

## ROMAN CASTRUM AT LYMNE.

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THE only historical notice we have of the Roman *castrum* or fortress, now known as Studfall Castle, is from the *Notitia Imperii*, an elaborate list of all the chief military *castra* and towns in the Eastern and Western Roman Empire, together with civil administrations. From internal evidence this great work was compiled, or re-compiled as we have it, as late as the time of Arcadius and Honorius.

The *castrum* stands in the list of fortifications on the Saxon Shore, thus: "Præpositus Numeri Turnacensium Lemanis," *i.e.* the Commander of a body of Turnacensians at Lymne.

These soldiers were drawn from *Turnacum*, now Tourney; and may have been from 300 to 400 strong. The fortresses were all under the jurisdiction of a *Comes*, or Count, who had his court of law and officials of various kinds; but where he resided is not stated; it may have been at Dover. What was called the Saxon Shore extended from Brancaster in Norfolk to the *Portus Adurni* in Sussex.

In the "Itinerary of Antoninus" the *castrum* is not mentioned; but the *Portus Lemanis* is; and its distance from *Durovernum*, Canterbury, by what is now called the Stone Street. This port was one of the three great entrances to Britain; the others being

at Dover and Richborough. But it appears to have been silted up and disused some time before this castrum was built. Of this there is evidence which was brought to light when, many years since, I and the late Mr. James Elliott of Dymchurch caused excavations to be made. We discovered that the large squared stones, from 3 to 4 feet in length, which formed the foundations of the main gateway, had been previously used in important buildings. Among them was an altar dedicated to Neptune by a præfect, or admiral, of the British fleet. This altar, from the marine shells which adhered to it, had been under water, and, doubtless, must have come, together with the other stones, from the site of the *Portus Lemanis*, then becoming useless as a port.

We made another interesting discovery. The tiles used in the main walls and in the interior buildings were stamped with the letters CL. BR., *Classiarii Britannici*, British Marines, who were, of course, the builders. Long anterior, similar tile-marks had been found at Dover; so that these military sailors were equally masons and carpenters, and might have assumed as a motto that of our Royal Marine Corps, "Per Mare per Terram."

In the same chapter of the *Notitia* to which I have referred (that of the forts on the Saxon Shore), where mention is made of the Second Legion at Richborough under a tribune, there is additional evidence of the late period of these *castra*. In the middle of the third century, in the reign of Valerianus, this legion was still at its head-quarters at Caerleon. We learn this from an inscription recording a reparation of the barracks, which shews that there was then no indication of removing the legion.

The coins which we found, 261 in number, were chiefly of the Lower Empire; those of Carausius and of the Constantine family being numerous: the latest were of Gratianus.

Reverting to the *Littus Saxonicum*, or Saxon Shore, the name given by the Romans to the line of coast upon which these fortresses were placed, it was so named, not, as some have supposed, from Saxons who had been allowed there to locate themselves, but from the piratical depredations they were continually making. For a long time they were kept in check by the British fleet; but this force being inadequate of itself, a powerful line of forts was established, securing the province for a time. But the power and glory of Rome were on the decline; the destiny of Britain as a Roman province, was tending to a change; and the gradual withdrawal of the legions and auxiliaries left the Saxon Shore to be converted into a portion of the Saxon kingdom.

The disjunct state of the ruins of the castrum is owing to a land-slip common in this district. So violent was it that in parts we found that the walls had been turned upside down, and thrown out of their original line. This rendered the excavations extremely difficult and tedious, while in the interior so deeply were the remains of buildings buried that we could only in two instances lay them open, and that not to a full extent. Towards the upper part were what had been extensive rooms strongly built, which could only be assigned to the quarters of the garrison. In the lower part we were successful in finding an important building which had been warmed by means of hypocausts, while the rooms had remains of wall paintings, the colours being well preserved.

Of course the soldiers' rooms must also have been heated in the same manner, as we find in other military stations; else it would have been impossible for them to have endured the wintry rigours of this northern climate.

In the western wall were some small chambers which could have served no other purpose than protection for watchers; the high situation probably rendering needless, here, the wooden structures for watchmen upon the top of the walls, with which *castra* were usually supplied. The coins of the Constantine family give examples of these sheds.

On the lower or water side there was no wall. As at Richborough, the natural features were a sufficient protection.

The architecture of the walls followed the usual system adopted in these *castra*, the interior being chiefly limestone, cemented with lime, and faced with small squared stones divided at intervals with layers of tiles; to the width of 6 to 8 feet, and in height about 20. The bastions or towers were semi-circular, and tied into the curtain wall. This is usually, but not invariably, the case; for, here and there, we find them detached, being built after the erection of the walls, and united at the top only. They were meant not to strengthen the walls, but solely for strategic purposes.

In concluding these brief\* remarks, let us consider how the Roman soldiers spent the long and dreary winter evenings. They had no newspapers, no books, for the art of printing was unknown. In

\* For a full account see *The Antiquities of Richborough, Reculver, and Lyme*, and a *Report of the Excavations at Lyme*.

their coins, however, they may have found materials for thought and discussion; for their coins give a history of national events. The coins of Probus alone, it has been estimated, include 4000 varieties. By the coins of past times veterans could illustrate great national events in which they had acted; and relate to their young comrades stories of marvellous interest, turning their stipends into annals of history.