

Roman Somerset, with special relation to recent
discoveries in Bath.

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IT will be remembered by some here present that when the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society met in Bath, 21st September, 1852, the fourth year after its foundation, I had the honour to give a brief account of the Roman remains that are preserved in the Museum of the Literary and Scientific Institution. The paper read on that occasion was published in the *Proceedings*, and the interest taken in the subject led to the expansion of it into a quarto volume published twelve years afterwards (1864). Twelve years have since elapsed, and in the course of those years something has been added to the information then brought together. I purpose therefore now to supply a notice of what has been acquired ; but this notice must necessarily be brief, and can only indicate what may be done by careful observation and collection and preservation of remains when found, and may serve to show how necessary it is to note down every remnant of antiquity which may come to light. If another edition of *Agua Solis* were put forth, it would contain much matter that has accumulated, and rectify some errors which in years past it was impossible to avoid.

The study of Roman remains, and especially of inscriptions, has within the last fifteen years received increased attention, and a great impetus has been given to it by the publication of Dr. Mc Caul's *Britanno-Roman Inscriptions, with critical Notes*, in

1863, in which Somersetshire inscriptions form an important part; and by the publication of Bruce's *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, or inscriptions found on the line of the great northern barrier, or in the neighbourhood of it. But the chiefest and most important work is due to German industry, and that is the seventh volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, put forth by the Academy of Letters at Berlin. This volume contains all the inscriptions found in Britain brought together and edited by Prof. Hübner, under the title *Inscriptiones Britannicæ Latine*.¹ In this very scholarlike work Bath has received due attention, and the readings of the inscriptions are very accurately given, while the comments upon them are exceedingly valuable. Prof. Hübner has paid two visits to England, and the Roman remains of Bath were on one occasion very carefully examined, when I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with him, and have since been in frequent communication. He has availed himself of all the authorities who have written on British Roman remains, consulting them with great care, always acknowledging their use and pointing out wherever they have fallen into any error.

The first subject to be noticed is the ancient name of Roman Bath, which has always been a fruitful subject of discussion. Is it *Aquæ Solis* or *Aquæ Sulis*? Prof. Hübner decides in favour of the latter, on account of the altars bearing inscriptions to the *Dea Sul*, but acknowledges that there is good authority for *Aquæ Solis*.² To myself it appears a point very difficult of solution, for *Sul* in the ancient Gaulish language seems to have been synonymous with *Sol*. *Sul* was the *Eye of the World*, the universal *Soul*, or *Soul* of the universe. Our word "soul" is from the Saxon, but in some of the cognate languages it approaches very near the word *Sul*. The word soul expresses inward illumination, and, if you note, *Sul* is connected with *Minerva* on two of the Bath altars. *Minerva*, the goddess of wisdom, is coupled with *Sul*, the goddess of illumination.

(1). Berlin, 1873, Reimer.

(2). See *Ins. Brit. Lat.*, p. 24.

Leaving however our hearers to select whichever name they would like, I pass on to a point of not less importance, the rank held by Bath among the Roman cities of Britain. *Aquæ Solis*, or *Aquæ Sulis*, is distinguished from another *Aquæ*, the position of which though generally believed to be Buxton, in Derbyshire, has only lately been confirmed by lapidary evidence. Some years ago (1862) a Roman "Miliaria," or milestone, was discovered in the immediate neighbourhood of Buxton. This gives the name of one of the Roman stations mentioned by the chorographer, Ravennas, as the next to "*Aquæ*," and at the same time the distance between the two places is given, and so we are enabled to fix the position of "*Aquæ*" at Buxton, where the remains of Roman baths have been found.³ We have therefore the remains of two watering places, famous in Roman as well as in modern times, "*Aquæ*" and "*Aquæ Solis*" or *Sulis*, but our Somersetshire city appears to have been most famous according to the account of Solinus, and judging from the remains that still exist. Indeed if I may quote the words of Prof. Hübner—"Omnis vero regio illa vestigiis vitæ Romanæ abundat: ut appareat loca etiam hodie amœnitate cæli non minus quam aquarum salubritate clara inde ab initiis dominationis Romanæ precipue culta esse."

I hope this testimony of a German to the charm of the climate of Bath, as well as to the springs and the Roman remains, will have due weight with some who dwell here and who, it is to be feared, little regard the privileges of place, country, or clime! We see that Prof. Hübner regards the antiquities found in Bath for the most part as of *early date*, and this is certainly borne out by the discovery of the "Lamina" and pigs of Roman lead, bearing the Imperial stamp, in the district of Mendip. One as early as A.D. 44-48, found at Blagdon; two more of the time of Vespasian (A.D. 69-78), found at Charterhouse; and others of the time of the Antonines.

From the coming of Vespasian into this island, in the time of

(3). See *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxiii, p. 54.

the Emperor Claudius, to the end of the second century, we may probably date the chief remains found in this city. Yet Bath itself does not appear to have been a military station. There was a military station at Combe Down, as the inscription found there in 1854 clearly proves,⁴ but Bath itself was a place of resort for recovery of health in Roman times as well as at present. Prof. Hübner observes :—“*Milites ex universa provincia huc convenisse valetudinis recuperandæ causa consentaneum est; unde non mirabimur titulos aut votivos aut sepulcrales hic repertos esse legionariorum, legionis II adjutricis, II Augustæ, VI Victricis, XX Valeriæ Victricis, item equitis Hispani in ala Vettoniana militantis.*” We have evidence of soldiers of four legions coming hither, and of Spanish cavalry, but we have a total absence of Roman tile or brick bearing the stamp of any legion. These remains are abundant at Caerleon, Chester, York, and elsewhere, and would have been found in Bath had there been any stationary camp. There are no traces either of a Roman municipality, the decurion or magistrate whose monument was found here belonged to Gloucester (*Colonia Glevum*), not to Bath.

The discovery in 1854 of the inscribed stone at Combe Down,⁵ established the fact that “*Principia*” or Roman “*officers quarters*” were situated there, and the remains since found of columns, coins, pottery, and glass, shew that dwellings existed there. Though no traces of a fortified camp have been found, yet such may have been obliterated by quarrying, as all the ground around has been much disturbed, and a large portion of land built upon. There are some traces of a fortified camp on Brerewyck Hill, near where the Foss Road entered Bath; but here also the operation of quarrying renders it very difficult to trace the entrenchments.

The sculptures once seen in the ancient walls of the city, but now lost, which are recorded by Leland, and drawn and

(4). See *Proc. Som. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc.* vol., 1854, p. 133.

(5). See *Proc. of Som. Arch. Soc.*, 1854, p. 135.

published by Doctor Guidott,⁶ have been recently confirmed by the discovery of drawings also made of them by Dingley, in the time of Charles II, whose MS. has been published by the Camden Society (1867).

There is an additional sculpture given in Dingley's MS. of a figure bearing a palm branch in the right hand and a wand in the left.⁷

The authority for these sculptures has sometimes been doubted, on account of the representations given in Guidott's work being somewhat un-Roman. In the pen-and-ink sketches made by Dingley the Roman characteristics are better preserved, and no doubt is left of the authenticity of the sculptures.

It is much to be regretted that all these stones have perished. They had been built into the mediæval walls, as relics of a power that had passed away, but alas, in the removal of the walls in later times no care was taken to preserve them. In the autumn of 1867, and spring of 1868, the old White Hart Hotel was removed, to give place to the present Pump Room Hotel. In digging out the foundations, Roman remains were found at a depth of 16 feet, nearly opposite the Pump Room, and on the opposite side of Stall Street was found a basement of concrete, 24 feet 3 inches east and west, by 20 feet 3 inches north and south. Attached to this were large stones laid as a foundation. At a distance of 15 feet west the foundations of walls were laid bare, and 39 feet still further west foundations of other walls. These seem to have formed an ambulatory or covered walk round the building, the two lines of parallel wall being 10 feet 6 inches apart. The entire width of the court in which this building had stood was 112 feet, but the foundations of wall 15 feet from the mass of concrete seemed to shew that it had been surrounded by a portico or colonnade. Happily, an accurate plan of these remains was made, and notes taken by Mr. Irvine, and an account sent to the *Archæological Journal*

(6). A. D. 1676.

(7). See Dingley's *History from Marble*, A. D. 1680.

(5th March, 1868). Many interesting remains were found above these foundations, especially a fine piece of embossed glass, several coins, and some portions of sheet window glass. This is found in abundance all over the ancient city, when the Roman level is reached.⁸ The removal of the old White Hart led to the confirmation of an idea which had been current previously, that after the Roman evacuation of the city it had been abandoned, and allowed to fall into ruin. The site was found to be covered up with mud, vegetable remains, and drift wood, the deposit being in places almost converted into peat. This is the description of Mr. Moore, who carefully examined the site during the process of clearing away the foundations for the new Pump Room Hotel. Mr. Earle, in Vol. II of the *Proceedings of the Bath Field Club*, has given a very interesting paper on "An Ancient Saxon Poem on a City in Ruins," supposed to be Bath, (read 15th March, 1871). This poem is from an old Saxon book preserved in the Chapter Library at Exeter. The description well applies to Bath, and can indeed apply to no other place; and this is a confirmation of the fact that the Roman city was probably abandoned for a century or more after the battle of Dyrham, A.D. 577.⁹

We are, many of us, acquainted with the work of Samuel Lysons, published in 1802, containing drawings of the chief Roman remains found in Bath, and entitled *Remains of Two Temples and other Antiquities discovered at Bath*. He has attempted the restoration of two temples from the fragments preserved. Since the time of this publication others have come to light, and by the aid of these Mr. Irvine, who was some time resident in Bath (having the oversight of works needful for the restoration of the Abbey Church), has given a more detailed restoration of the Roman temple in the *Proceedings of the Archæological Association* for the year 1873, p. 379. He has

(8). See notes by Mr. Irvine on the remains of the Roman Temple and Entrance Hall to the Roman Baths found at Bath in 1790, printed in the *Journal of the Archæological Association*, 1874.

(9). See *Proc. of Bath Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Field Club*, vol. ii, No. 3, p. 259.

with great care and diligence succeeded in giving to every fragment its proper place, and has made two architectural drawings, of the temple and another building, in their original condition. We have the pediment, the frieze, the entablature, and the columns, all reproduced to scale, and the places assigned to the sculptures, still extant; also he has found out the probable position of the stone containing the sculptures of Hercules and Bacchus. He supposes that the building, called by Mr. Lysons the smaller temple, was the entrance to the Roman baths; and in the proposed frontage which he gives he finds the true position for the sculptures of the "four seasons," and also for the inscription, the fragments of which are placed in the passage of the Literary and Scientific Institution, together with the conjectural restoration. "This building," he says, "was erected probably later than the Temple," and was part of the Roman baths, &c., and he has computed the area covered by them at a length of 500 feet by a depth of 100.

I need not say how much the labours of Mr. Irvine have tended to elucidate the Roman vestiges still remaining in Bath. I have mentioned the inscription in the passage of the Institution, which has called forth the learning of eminent men in conjecturally filling up the missing spaces. Mr. Lysons gives a conjectural restoration (p. 5), and for further conjectures I would refer to *Aquæ Solis* (p. 20). Prof. Hübner is the last authority who has put forth an opinion, and his conjectural restoration is well worth our attention. He says, "In Bath anno 1790 in Stall Street detectæ sunt reliquæ templi operis tectonici optimi, quæ servantur in Musæo. Litteræ sunt optimæ et alte incisæ, seculi puto secundi." He would read it—

C.	PROTACIV	s. libo, ti. c	LAVDIVS. LIGVR	sacer (dotes)*
DE	AE.SVLISM	inerv	AE. NIMIA. VETVST	ate conlapsum†

* restituto o OLEGO. LONGA. SERIA annorum abolito ædem
 † sua pec VNIA. REFICI. ETREPINGICVR arunt idemque.

He supposes the restoration of the temple of Sul-Minerva to be the work of two priests of that goddess.

If this restoration of the temple was carried out in the *second century*, as Prof. Hübner seems to think from the form and execution of the lettering, "Litteræ sunt optimæ et alto incisæ, seculi puto secundi," it is another proof of the early settlement of Bath as a Roman town, for the inscription commemorates a *restoration*. Most of the altars hitherto found in Bath are dedicated to the goddess Sul, Sul-Minerva, the Sulevæ; one is dedicated to Mars Lucetius and Nemetona; but there was found in 1870, in removing a portion of the buildings of the Bath Market, adjoining the Guildhall, two portions of an altar dedicated to the "Genius Loci." The inscription had consisted of six lines, the first and last alone being distinctly legible, the other portions can only be conjecturally restored. The altar seems to have been erected in the time of the Emperor Hadrian; probably from A.D. 119—135. This is an addition made to the city collection of remains, for which we have to thank Mr. Davis, the city architect. An altar bearing the same inscription, DEO GENIO LOCI, was found at York in 1875, in making the new railway station.¹⁰ It is a curious inference to be drawn from the discovery of this altar dedicated to the "Genius Loci,"—that the goddess Sul seems to have had other and distinct attributes. Although the tutelary deity presiding over the springs, she was not the "Genius Loci," unless it be supposed that the "Genius Loci" was only another title of the goddess Sul. "Not only the individual," says Prof. Döllinger, "but each and every place had its genius. There were countless genii of places." "Why talk to me," says Prudentius, "of the genius of Rome, when your wont is to ascribe a genius of their own to doors, houses, baths, and stables, and in every quarter of the town, and all places, you feign *thousands* of genii as existing, so that no corner is without its own ghost."¹¹ "No place," says Servius, "is without a genius, generally manifesting itself in a serpent." The

(10). See *Academy*, 9th Oct., 1875.

(11). *Prud. Adv. Symmach*, ii, 444.

people, the curiæ, the centuries, the senate, the army, the different burgher companies, each and all had their genius. There were even genii of particular deities."¹² We may therefore infer that this genius had presided over the locality where the altar was found, or over some society. What a medley of belief do these remains open out before us! The goddess Sul, or Sul-Minerva, seems to have presided over the springs, and her tutelary guardianship to have rested over them. Thus it was at the head of the spring of the hot bath, near the site of S. John's Hospital, that the small and elegantly shaped altar, dedicated DEAE SVLIMINERVAE, by SVLINVS MATVRI FIL: was found, and with it many coins, deposited there, no doubt, as votive offerings. At the source of the Seine, which rises near Besançon, around the principal spring were found the foundation of a Roman temple, with busts, statues, and *ex voto* offerings—as arms, legs, hands—carved in stone. Also a vase, containing votive offerings in bronze, and silver, and as many as 830 coins, reaching from Augustus to Magnus Maximus. The vase was inscribed

DEAE SEQVANAE RVFVS DONAVIT.

A votive altar also, dedicated by Flavius or Flavianus—

AVG SAC DEAE SEQ

“To the August and Sacred Goddess Sequana.”

PRO SAL[VTI]. NEP. SVI.

For the health of his nephew.¹³

As late as February, 1875, there was found at Bourbonne-les-Bains, department Haute-Marne, France, in clearing the reservoir of thermal waters, above 4,000 bronze coins or medals, and a few gold coins. These were no doubt *ex voto* offerings to the divinity of the spring; also small statuettes, beautifully wrought, and a stone pillar bearing inscriptions¹⁴—

(12). See Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew*, vol. ii, p. 82.

(13). See *Rapport sur les Découvertes faites aux Sources de la Seine*, par M. Baudot, 1845, Paris and Dejon. Also, *Journal of Arch. Assoc.*, vol. xxxii, p. 61.

(14). See *Times* (London), 4th Feb., 1875.

BORVONI ET DAMONÆ, BORMONIAE DAMONAE,
 APOLLINI BORVONI ET DAMONAE.

We have here the local deity Borvo dignified with the prefix of APOLLO. Apollo precedes Borvo, but at Bath *Sul* precedes Minerva. The barbarous goddess precedes the Roman. We never find *Minerva-Sul*. Borvo, however, was happily united to a wife or female companion called Damona, but we do not find the goddess Sul or Sul-Minerva to have been blessed with a husband. I am therefore disposed to regard *Sul* as only another form of *Sol*, and as combining the attributes of male and female.

It is interesting to find in different lands remains of the same grateful custom of making votive offerings for recovery of health. The altar in the Literary Institution, dedicated DEAE SVLI, by

AVF. LEMNVS,
 PRO SALVTE ET INCOLVMITATE
 AVF. MAXIMI.

whose freed-man he was, is a very pleasing record of gratitude. I cannot but look upon the noble Mineral Waters Hospital in the city of Bath, open to all the sick poor of the British Empire, where the cases of sickness might receive benefit from the healing springs, as a fitting monument—a votive altar—on behalf of a Christian people—a grand evidence of Christian love and charity, in obedience to the Divine command that “he who loveth God love his brother also.”

Among the amended readings of the Bath inscriptions, where the lettering upon the stone is doubtful, made by Prof. Hübner, is one which deserves attention. In the Sydney Gardens was found the monumental stone to the priest of the goddess Sul, C. CALPVRNIVS, who died at the age of LXXV. The memorial is erected to him by his wife TRIFOSA : but the letters following this name are much obliterated. Prof. Hübner has, however, given what appears to be the true reading, viz. :—

LIB(ERTA) et conjunx,

"freed-woman," who had become his wife, and probably nursed him in his old age, and been comfortably provided for by him, or she would not have erected the memorial stone, for monumental stones were generally tokens that means were provided for their erection. Thus, in the mutilated inscription (probably of the 1st century¹⁵) to a soldier of the 20th Legion, who had served his time, and was probably of Nicomedia, the monumental stone is erected by G. TIBERINVS, "heres," his heir. To the Romans belongs pre-eminently the credit of inventing the will. It is doubtful whether a power of testation was known to any original society except the Romans. "Rudimentary forms of it (says Maine, in his *Treatise on Ancient Law*, p. 194) occur here and there, but most of them are not exempt from suspicion of Roman origin. The Athenian will was no doubt indigenous, but it was only an inchoate testament. Similarly the rudimentary testament which the Rabbinical Law of the Jews provides for, has been attributed to the Romans. . . . The original institutions of the Jews have provided nowhere for the privileges of testatorship."

In addition to the memorial stone to the priest of "Sul," found in Sydney Gardens, other interments have since been found, but no inscriptions. A stone coffin, mentioned in *Aquæ Solis*, p. 101; and since then, in February, 1866, where a pit for gravel was opened near the boundary fence which separates the College play-ground from the gardens, many fragments of black earthenware and pottery, together with two flint arrow-heads, were found. Ashes and burnt matter were also found, and stones reddened by the action of fire. During the month of August, the same year, another gravel pit was opened in the same ground, and at the depth of 10 feet below the surface two stone coffins, lying side by side, were discovered. The one contained a skeleton, supposed to be that of a male, and the other the head of a horse. The head of a horse, interred in a stone box or cist, was also found at Combe Down, when the inscription

(15). See Hübner, *In Brit. Lat.*, p. 27, No. 51.

there was discovered.¹⁶ Many interments, both in sepulchral urns and in stone coffins, have been found at the foot of Bathwick Hill, in preparing sites for villas, and this leads to the belief that the south side of the river was used as a place of interment, and that probably a Roman road here passed up the hill, or along the river side.

Roman interments have been found on every side of Bath, especially where the lines of ancient road passed out of the city. In digging the foundation of the Church of St. Andrew, beyond Catherine Place, a stone coffin was found in 1870, also the remains of several interments. The traces of the Roman road which passed out of the city in the direction of Bitton were also found. This line of road has been called the Via Julia, and came from Marborough, the Roman Cunetio, and passing down Bathford hill and through Bath-Easton into Bath, passed out by way of Weston to Bitton, and on to Sea-Mills and the Severn at Aust.¹⁷

But the most important Roman road entering Bath and traversing Somerset was the Foss Road, coming from the sea coast at Seaton, passing through Ischalis (Ilchester) on towards Shepton Mallet, where it crossed another great line of Roman road which traversed the Mendip mineral district, and passing by Camerton entered Bath by Holloway, and left the city again by way of Walcot Street and Bath-Easton, and passing up Bath-Easton hill in the direction of Colerne, went on in a direct line to Cirencester. Along the course of this road the sites of many villas have been traced, and the pavements and hypocausts laid bare, as at Wellow, Camerton, Newton St. Loe, Combe Down, Bath-Easton, Colerne, South Wraxall, and Langridge.

These are enumerated in *Aquæ Solis*, pp. 112 and following, but since the publication of that work another has been opened

(16). See *Aquæ Solis*, p. 100.

(17). An account of this road will be found in Vol. I. of the *Proceedings of the Bath Field Club*.

near Tracey Park, in October, 1865, under the direction of the Bath Field Club, and a full account of this is given in the first volume of their *Proceedings*.

Somersetshire is rich in the remains of Roman villas, and these lie chiefly in the direction of the great Roman roads.¹⁸ There are three principal lines of Roman road in Somerset, the *Foss*, the *Via Julia*, and what has been called the *Via ad Axium*, which passed from old Sarum, near Salisbury, to Shepton Mallet—where Roman pottery kilns have been discovered,—and through the mineral district of the Mendip Hills, where many vestiges of Roman mining are now being unearthed, on to the mouth of the Axe. The vestiges of Roman mining are here very abundant, and portions of inscriptions have been found cut in stone, as well as stamped in leaden lamina. These works go back to the time of Claudius.

Scattered throughout the *Proceedings* of this Society will be found notices of the tessellated pavements which have been opened in various parts of the county. It would be too long to attempt more than to mention those found at Pitney, at Chard, at Coker, at Ilchester, at Somerton; but it is time that some steps were taken to collect and put together details of Roman Somerset—the roads, villas, Roman stations, coins, pottery, inscriptions, accompanied by a map noting the exact position where such relics have been found. This Society might devote something from its resources for the publication of such an account, and this should be done throughout every English county. Private efforts have accomplished much, but these ought to be seconded by public spirit, and the burden lightened for those who, if partially assisted, might accomplish much in the illustration of their country's antiquities.

(18). A Roman villa has lately been found in the Vale of Wrington at Lychole, two miles east of Wrington,—in July 1876.
