On the Paucity of Aboriginal Monuments in Canada

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Source: *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, Vol. 8 (1870 - 1871), pp. clxxiii-clxxviii

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3025184>

Accessed: 15/06/2014 03:41

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"Berber" from the Arabic word *berbera*, "a jumble of unintelligible cries." This reminded one of an etymology of Leo, quoted by Müller, that the name which the Germans gave to their neighbours the Celts, *Walh*, in old high German, *Vealh* in Anglo-Saxon, the modern *Welsh*, is supposed to be the same as the Sanskrit *mlechha*, "a person who talks indistinctly," a sort of etymology very well for babies. It would be absurd to suppose that the Welsh could have derived their name direct from the Sanskrit. But it might be as well to see whether a better etymology of the word Berber could not be found than that suggested in the paper. The Arabs also give the name of Berber to the Somāli, who inhabit the country between Abyssinia and Zanguebar, and to the Barābrā, the general name by which the peoples of Nubia are designated in Egypt. But these three peoples are different in race, language, and everything else. Burckhardt derives the name of the Barābrā from a wady or district of Upper Nubia, on the right bank of the Nile. The Hebrew word *bar* signifies "son," and *êber* or *êbr* "region on the other side"; so that *Bar-êber* or *Bar-êberon* might signify "the people on the other side", i.e., "the people beyond the boundary, or across the stream." Again, the Hebrew *bar* is a field, plain, country, and the Arabic *barr* is also a desert: so that a compound, *Bar-ber-berr*, or *Bar-berim*, might mean "people of the country or of the desert." Now this latter etymology (people of the desert) was supported by the fact that Barbary, before it was inhabited by the Arabs, was almost depopulated, and also because all the oases of the desert were formerly peopled by Berbers. But another etymology might still be found. Among other names for Barbary, in vulgar Arabic, were *Belâd-êl-Moghârebah*, "the country of the West"; and *El-Moghreb*, "the West," *Berr-êl-Gharb*, and *El Gharb* respectively of the same meaning. Now, if the term El-Gharb was used to designate Barbary, might not this district also be called the *Berr*; and if so the inhabitants would be named *Bar-Berr*, "the people of the Berr." The term Kabylah meant "men who lived in tribes," from Arabic *kabâil*, a tribe, plural *kabylêh*; and Tawârik or Tuârik, is a plural formed from the Berber word *terkâ*, of the same meaning. Mr. Dendy was of opinion that the descendants of Cush peopled the North, and those of Ham the South, of Africa; but he admitted that this was a sweeping assertion; and he, Dr. CHARNOCK, agreed that it was such.

Sir DUNCAN GIBB, Bart., read the following paper: *On the Paucity of Aboriginal Monuments in Canada.*

I have oftentimes been struck by the remarkable scarcity of monuments of an aboriginal character when residing in Canada, contrasted with the neighbouring, more southern territory of the American Union and the nations of Central America. Being familiar with most of the archæological discoveries such as we know them in Canada or the immediately bordering lands, such as the pictured rocks of Lake Superior, and the great mounds of Ohio, and other states contiguous to Canada, it has occurred to me there must be some good reason why architectural monuments are either wholly absent in Canada, or so scarce that as yet we know of very few or almost none of them.

Humboldt, indeed, in his *Aspects of Nature*, published by Bohn, refers to a monument discovered in the prairies of Canada, about nine hundred French miles due west from Montreal. This would be either in the state of Wisconsin, to the west of Lake Michigan, or to the north or south of Lake Superior. I incline to think it the prairie land in the first named, but which was considered a part of Canada at the time the monument was discovered. Regarding this monument I shall have a word to say by-and-bye.

In discussing the subject of Aboriginal Monuments, I would exclude the small remains of the earlier inhabitants of Canada, such as flint arrow-heads, stone implements or weapons, fragments of pottery, etc., found now and then in various parts of the country. I would also exclude Indian burying-grounds, which are not uncommon in Canada, near Dundas, Ottawa, and other places, even with large, full-grown trees flourishing over them, because, although the inhabitants may have been ancient, they were not builders of stone. Likewise I would exclude the Ancient Mounds described by Mr. T. C. Wallbridge in the *Canad. Jour.* for September, 1860, occurring upon the shores of the Bay of Quinté. These are similar to the barrows or tumuli described by American antiquarians, and extend along the bay shore for eight miles, in which distance as many as a hundred of them may be counted. It is conjectured, also with good reason, that they may extend to the shores of the upper lakes, and thence to the most remote parts of the Continent. There is this curious fact, however, which allies them to ancient monuments, and it is that for the most part they are constructed of masses of broken gneiss brought from a distance, and covered with a layer of earth of a certain thickness. They are invariably sepulchral in character, for they contain human remains, and objects of curiosity and art, not unlike our English barrows, and such as extend over a very wide range of the North American continent, especially in the state of Ohio and valley of the Mississippi.

The present communication refers to monuments that had been erected either as dwellings, or temples of a religious character, as met with in Chiapas, Yucatan, Mexico, Peru, and other places.

There seem to me to be *two* good and sufficient reasons why such remains have not been found in Canada, and one of them will apply to northern nations in other parts of the world. It is this, that the extreme cold and rigour of such a climate as exists in Canada, with its six months of winter, the ground for the most part of the time, indeed the whole of it, covered with snow; and although the change is very rapid in the spring of the year from winter to summer, the summer being not inferior to that of the tropics, is nevertheless unfavourable for the long conservation of architectural monuments or remains of any kind, unless carefully looked after as in modern times. The continuous frost of winter will in time destroy everything of a monumental character, built up of separate stones, no matter almost what their size may be, unless I except the Canadian mounds of stone, covered with earth. We have no evidence, that I know of, of the existence of truly aboriginal temples or monuments in any part of Northern Europe, although perhaps there may be some in Asia, but

certainly none exist in America, although there are still large districts of country that have not as yet been thoroughly explored. In the southern frontier mountains of Siberia, and in the steppes of the middle regions of the Lena, it has been asserted that frequent memorials are found there of ancient grandeur, magnificence, and culture, of which some are presumed to be of an antiquity demonstrably of above a thousand years. The crumbling ruins of some ancient town are now and then found, and Tartarian tombs in Siberia, containing objects of interest, antiquity, and art. But I doubt whether such things are found very far north in Siberia, although I am free to admit that where they are found would be about the same latitude as many parts of Canada. The same also may be said of some of the wonderful Lamaseries and other temples, found in the elevated and northern parts of Asia, which have been described by various travellers; but they are comparatively modern, and cannot possess any claim to rank as aboriginal, although it is very possible that some may possess a tolerably great antiquity. Climate, then, is the great drawback to the preservation of aboriginal monuments, and I very much doubt, from my intimate knowledge of that of Canada, whether, even supposing they had been built, their remains would have held long together from the destructive action of some centuries of frost and snow in the long winter season.

Secondly, the people who built the great American mounds, many of which are close to Canada, especially in the neighbouring state of Ohio, and who no doubt peopled the country north as well as south of the great American lakes, and erected the Canadian mounds as well, were, I believe most firmly, the descendants of those Tartar tribes who crossed into America by Behrings Straits, and who occupied the greater portion of the North American Continent, now represented by the existing races of Indians. They were altogether a different race of people to those who built the magnificent temples of Central and South America. I state this advisedly, notwithstanding the interesting essay of Mr. Charles Whittlesey, on the *Ancient Miners* of Lake Superior, wherein he has endeavoured to show the connexion of the Aztecs, or Ancient Mexicans, with the ancient mining operations on Lake Superior (*Can. Jour.*, vol. i, 4to, 106). Supposing even it were established that the Aztecs arrived in Central America from a northern region one thousand two hundred years ago, *i.e.*, about A.D. 600, I still think that the *climate* would be the chief reason for no stone buildings being erected, or, if erected, soon hopelessly destroyed. Whether the Aztecs are the mound builders or not, or the ancient miners of Lake Superior, does not signify in the general argument, for we find no monuments of stone in Canada.

If anything points more to a kinship between various nations, it is their monuments, and it is curious to reflect that the Mexican and Central American monuments exist in a climate that is not unlike that of Egypt, and one in which the rule is preservation like that of Egypt, instead of disintegrative destruction, as would occur in a cold climate like that of Canada. Who can tell whether they, the ancient Egyptians and the Mexicans, may not be the descendants of one and

the same people. The modern representatives of the Indians, as we know them in North America, certainly manifest no architectural genius, inherited from their forefathers. The same may be said of the present Central American Indians ; but among the latter civilisation would seem to have departed from among them ; whilst among those of more northern parts it may never have existed, or if it did, the only remains left behind to show it are the great American mounds in Ohio, and other neighbouring states, and those in Canada.

The climate varies somewhat in the eastern and western parts of Canada, being milder in the latter and more favourable for the preservation of any monuments. Yet we find none of them unless the mounds, such as exist in the prairies of Ohio, almost alongside of Canada. I thought at first that the great chain of lakes formed a sort of dividing line between the mound builders and the then existing more northern Indians, but that could not be so, as mounds have been found north of Lake Ontario. The same line of reasoning respecting climate will apply to New York State, and all of the territory to the east, including Maine, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. The only aboriginal remains are chiefly rock sculptures and markings, as have been described from time to time by various writers, occurring chiefly in the state of New York. Of these Canada can boast of none in caverns, such as have been found in Scotland, although no one can deny that they may have existed at one time, but, owing to the denuding agency of frost and ice they are now all destroyed. Look at the lesson taught us by the Flower-Pot rocks of the Mingan Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which at one time formed portions of great sea caverns, the remains of which now lie high up on land some sixty or seventy feet above the level of the sea. The same also with similar flower-pot rocks of Gaspé and of islands in Lake Huron. As I am familiar with most of the land caverns in Canada, the absence of animal remains in almost all of them would point to severity of climate unfavourable for preservation of monuments. An exception to this may be taken in favour of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, and Weyer's Hole in Virginia, and probably the great caverns yet to be explored existing in the Middle Silurian Rocks of that portion of Western Canada (now the province of Ontario), extending from West Flamboro, at the extreme western part of Lake Ontario, running northward to Georgian Bay, to the east of Lake Huron. And probably also in a similar series of caverns, which I conjecture will be discovered some day in the northern part of the island of Anticosti, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in the same geological formation.

To refer to the monument in the great prairies of Canada, as described by Kalm :—It consisted of great pillars formed of a single stone each, with others laid across the top of them, forming a sort of wall, and their size was such as in some respects to resemble the Druidical monuments of our own country. A single large stone, like a pillar, was met with, and in it a smaller one was fixed, which was covered on both sides with an inscription in unknown characters. This stone, twelve inches by six, was detached, carried back to Canada,

and sent to France to the Secretary of State, the Count de Maurepas. The Jesuits in Canada unanimously affirmed that the letters were Tartarian; and on comparing the two sides of the stone they were found to be alike. If I can claim this ancient monument as Canadian, then it is the only one that has hitherto been discovered, but unfortunately it is lost to science, for its whereabouts to this day remains unknown. Humboldt states that he had in vain requested many of his French friends to make inquiries regarding it. I may say the same of myself, for not only did I make ineffectual inquiries to discover it, but sought for it in the various museums of Paris, in which my efforts were seconded by many powerful and willing friends.

In the western part of Canada there are a few scattered ancient fortifications or embankments called Indian forts, especially in the counties of Beverley, Vaughan, Whitchurch, and the country about Lake Simcoe; there is a remarkable one near the mouth of the small river Huron, on the western or American side of the river Detroit, near Lake St. Clair.

Respecting the earthworks, embankments, fossæ, and ramparts of these fortifications which exist in many parts of the United States, though more sparsely in Canada, I would claim for them an antiquity not later than that of the Roman encampments met with in Britain; and, providing they are situated on land sufficiently elevated, their preservation would be secured for long periods of time. Many of these mounds, and especially some in Canada, have the largest-sized forest trees growing upon the top of them, which always points to an age of many centuries at the very least.

In conclusion, it may be said that, if true aboriginal monuments are few, scarce, or altogether absent in Canada, we have an explanation in the character of the climate, together with that of the aboriginal inhabitants themselves, which certainly points to the superiority of their mental development, in so far, that where so much snow existed for so many months in the year, it would have been the extreme of folly to build temples, monuments, or houses of stone, that would in time become destroyed unless kept in a state of constant repair, by incessant watchfulness, as is the practice and custom at the present day among their more modern successors.

The *only stone* pyramidal edifice north of Mexico is stated to be not far from Newark, near the Ohio and Erie Canal; it stands a large tumulus, built of *stone*, described as a right cone in figure, with an altitude of about forty feet, and a base with a diameter of a hundred feet. Newark is about thirty-six miles south of Sandusky, on the shores of Lake Erie. Regarding the preservation of this aboriginal mound, it must be stated that a comparatively mild winter occurs in Ohio, with but little snow or denuding agency such as exists in Canada.

The crania, however, of the aborigines, as found in the tumuli of Ohio, represent individuals of a very low type, and quite incapable of constructing such noble monuments as are seen in Central America. Yet it has been stated that, anatomically, there is a striking resemblance between the crania of the race of the Mounds and the ancient

Peruvians. And the extension of these mounds, tumuli, etc., through western North America and Mexico to Peru—an assertion which I call in question—induces a belief that the race which constructed them emigrated thither; and their termination there, to the conclusion that the natives went no further. Into the question who were the mound builders I do not purpose going, as the scope of my paper refers exclusively to the Paucity of Aboriginal Monuments in Canada, which I have attempted to explain as briefly as the subject would admit of.

Mr. Gould Avery, Dr. Richard King, Mr. Dendy, Sir Duncan Gibb, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. MacCarthy also joined in the discussion.

The meeting then adjourned.

JUNE 14TH, 1870.

DR. BEDDOE, PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

THE minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Logan D. H. Russell, Esq., M.D., was elected a Local Secretary for Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.

The following list of presents was read, and the thanks of the Society were voted to the respective donors:—

TO THE LIBRARY.

From the EDITOR.—Food Journal, No. 5.

From Dr. E. T. RYAN TENISON.—The British Medical Journal.

From the EDITOR.—Scientific Opinion (to date).

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Royal Society, No. 119.

From the INSTITUTION.—Journal of the Royal United Service Institution, vol. xiv, No. lviii.

From M. AD. QUETELET.—Mémoires Couronnés in 4to, t. 34, in 8vo, t. 21. Bulletin, 2nd Série, t. 27-28. Annuaire de 1870. Phénomènes périodiques, 1867-68. Notice sur le Congrès de Florence, Académie Royale de Belgique.

From the SOCIETY.—Bulletin de la Société Impériale des Naturalistes de Moscou, Nos. 1, 2, 3.

From Dr. KOPERNICKI.—Postac Kasimierza Wielkiego, Dr. Joseph Majer. Lebensbericht van Prof. Jan Van der Hoeven. Prof. G. F. Groshaus.

From the AUTHORS.—Les Carthaginois en France. M. de Marchard et Dr. Pruner-Bey.

The CHAIRMAN announced that Dr. Richard King, Mr. C. Staniland Wake, and Mr. Gould Avery have been appointed delegates to represent the Society at the Liverpool meeting of the British Association.

The following papers were read:—

1. *On the Irish Celt*, by HENRY HUDSON, M.D.

Although Mr. Avery's paper on the Irish Celtic race has scarcely done it justice, he nevertheless has well deserved our thanks for direct-