

XXIX.—*Account of Roman Remains found at Box Moor, Herts. Communicated by JOHN EVANS, Esq. of Nash Mills, to Captain W. H. SMYTH, R.N., V.P., and Director.*

Read December 11, 1851.

THE Antiquities represented in the annexed anastatic Sketch have been found in the immediate vicinity of Boxmoor Station, on the London and North Western Railway, and have nearly all been brought to light and preserved by the intelligent clerk at that station, Mr. Byles. The neighbourhood was first known to contain any Roman remains through the discovery in 1837 of some Roman sepulchral interments in the burial-ground attached to Box Lane Chapel, which is about 300 yards distant from the station. An Account of the Objects then discovered will be found in the *Archæologia*, vol. XXVII. p. 434. They consisted of a circular glass urn about 12 inches in diameter; the fragments of another of the same character; another of a square form with a handle; an earthen præfericulum or pitcher-shaped vessel used for funereal libations; a bronze lamp-stand and an earthen lamp; together with a number of large iron nails, with which the wooden cistæ in which the interments were made were fastened together. It will be at once observed that these remains and those represented in the sketch are of a totally different character; the one being adapted for sepulchral and the other for domestic purposes. The majority of the latter were found in and around one of those circular pits or *culinæ* which are not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Roman buildings.^a This Pit was discovered and excavated by Mr. Byles, until he came to the water-level, below which it appeared to extend about two feet; so that its original purpose may have been that of a well, though it was afterwards converted into a receptacle for refuse of all kinds. The upper part was filled with rich mould, and the lower with a bluish clay. Besides the various articles given in the Plate (XXIX.), a large number of fragments of Samian and the more common descriptions of ware were found, as well as two boars' tusks, some pieces of greenish glass and sheet-iron, and also a denarius of Nero, with the reverse of *Salus*. The foundations of a building were uncovered at the distance of a few yards from the pit, but only one small apartment, with the walls of flint, plastered on the inside, and coloured with the usual red pigment, could be traced, the foundations extending beneath a road, on the other side of which the ground has been raised for the embankment of the railway.

The objects in the Plate may be described as follows:—Fig. 1 is a knife in iron,

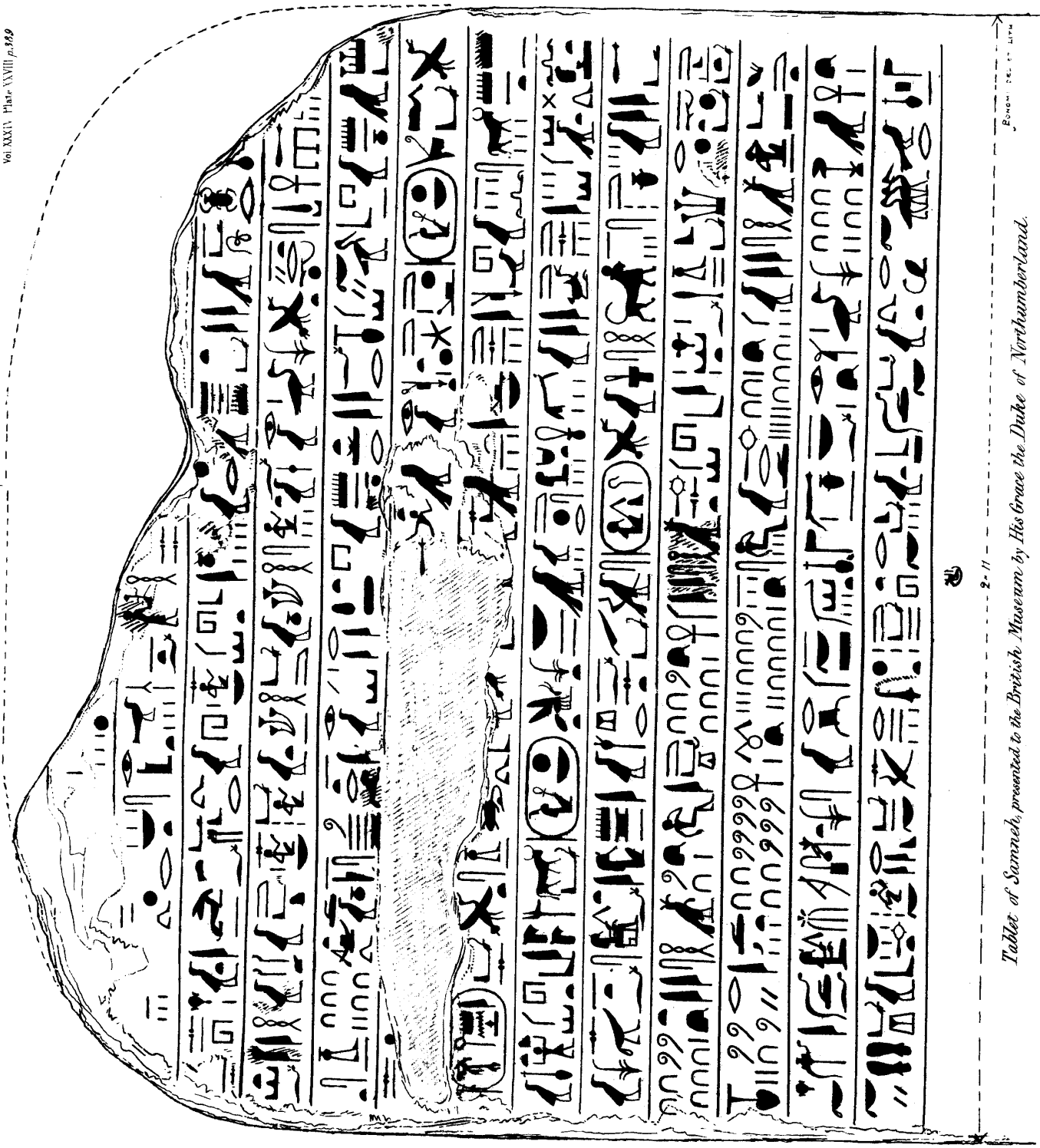
^a See Mr. C. Roach Smith's *Richborough*, p. 55.



BOHOMI DEL ET LITH

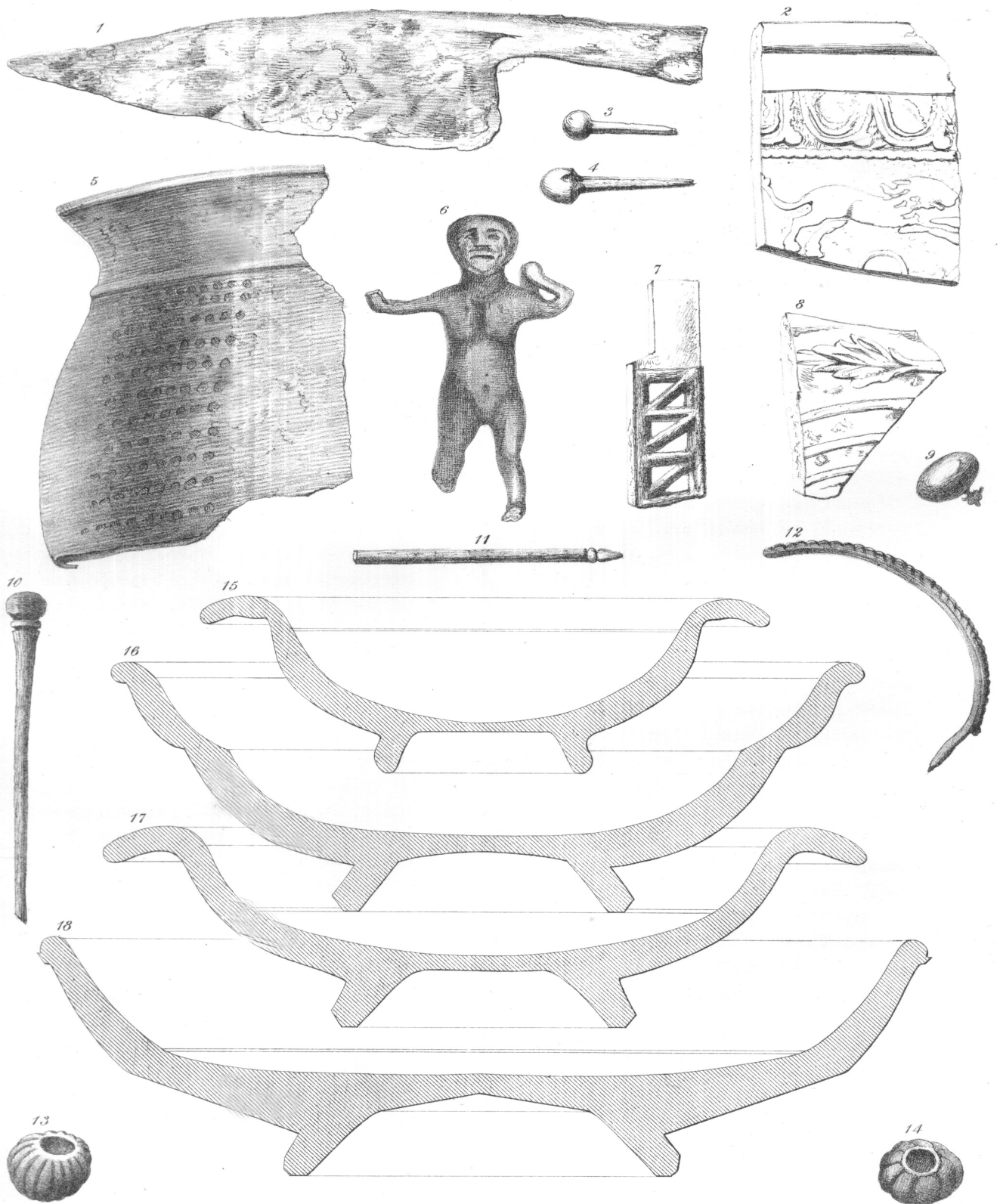
Names of Negro Prisoners on the pedestal of a statue in the Louvre.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries, in London, 25th April, 1832.



Tablet of Semneh, presented to the British Museum by His Grace the Duke of Northumberland.

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London. 25th April. 1832.



Roman Antiquities. found at Boxmoor. Herts.

and is drawn half-size. The end of it is forged hollow, in the same manner as that of some chisels and bill-hooks of the present day, for the insertion of a wooden handle. It was probably used for culinary purposes. Somewhat similar knives, but with tangs instead of sockets, have been discovered at the Roman villa at Hartlip and in other places, but specimens with the hollow shank appear to be far from common. Figs. 2 and 8 are represented full size, as are all the others, and are fragments of vessels of Samian ware, which when perfect must have been of a very handsome description. The lion on fig. 2 probably formed part of some hunting or gladiatorial scene, with which these vessels were frequently adorned.

Fig. 5 is a fragment of an urn of grey pottery, about 5 inches diameter, and ornamented with stripes consisting of rows of roundels of a dark-brown colour, and slightly in relief. The pattern must have been printed or stencilled on the urn in a manner somewhat similar to that by which the pattern on paperhangings is or was produced. Figs. 3 and 4 are bronze nails, with nearly spherical heads, and of the usual character. Fig. 6 is in bronze, and was found in a field on the opposite side of the valley to the station. The figure is of very rude workmanship, and from its carrying a purse or small bag over its shoulder was possibly intended for Mercury. Fig. 7 is part of an unknown article in bronze. Of small hemispherical studs resembling Fig. 9, five were discovered. They appear to have ornamented some article of leather which has totally perished, as on most of them there is still a small burr or washer riveted on to the stem, with a space of rather more than an eighth of an inch between it and the head. Fig. 11 is a portion of a bone pin, and Fig. 10 a pin in bronze; beside which the fragments of three others were discovered. The number of these found where Roman remains exist is the less surprising, when we consider the millions of similar useful instruments that annually disappear in our own times. Fig. 12 is a portion of an armilla or bracelet in bronze, and presents nothing remarkable. Figs. 13 and 14 are beads of light-blue vitrified porcelain, or possibly of opaque glass. They belong to the class called Druidical, specimens of which are to be found all over England and the continent. The remaining four figures are sections of vessels of the so-called Samian ware, of which portions were found sufficiently perfect to give an outline of their shape. The rims of Figs. 15 and 17 are ornamented with a leaf-pattern in low relief, very similar to those engraved in Buckman and Newmarsh's *Corinium*, p. 87. Fragments of five or six other vessels, with the rims thus ornamented, were discovered; the leaf-pattern slightly varying in each case. It is somewhat remarkable, that, although portions of fully twenty Samian cups were found, not one of them was impressed with a potter's name. As the taking an accurate section of vessels such as those

delineated, at first sight presents some little difficulty, it may not be altogether useless to record the process by which these sections were obtained. The piece of Samian ware after being slightly greased was plunged into fine sand, in a direction perpendicular to the axis of the vessel, to within about a quarter of an inch of the centre, and the surface of the sand was then made level. A thin mixture of plaster of Paris was next poured upon the sand until its upper surface was level with the centre of the vessel. When this was set, the fragment of Samian and the plaster were removed from the sand, and the plaster broken into a sufficient number of pieces to set the fragment free, and these pieces being re-united with their upper side downwards on a piece of paper, gave a section from which the form of the vessel could be accurately traced.

Among other objects discovered in the vicinity of the station may be mentioned a denarius of the Claudia family; a second-brass coin of Domitian, with the reverse *Fortunæ Augusti*; and third-brass coins of Victorinus, Tetricus, Constantine, Constantians, and Arcadius. There is also at present buried in a garden about 300 yards distant a tessellated Pavement,^a of which nothing more is known than that the small portion that has been seen consisted of small black and white tessellæ surrounded by a border of red of a larger size. The existence of such a pavement, and the large proportion of Samian ware discovered, are sufficient to prove that Boxmoor was formerly the site of one, if not more, Roman villas, of a superior class, and their position at the junction of two picturesque valleys, and in the neighbourhood of a stream, is such as was admirably adapted for the residence of wealthy Roman families who were fond of a country life. The sepulchral remains found in Box Lane were probably memorials of some of the inhabitants of the villas, and are also such as would only occur at the interment of those of a superior rank in life. It is exceedingly probable that the Roman road (*Akeman Street*), which led from *Corinium* through *Aldchester* to *Tring*, was continued through *Berkhamstead*, (where both British and Roman coins have been found), and along *Box Moor* in the close vicinity of these villas, until it branched into the *Watling Street*, a little to the south of *Sulloniacæ*, which completed the communication with *London*. The presence of such a road would, of course, be a great inducement to select this spot for the erection of a villa, which would also be within six miles of the important municipium of *Verulamium*.

As it is only by the accumulation of a large number of facts that certain and satisfactory results, as far as regards the study of antiquity, can be obtained, it becomes a matter of importance towards rightly determining the state of Britain

^a This pavement has since been excavated.

under the Roman dominion that the discovery of any vestiges, however slight, of the Roman occupation of this country should be recorded. The following list of coins found at various times in a field a little to the north-west of the town of Hemel Hempsted, is therefore appended. They are mostly unimportant in themselves, but become interesting from the place of their discovery being known, and from the early period at which the deposit must have been made of which they form a part. They are all denarii.

COINS FOUND AT HEMEL HEMPSTED.

Family Coins.

ÆMILIA.

Obv.—PAULLUS LEPIDUS . CONCORDIA. A veiled head, with diadem.

Rev.— . . . PAULLUS. Three captives standing opposite a figure erecting a trophy.

ACILIA.

Obv.—SALUTIS. Laureated female head.

Rev.—MU . ACILIUS III . VALETU. A female standing; in her right hand a serpent, her left resting on a column.

BAEBIA.

Obv.—TAMPIL. Head of Rome to the left; in front x.

Rev.—M . BAEBI . Q . F . ROMA. Apollo in a quadriga.

CASSIA.

Obv.—Q . CASSIUS VEST. Head of Vesta.

Rev.—The temple of Vesta between an urn and a tablet inscribed A . c.

CORNELIA.

Obv.—s . c. Head of Hercules.

Rev.—A globe between four garlands, the acrostolium, and an ear of corn.

FORTEIA.

Obv.—M . FORTEI . C . F. A laureated head: below, a thunderbolt and AP.

Rev.—Cupid riding on a goat; above, the caps of the Dioscuri; beneath, the thyrsus: the whole within a garland.

HOSIDIA.

Obv.—(GETA) III . VIC. Bust of Diana.

Rev.—C . HOSIDI C . F. A boar pierced with a spear and assailed by a dog.

JUNIA.

Obv.—(L. SESTI PRO Q.) Laureated head.

Rev.—Q. CAEPIO BRUTUS PRO COS. A tripod between an axe and simpulum.

PETRONIA.

Obv.—TURPILIANUS III. VIR FERON. Head of Feronia.

Rev.—CAESAR AUGUSTUS SIGN. RECEP. A Parthian presenting a standard.

SCRIBONIA.

Obv.—BON. EVENT. LIBO. A female head.

Rev.—PUTEAL SCRIBON. The Puteal with a lyre suspended on each side.

SULPICIA.

Obv.—A veiled female head; behind, s. c.

Rev.—P. GALB. AED. CUR. The secespita, simpulum, and axe.

Imperial.

M. ANTONIUS.

Obv.—ANT. AUG. III. VIR R. P. C. A galley.

Rev.—LEG. VII. The eagle between two standards.

AUGUSTUS.

Obv.—Head of Augustus.

Rev.—CAESAR AUGUSTUS. Two branches of laurel.

Obv.—AUGUSTUS DIVI F. Head of Augustus.

Rev.—IMP. X. A bull butting.

Obv.—CAESAR AUGUSTUS DIVI F. PATER PATRIAE.

Rev.—C. L. CAESARES AUGUSTI F. COS DESIG. PRINC. JUVENT. Caius and Lucius standing, with spears and shields; above, the lituus and capeduncula.

VESPASIAN.

Obv.—IMP. CAES. VESP. AUG. P. M. Laureated head of Vespasian.

Rev.—TRI. POT. A seated and veiled figure; in her right hand a simpulum.

Obv.—IMP. CAESAR VESPASIANUS AUG. Head.

Rev.—COS. ITER. TR. POT. A seated figure; in her right hand a branch, in her left a caduceus.

Obv.—IMP. CAESAR. VESPASIANUS AUG. Head.

Rev.—COS. ITER. FORT. RED. Fortune standing; in her right hand the prow of a ship, in her left a cornucopiæ.

Obv.—IMP. CAES. VESP. AUG. CENS. Head.

Rev.—PONTIF. MAXIM. A seated figure; in his right hand a branch, in his left a hasta.