonia Romana*, also place it there.

foreign nations," he says, "not on account of their being seated out of
Britain, but because they were remote from that part of. it which was
possessed by the Britons, two inlets of the sea lying betwixt them, one
of which runs in far and broad into the land of Britain, from the
eastern ocean, and the other from the western, though they do not
touch one another; the eastern has in the midst of it the City Giudi,
the western has on it, that is on the right hand thereof, the City
Alcluith, which, in their language signifies the Rock Cluith, for it is
close by the river of that name." The incidental notice is from
Nennius. "He (Oswy) slew Penda, in the field of Gai Campi, and the
kings of the Britons, who went out with Penda on the expedition as
far as the City Iudeu, were slain."—"Then Oswy restored all the
the wealth which was with him in the city to Penda, who distributed
it among the kings of the Britons, that is, Atbret Iudeu." The second
reference is from an old tract of the ninth century, ascribed to Aengus
the Culdee, and rendered thus by Dr Skene:—"The Sea of Giudan in
the Firth of Forth, so called from the City of Giudi, which Bede says
was in the middle of it, and which may be identified with Inch Keith."

It is very obvious that all these three notices refer to one and the
same city, whatever may have been its actual site. The identification of
that site is unquestionably surrounded with difficulties, but it is only by
taking into account all the circumstances of the very limited informa-
tion which these old writers have supplied us with, that the question
can be determined, if ever it can be determined. It is not very
apparent, whether Bede has given us the name of the city in its purely
British or Welsh form, or in a Latinised form. It seems certain, from
Bede's reference to the two cities, Alcluith on the western inlet of the
sea and the City Giudi on the eastern inlet, that he was describing two
well-known landmarks of his time, in the regions of the Firths of
Clyde and Forth, and that the character of the one on the western
inlet was equally applicable to that on the east. Bede does not always
use the same Latin word for city. In the passage quoted, however, he
uses the Latin word *urbs* with reference to both Alcluith and Giudi,
which is translated city in English. It is beyond question, from what
is known respecting Alcluith, Dumbarton Castle, that it was not a city

or town in our sense of the English word, but was only a strength or stronghold in a military sense, for the area of Dumbarton Castle is of very limited extent, and is quite inaccessible except on one side, and incapable of accommodating any large number of people. This remark is equally applicable not only to Inchkeith, but to the three other islands in the Firth of Forth—Inchcolm, Cramond, and Inchgarvie. It so happens, however, that Bede leaves us in no doubt whatever as to the actual sense he meant to convey by the word *urbs* as applied to Alcluith; for, in another chapter of his History, he describes Alcluith as a "civitas munitissima," a fortified city, "ubi est civitas Britonum munitissima usque hodie, quæ vocatur Alcluith."[1]   This description of it by himself establishes the fact that Alcluith was a fortified stronghold, and the idea he obviously meant to convey in mentioning the City Giudi on the eastern inlet was, that it also was a stronghold or fortified place, like Alcluith on the west, and like the latter had a certain relation to the Roman wall.

The expression used by Bede with reference to Giudi as being situated *in medio* of the eastern inlet is susceptible of various renderings, and here, I apprehend, has arisen one of the difficulties in determining with certainty its actual site. Some of the authorities on the subject seem to hold that it could only be on an island in the very middle of the Firth of Forth. Had that been the case, would not Bede have used a different expression? *In medio* may either mean in the middle of the inlet of the sea, as between the two opposite shores, or it may mean in the middle lengthways, as between its two extreme ends. The one expression is just as correct as the other, or it may mean that it was situated on the extreme end of a long peninsula that projected itself far in towards the middle of the sea, and appeared to be so situated, whether as seen from the high land on the shore, on either side of the Firth, or as seen from the sea itself. The idea that the city was on an island situated in the middle of the Firth receives no support whatever from the reference made to the City Iudeu by Nennius. That writer, in

[1] Est autem sinus maris permaximus, qui antiquitus gentem Brittonum a Pictis secernebat, qui ab occidente in terras longo spatio erumpit, ubi est civitas Brittonum munitissima usque hodie, quæ vocatur Alcluith.—*Bede*, B. i. c. 1.

referring to the City Iudeu, is narrating the events that took place between the cruel Penda, king of the Mercians, and Oswy, king of the Northumbrians, about the year 655, when Oswy slew Penda in the field of Gai, along with the kings of the Britons who went out with him on this expedition as far as the city of Iudeu. Previous to this, Oswy is said to have given up to Penda all the wealth that was with him in the city, who distributed it among the kings of the Britons. Bede's narrative of the same event corresponds very much with Nennius. He says that Penda himself was slain, and his army that invaded the kingdom of Northumbria was completely vanquished in the battle of Vinwed, and the thirty princes who were with him were slain, the war being concluded in the country of Loidis. Now the idea that Iudeu (Giudi) was situated on an island such as Inchkeith, is altogether inadmissible, if Bede's or Nennius' description of those events is to be taken as correct, the idea of going as far as Inchkeith would not be applicable. If we further consider the modes of warfare, either for defence or offence, that were used in these early times a fortified strength on Inchkeith for either of these purposes appears to be altogether useless. If this city was situated on an island, Inchgarvie is a much more likely place. Before and during the Roman occupation, and long after the Romans had left this country, this small island must have formed a very important military position, from its commanding the narrow strait of the Firth of Forth between the two projecting head-lands at Queensferry. If the City Giudi was situated on an island, this one was far more likely to be the site than any of the others, because of its commanding the strait, on either side of which dwelt hostile peoples.

Five miles above Queensferry, on the Firth of Forth, stands the grim-looking Castle of Blackness. Nothing is known of its very early history. Roy and other writers on Scottish military antiquities specially refer to it as a place that must, during the Roman period, have played a most important part in the early history of Scotland, as well as during the Saxon period of our history. Although now a deserted and desolate-looking place, for centuries it was one of the most important sea-ports of Scotland. There are ample details of the revenues derived from it as a port of entry, in the Chamberlain's Rolls for Scotland,

as well as in the Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, where
it figures as a royal castle and naval station.

Until a comparatively recent period there were no harbours for
vessels between South Queensferry and the mouth of the Avon, a
distance of 11 miles, except this at Blackness. During the Roman period,
before and after the building of the Roman wall, the natural harbour at
Blackness must have been of essential importance throughout the Roman
occupation, as it lay within 2 or 3 miles from the eastern termination of
that wall. The military way that stretched from Alcluith along the
south side of the Roman wall all the way to Cramond must have come
within a mile of Blackness Castle, where the military and other stores
only could be landed for the garrisons manning the wall. Bede says
that the wall commenced at a place called Peanfahel, about 2 miles west
from the Monastery of Abercurnig (Abercorn), but there is a mistake as
to the distance. It is now established almost beyond question by the
recent finding of the memorial tablet, now in the National Museum,
in 1868, at Bridgeness, half a mile or so west of Carriden Parish Kirk,
that that was the eastern commencement of the wall. The distance
between Abercorn Church and the point where the stone was found,
measured on the Ordnance Survey Map, is nearly 5 miles in a straight line.

Blackness, like Alcluith, formed a strong outpost, or in military
phraseology, a " point d'appui," to the eastern termination, besides
covering the only harbour that had immediate connection with the wall
on the Firth of Forth, much in the same way that Dumbarton Castle
did on the western end on the Clyde. That this was so, is quite
apparent from Bede's narrative, for the description of the physical con-
figuration of the district given by him is only preliminary to what he is
about to relate respecting the means that were adopted—the building of
the wall as a defence, in order to prevent the incursions of the hostile
savage peoples, the Scots and Picts. This being so, is it not something
very decisive against the idea that this city was situated on an island,
some 15 miles away from the wall, and 4 miles from the land on either side
of the inlet. Blackness Castle[1] is situated on the extreme north end of

[1] Besides the Castle there are extensive mound ruins situated on an elevated posi-
tion inland, about which there is no tradition, but the mound is called the Castlehill.

a low ridge of rocks jutting out into the sea to the extent of one-fifth of a mile, and at high water is all but surrounded by it. The area on which the castle stands is only connected with the mainland by a narrow ledge of rock, the width of the causeway. As seen during high water, either from the heights on the land side or from the sea, it is unquestionably in the midst of the inlet. Bede says it was situated *in medio* of the inlet. In his concise and brief mode of expression, it is difficult to conceive how he could have more graphically or correctly described its situation without going more into detail. Any intelligent person describing Blackness Castle, as seen from the land or sea, could not do so more correctly than Bede has done in using the words *in medio*. Bede, so far as known, never saw it; he only described it probably from information furnished by the Monks of Abercurnig.

When the place was first called Blackness it is impossible now to say, but the name is unmistakably Saxon, so that there need be no hesitation in assuming that in early times it was known by some other designation. The earliest notice of it is contained in a charter of William the First's time, where it is spelt Blackenis.

In the Chamberlain's Rolls the spelling varies—Blackynes, &c. There is a small rivulet that falls into the sea close by the east side of the Castle, called the Back or Blackburn. The Ordnance Survey Maps give both names. Blackness is situated on the extreme north-east corner of the parish of Carriden; while Bridgeness, the place where the memorial stone tablet was found in 1868, is at the extreme west end of the parish. In Bede's time there were certainly no parochial divisions of the district; he simply says that the wall began at a place called, in the Pictish language, Peanfahel, about 2 miles west from the Monastery of Abercurnig. Neither he nor Nennius makes any reference to a fort or city at the end of the wall. Had there existed at the commencement of the wall a very ancient city—such as Caer Eden, as some allege—the probability is that Bede would not have used in his description the name of such an insignificant place as Peanfahel—which simply means the head or end of the wall. The earliest and most reliable mention of Carriden is contained in one of the Holyrood charters in the time of David I. by Robert, Bishop of St Andrews, say 1140, in which the name is spelt

Karedyn and *Karreden.* Some writers quote, from an addition to
Gildas' history, to prove that Carriden was known so early as Gildas'
time as a most ancient city, under the name of Kair Eden. This,
however, is a great mistake, as the statement in question could not
have been written for about five centuries after Gildas' death in 570.
The phraseology used by the scribe who wrote the sentence betrays
the exact time, before which it could not have been written. This
extract says "that the wall extended from the Scottish sea (*mare
Scotiæ*) unto the Irish sea; that is from Kair Eden, a most ancient city
about 2 miles from the Monastery of Abercurnig, now called Abercorn."
It is a well established fact that the Firth of Forth was not known in
history as the *Mare Scoticum* or Scottes Water until about the com-
mencement of the eleventh century. The extract is taken from what is
called the Capitula of Gildas, and, according to Stevenson, is only found
in a MS. of Gildas' History of the thirteenth century; and he assigns 564
as the date of the history, so that we are justified in assuming that the
date of the Holyrood charter is the earliest record that we have of
Carriden as the name of the district. What the origin or derivation of
that name may be is not a mere matter of conjecture. I am disposed to
assert that the *Caredyn* and *Carreden* of the Holyrood charter of the
twelfth century is simply the rendering into English of Nennius' *Iudeu*
of the ninth century, as the latter is the equivalent of Bede's Giudi of the
eighth century; for the following reasons :—Nennius' form of the word,
with the consonant J as the initial letter, must be Latin, as neither the
Welsh, Irish, nor Gaelic languages have the consonant J in their alphabets.
I take it to be the Irish form of Bede's Giudi. Then the initial letters
of many Welsh words are subject to great mutations. The initial G is
sometimes dropped altogether, as in the case of the name of the river
Gippen near Ipswich, from which the name of that town is derived—
the name of the river being spelt Ippen as well as Gippen. Considering
the diversity of spelling of many words, especially the names of places and
of men in those early historic documents, and further, that the scribes who
wrote and transcribed them did not all belong to one people,—always using
the same language, one using the Welsh, another the Irish, while a third
used the Gaelic, and ultimately the English in the twelfth century, jumb-

ling two of the forms together and coining a new word altogether, as their
equivalent for the old form,—there need be no wonder at all about the
diversity that exists.   We have thus the *Iudeu* of Nennius changed into
Edyn or Eden in the twelfth century, and the prefix Carr or Cair used
instead of the Latin *urbs* of Bede and Nennius.   In the passage already
quoted from Nennius it says, that Oswy slew Penda in the field of Gai
Campi. The identification of *Gai Campi* has never been made out by any
of the commentators of that writer.   There is, according to Stevenson, in
three of the MSS. of Nennius' History of the twelfth century, a different
word used for Gai Campi, which, if adopted as the correct one, at once
clears up the mystery as to the whereabouts of this undiscovered *Campus*,
and confirms in a remarkable manner my theory respecting the actual
site of Bede's Giudi.   The word used in these MSS. is Giti Campi—all
but the identical word Giudi—the harder consonant *t* being used instead
of *d*.   If this reading is adopted the mystery is very much diminished,
because all the other evidence as to the locality in which Bede's battle
of Vinwed and Nennius' destruction of Penda and his army by Oswy,
points to the district of country within a few miles of Blackness.   This
reading Giti Campi at once localises the battlefield, and implies that the
field derived its distinctive appellation from the neighbouring Cair or
stronghold Giti within the district, and not from a Cair on the island
of Inchkeith, some 15 miles away, totally disconnected with that
locality.

Nennius, in the early part of his History, says that the island of Britain
contains twenty-eight cities, one of them is named *Cair Maunguid*.   In
one of the additions to Nennius' history, reference is made to a district
of country called Manau Guotodin, which Dr Skene, who has thrown much
new light on the early history of Scotland during the sixth and seventh
centuries, identifies, in a very circumstantial manner, with the district of
country lying along the Firth of Forth from the Esk to the Avon in
Linlithgowshire.   This city of Nennius, Cair Maunguid, is obviously
only another form of Bede's Giudi, with the name of the district in
which it is situated used as the prefix to the name of the city itself.
The phonetic argument, I admit, is not by any means the most satisfactory
mode of determining such questions as the identity of names of places,

but in this particular case it requires only the transposition of two letters in the prefix—the vowel *u* with *n*, to make it harmonise with Bede.

In the Gododin, a poem of the seventh century, by Aneurin, a Welsh bard, descriptive of a conflict between the Saxons and the Britons in the district then known as *Manau Guotodin*, Caer Eiddyn is mentioned several times. Dr Skene, in his notes to the Gododin poem, published in his *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, has a note explanatory of the localities mentioned in the poem. He says : " At Caredin the Roman wall terminated, and here there was a headland and a promontory jutting out into the Firth, on which was a royal castle called Blackness, where, probably, was the ' Ynys Eiddin yn y Gogled ' mentioned in the *Benedd y Saint.*" The common assumption is that the district took its name from a castle near Bridgeness, where the Roman wall terminated. Dr Skene's idea is by far the more probable, and it would follow that the district derived its name from the " Ynys Eidden " and the castle on it, rather than from a castle at the end of the wall. This view of the matter would go a long way in support of the theory that Blackness was the site of Bede's Giudi and Nennius' Iudeu—the two names being merely different forms of the same word.