

Dolbury and Cadbury Camps.¹

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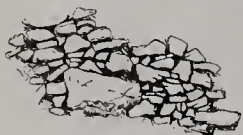
Dolbury.

THE photo-lithographed plan which illustrates this section is reduced from one plotted to a much larger scale from an exact instrumental survey made in the year 1872, and shows all visible features of the works, as well as incidents of the surface. Within my knowledge, only two other plans of this camp have hitherto been published. One of these, lithographed to a small scale, from a survey made in the first third of this century by Mr. Crocker, was inserted by the Rev. W. Phelps in his *History of Somersetshire*. It is inaccurate in several particulars, some of which will appear on a comparison with the accompanying plan. The other, a rude and very small wood-cut, will be found in Rutter's *Delineations of N. W. Somerset*.

The fortified inclosure occupies the western extremity of a spur of Blackdown (a part of the limestone range of Mendip) which, on the southern side, declines, by a very abrupt, and, in some parts, precipitous natural escarpment, to a deep and narrow ravine: on the north, the descent to the open plain, though steep, is less sudden: the western end, 230 feet high, is slowly surmounted by an ancient winding chariot-way from the gorge, through which must have run, as now, one of the principal passes of the hills. Eastward from the main rampart, a narrow plateau extends on a level for about 150 yards, beyond which there is a gentle dip to a wide neck intervening between it and

(1). Condensed from a paper, "Dolbury and Cadbury: Two Somersetshire Camps," by the same author, published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 1882.

DOLBURY CAMP NEAR SANDFORD, SOMERSET.



Place of Walling at A.



the rising back-ground. This plateau is crossed, at the distance of 100 yards from the outer eastern trench of the camp, by a slight doubly-embanked trench, 75 yards in length. Another trench, or ancient hollow-way, may be seen on the northern slope of the hill, commencing behind the gardens of the cottages which flank the lower part of the main approach, bearing somewhat in the direction of the north-eastern corner of the camp, and terminating about half-way up the hill. Such incomplete lines of defence are frequently found in the outskirts of primitive camps. Westward, on the opposite side of the pass, and at a lower level than Dolbury, a small intrenched camp, called Dinhurst, on the edge of an almost precipitous bluff, is its *vis à vis* across the gorge. It remains but to note that the ground inclines with growing steepness from the flat western end of Dolbury to the crest of the ridge at the eastern end; there being a difference of level of about 155 feet between these two points. From this crest, there is an abrupt fall over some rugged rocks toward the eastern half of the northern rampart, behind which it forms a deep trench; while, on the other side, there is a gentler descent to the southern rampart.

It will be seen that the plan of the works approximates to a rectangle; and that the inclosure is embanked on every side. Its greatest interior length and breadth are respectively 1570 feet and 750 feet; and the area of the *enceinte* is 22 acres and a quarter. The southern rampart is not intrenched,—the natural escarpment making such a precaution unnecessary: but on the other three sides, there are both double banks and double trenches. There were probably only two chief entrances,—those at the western end, and at the north-eastern corner. There is now a third entrance near the south-eastern corner; but it is doubtful whether this is of ancient date, as it is shallower than the others, and is neither shown on Crocker's plan, nor mentioned by any of the older writers. It will be noticed that, at two or three points, there are interruptions of the outer northern trench; and it is quite possible that these may indicate the

positions of ancient sally-ports, of which no other trace remains; for the foot-ways, which here and there cross the ramparts, are all modern. The older plans, to which reference has been made, represent a rectangular inclosure, external to the camp, to the south-west of the main entrance, reinforcing, as it were, the defences of the inclined approach. There neither is, nor, evidently, ever was any such outwork. A narrow tongue, with steep flanks, as shown in the plan, forms the western termination of the southern escarpment; but it carries not the slightest trace of any artificial work, for which there would be neither room nor use, as a deep hollow intervenes between it and the approach-road which rounds the opposite shoulder. Within the south-western corner of the camp, at the lowest level in the area, there is a somewhat rectangular shallow hollow, measuring 175 feet by 125 feet, its eastern side, and a portion of the northern one, being formed into a kind of bench or shelf. This has been sometimes, though erroneously, represented as embanked, and regarded as the site of a *prætorium*, or as the remains of an inner camp. The theory that it was a pond for the storage of water for the garrison seems to be the most tenable. If this reservoir should fail, a copious supply could be obtained from streams at the foot of the hill.

On reference to the plan, it will be seen that the uniformity of the inclosed area is broken by seven long mounds. The object for which these were raised has never yet been ascertained. They are of various degrees of relief, and regularity of form, and are, for the most part, surrounded by shallow trenches. While very like some of the long barrows, or those mounds known as "giants' graves," they can also hardly be distinguished from similar objects on other large warrens, raised for rabbits to burrow in; and such might have been thought to be their use here, had not the keeper told me that it was not so, and that these banks were not recent. The Rev. W. Phelps hazards a conjecture, which he seems to mistake for a fact, that "under these long barrows were deposited the remains of some

departed British chieftains." None of these mounds, however, give evidence of having been opened; nor can I find any record of search for interments having been made in them. Mr. Kerslake (*A primæval British Metropolis*, pp. 37 and 99) makes an ingenious guess as to their use, when he regards them as the remains of raised causeways or streets. To this theory it will perhaps suffice to object, that the trenches sometimes surround the ends, as well as flank the sides of these mounds; that some of the latter are too much raised and too round-backed for the supposed purpose; and also that it would be unnecessary to embank the ways on so dry a site. A series of banks, somewhat like these, meeting one another squarely and obliquely, have been observed in Ogbury camp, Wilts.

On farther reference to the plan, it will be seen that fifteen cruciform constructions are laid down at intervals, chiefly along the hollow-ways and trenches within and without the ramparts. These are nothing but modern devices, made within the memory of the keeper, to entrap vermin. The circular wall, and the inclosed portions of a rectangular building, are the ruins of a warrener's lodge that, for many years, occupied this, the highest point in the camp, where, originally, there may have been a beacon. A causeway, doubly-scarped on its northern side, and probably ancient, leads from these ruins to the north-eastern entrance; and, half-way down the rocky breast, there is a narrow ramp (shown in the plan) which may possibly be no more than a natural shelf produced by regular stratification. Above this, occurs a large pit dug, doubtless, in recent times in search of minerals.

The principal feature which differentiates Dolbury from almost every other camp in the district is the structure of portions of its *agger*. In remains of this class, it is commonly a simple embankment composed of stones and earth; and this was probably its primitive form in those works where, either from natural strength of position, or from haste in execution, or from lack of walling-stone, or, possibly, from constructive inep-

titude, a more artful mode of defence was not adopted. It was so here, I think, in the case of the southern embankment which, though of the usual brashy material, is entirely overgrown by grass, affording no evidence of having ever been very different to what it is now. But when we examine the other portions of the *agger*, (the higher and inner one), we find it assuming another character: there is more stone and less earth in its composition, especially in the northern rampart, along the eastern half of which, little but stone is visible. That this is in part the ruins of ancient walling, may be seen on a perambulation of the rampart. Starting at the south-western corner, and proceeding northward, the first exposed piece is met with at a point about 100 feet north of the main entrance. Afterward, (excepting about 500 feet in the middle of the northern side, where the face is continuously out of sight), it comes into view at short intervals all the way around to a point 175 feet south of the north-eastern entrance, especially in a length from 300 to 400 feet west of the north-eastern corner. All these visible portions of the face are plotted on the original plan; but most of them are too small to be clearly seen on the accompanying plate. Where least broken down, they stand about 4 feet high above the present surface of the rubbish in the trench which, as at Worlebury, is, doubtless, the fallen material of the original wall. At Worlebury, the walls had generally more than a single terraced face—in one part there were four; but here, there is no reason for thinking that there ever was more than one, and that springing from near the foot of the outer slope of the *agger*. Whether, after being built to a height sufficient to frustrate any attempt at escalade without ladders, this was levelled-off to a simple bench at the top; or whether this bench was surmounted by a breast-work; there is no evidence to show. Some antiquaries have thought that they could discern in the walling at Dolbury indications of a later date than they found at the rival fortress; but the fact is that, allowing for some superiority in the natural bedding of the stone at Dolbury,

its masonry is essentially of the same character as that at Worlebury. In neither case has the least tool-mark been detected. A sketch of a piece of the walling which exhibits, at the same time, the greatest boldness and the greatest contrasts of size in the materials, is inserted as an illustration on the plan. As to the bank intermediate between the two trenches, nothing remains to indicate that it was either faced or crowned by a wall; for very little rubble appears in the outer trench.

The idea that the style of a piece of rude, dry walling is indicative of its relative age is purely imaginary. That there should be a difference between the walling executed by a people destitute of metallic tools, and that erected by a race possessed of them, and a still greater difference between the former and masonry set in mortar, is quite reasonable; but there is positively nothing in one class of dry, untooled work which, *per se*, indicates a higher or a lower antiquity than in another with which it may be compared; otherwise we should not have examples of several styles built at the present moment in the same district. The difference between varieties of dry walling is necessarily regulated chiefly by the character of the stone, and the end for which the work was designed, and, in a minor degree, by the energy of the builders.

It is recorded that Roman and Saxon coins have been found in Dolbury, with iron spear-heads and other weapons. A friend lately showed me some articles which he had obtained by digging a foot or two below the surface, at about the middle of the inclosure. They consisted of fragments of unglazed pottery, not very coarse, made on a wheel, and of various shades of grey,—one of them ornamented with a zig-zag pattern. With these were found a sling-stone of whitish pebble, and two flint flakes.

Even if no objects had been found pointing to an occupation of this camp by the Saxons, the latter half of its name, it is well known, would strongly indicate the fact. The first element (as in many parallel instances), is clearly Keltic; and if

there were no other examples in the district with the same ending, more than one plausible Keltic etymology of the whole name might be found.

These facts exhaust almost all that is known about Dolbury. A few objects recovered from the site; one or two popular sayings; and the collected results of antiquarian research among the relics of the neighbourhood, dimly illumined by hints struck off from the history and legendary lore of the past;—these are our only guides in conjecturing who established this ancient fortress, and what was, probably, its eventful subsequent history. Many have been the theories as to who were its founders. Some have conjectured the Phœnicians; not a few have attributed it, with similar works in this part of the country, to the Belgic-Britons; others have referred them to the race usually distinguished by the name of Kelts; others, again, have given this fortress to the Gael; and yet others to the Firbolgs;—on the assumption, not yet proved in every case, that each of these was a people distinct from the rest. All, however, that can at present be safely said on this subject is, that this camp was formed in pre-Roman times by some of the warlike dwellers or sojourners in the land; and that, afterward, it was occupied by the Romans or Romanized Britons; perhaps, temporarily, by the Danes; and, subsequently, by the Saxons.

Gadbury.

The photo-lithographed plan which illustrates this section is reduced from one plotted to a very much larger scale, from a *reconnaissance*-survey made in the year 1873, by a combination of paced lines and compass-bearings. Except that there may be a lack of strict accuracy in the radial intervals between the outer banks, trenches, and escarpments, a comparison between it and other plans makes it clear that there is little room for amendment here, while, in all matters of detail, both greater and less, this new plan is much fuller and more correct

CADBURY CAMP.

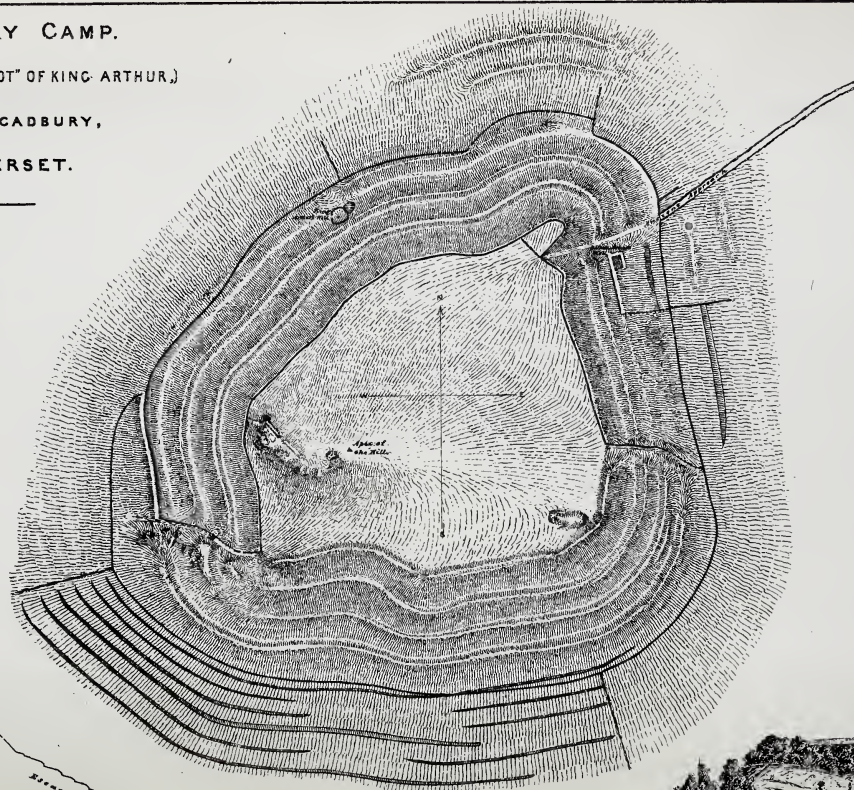
(THE REPUTED "CAMELOT" OF KING ARTHUR.)

SOUTH CADBURY,

SOMERSET.



Arthur's Well.



Representative section (south side)



View of hill from N.E.



than the earlier ones.¹ These are,—(1) A plan, dated 1834, lithographed to a small scale, after a survey by Mr. Crocker, and published in Phelps' *History of Somersetshire*: (2) An estate-plan, of somewhat later date, to about the same scale, a copy of which the author has seen in the possession of a friend: (3) A very small plan (doubtless copied from Crocker's) which illustrates a paper by the late Rev. F. Warre on *Types of British Earthworks*.

Cadbury Castle (so called to distinguish it from the three other Cadbury camps within or near the borders of Somerset) occupies the whole of the top of a steep hill, about 300 feet in height, standing detached as an outpost a little in advance on the north-west of the higher range which stretches from Yeovil to South Cadbury, different parts of which are distinguished by the names of Corton Down, Poynington Down, and Holway Hill. Cadbury hill forms a portion of the great outcrop of the inferior oolite resting upon the lias, which comes to the surface below. It commands the basin watered by the affluents of the river Yeo; and was an important link in that chain of strong forts which dominated the Somerset levels from points of vantage at the verge of the high hill-region behind them,—long ere the dawn of history, the broken coast of a deeply-embayed estuary. The spot is two miles from the nearest point (at Sparkford) of a Roman road which left the "*Via ad Axium*" at a point somewhat to the east of Maiden Bradley; went through Stourhead; passed south-westward, at the distance of a mile or two from Bruton and Castle Cary; and then, through Sparkford and Queen's Camel, to Yeovil. There is no record of any other ancient road in this locality; but there must have been vicinal ways, the traces of which have since disappeared. The nearest camps of any note are

(1). It is unfortunate that the scale of the plan has been so greatly reduced in the reproduction that many of the delicate details of the original are lost. This is especially the case with the incidents on and around the apex of the hill.

Hamdon, 11 miles to the south-west, and Castle Orchard, 10 miles to the north-east.

The plan of the works may be described as an irregular triangle, fenced by four concentric ramparts, with intervening trenches, stepping steeply down the hill-slopes from the edge of the plateau. Below these, the plan shows that, on the north and north-east, there were detached lengths of outermost embankments; on the eastern side, a piece of bold escarpment; and on the south and south-west,—one of the steepest parts,—a series of six similar escarpments partly cut into the rock. The main entrance was probably that still used at the north-eastern corner, where the ascent is the easiest and where the northern rampart was made to bend round, so as to form a flanking defence. It has generally been held that the one at the opposite corner also was ancient; and that there was a third entrance on the eastern side, where the plan shows an existing way through the ramparts. Although these roads appear in Crocker's plan, there is reason for doubting the antiquity of the last, which has some appearance of having been made for the convenience of a former occupier of the land, and is neglected by Phelps in his enumeration of the entrances. While Stukeley writes of only one entrance from the east, guarded by six or seven ditches, it is clear, from Leland's account, that the south-western one was in existence in his time; and, therefore, it was, doubtless, a part of the original work. Mr. Warre regarded the south-western entrance as the chief, and the north-eastern one as secondary; while he assumed, undoubtedly, that the other entrance from the east, to which I have referred, was likewise ancient. The author has been unable to recognize "a smaller opening on the north side, leading through the entrenchments to the spring," which Mr. Warre fancied he could detect; "but the entrenchment had been so tampered with by modern fences," that he was evidently in considerable doubt on the matter. I have written of the south-western entrance as though there was

only one at that point; but the truth is, that, immediately to the south of the existing cart-way which gives easy access to the area, there are signs of another, a much rougher way, shown on the plan, cutting across the three higher banks, straight up to the angle. It is also shown, but too distinctly, in Crocker's plan. Whether this gap, or the adjoining more distinctly marked way, was the entrance at this point in Leland's time, may perhaps remain an open question.

The *enceinte* measures approximately about 1,000 feet by 750 feet, and may have an area of about 18 acres. Crocker's plan has no scale whereby to check the accuracy of this estimate. The ground rises gradually from the north-east and east to the apex of the hill, from whence there is a somewhat abrupt fall to the rampart on the west, and to the entrance at the south-western angle. Almost on the brow, there are remains of a straight piece of embankment, interrupted in the middle; and faint indications of small mounds between it and the edge. Not the slightest trace can be seen of the "work ditched round, and called *King Arthur's Palace*, and which might have been the *prætorium*" of Stukeley. Phelps thinks the apex of the hill might have been occupied by a *speculum*, or watch-tower. In the south-eastern corner there is a small gravel-pit, or quarry. Two springs issue from the hill-sides, among the ramparts. The chief of these, called *Arthur's Well*, (said to be never dry), is in the outer trench, on the north side, inclosed within a ring-fence, adjoining which is a small pond; the other, called *Queen Anne's Well*, is in the middle trench, by the side of the main entrance-way, close to the keeper's cottage.

The embankments are composed of the usual mixture of stones and earth, nearly everywhere overgrown by grass. In some places they and the trenches exhibit exposures of rock; but I have nowhere observed any indication of ancient walling, such as Mr. Warre, somewhat doubtfully, thought he had been able to detect. Stone must always, as now, have been scarce

on the site, and the place amply strong without walled bulwarks.

The modern works shown on the plan will, for the most part, be easily recognised. The banks and trenches belting the western, north-western, and eastern sides, are planted with trees, and fenced-in by walls. The upper one forms a *revêtement* to the inner *agger*, on the side of the *enceinte*; while the lower approximately follows the line of the outer *agger*. Another wall sweeps around its southern foot, from the westernmost bend to the south-eastern entrance. From these, several fence-walls radiate in various directions; and the main approach, beyond the trenches, is shut in by hedges.

The accounts and theories which have been published from the time of Leland downward, both of the camp, and of the objects found in it and its vicinity, together with records and opinions relating to the Arthurian legend, are fully quoted and discussed in the original paper, of which this is an abstract. As to the connexion of King Arthur with Cadbury, the writer concedes that if he were a real personage, and if the scenes of the chief incidents of his career have been truly laid in the West of England; and if the Camelot of romance had an historic reality; then the fortified hill of Cadbury seems to have the best title to be the remains of that place.

When we come to inquire by what people this ancient stronghold was constructed, we shall, as usual, have to bewail the lack of guiding evidence. Both Camden and Stukeley, with strange error of judgment, (as has been well pointed out by Mr. Warre), attributed Cadbury to the Romans, because so many coins of that people have been found there, and notwithstanding that it is not planned according to their well-known system of fortification. The evidence of the coins of course goes no farther than to show that the work was occupied either in Roman or *post-Roman* times, but gives no clue as to the date of its establishment.

Like Dolbury, the name Cadbury is compounded with ele-

ments of diverse parentage. The first half is Keltic, and has been supposed to have some reference, not very well defined, to war or battle. The last half of the word is clearly Saxon.

It is well-known that Mr. Warre had a theory which he expounded in several papers published in these *Proceedings*, that two classes of camps can be distinguished in Somerset; and that these should be attributed to different races. After much thought, and a careful comparison of most of the instances he adduces, and of many to which he has not referred, I am disposed to think that Mr. Warre's induction was based on too small a number of examples; and those, in many cases, either erroneously classified, or not sufficiently marked to lend it any support. His three-fold arrangement, for instance, is only found in its proper order of succession in two or three of the camps he has named,—the best example being Castle Neroche. Hamdon has it not. In Worlebury, the two lower divisions are separated by the "keep;" and Dolbury does not in any way answer to the description. Membury, and Norton too, must not be grouped in that category. And it seems not to have occurred to Mr. Warre that there are many examples of the concentric camp in Damnonia, even down to the extremity of Cornwall; and also that specimens affiliated to those of the triple order are found in distant localities,—for instance, in Wales, Ireland, Brittany, and Istria. Among many less important works of the concentric class in Damnonia, it will be sufficient to instance Chywoon Castle, Castle-an-dinas, and Castle Kenyoe, in Cornwall; Ditchen Hills, Denbury, and Cadbury (near Silverton), in Devonshire; and Norton camp in Somerset; all within the region unpenetrated by the Belgæ; and all good examples of the circular, oval, or concentric form.

In fact, the truth appears to be, that the plans, arrangements, and modes of construction of primitive works of defence were ruled almost solely by the form of the ground, and by the nature of the materials found upon the site; and, though there may have been some differences of fashion among different races,

arising from tribal needs, habits, and pursuits, I am convinced that these were not sufficiently marked to make any such a local classification as that proposed by Mr. Warre at present possible. It can scarcely be hoped that any clearer light will be shed upon the subject until a much more extensive and systematic exploration by the spade than has yet been undertaken shall have been applied to these and many other similar works in the same district.
