



Report on Bones from Chastleton.

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Coote, quoting the old writers,* speaks of the planting for such a purpose, date, almond, and quince trees in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, and olive with elder trees, etc., in the vicinity of Carthage.

Among the miscellaneous objects found were a bone pin of neat workmanship, a flint flake, burnt pebbles, and various burnt shells, chiefly *Terebratulæ*. Several animal bones were also found; these we submitted to the inspection of Prof. G. Rolleston, M.D., F.R.S., who has very kindly favoured me with the following report upon them, dated from Oxford:—

REPORT ON BONES FROM CHASTLETON.

I was reluctantly obliged to decline to join the excursion to Chastleton, but I have been favoured with a small box of bones from that pleasant place, of which I will now say a few words.

All the bones, with two or three exceptions, are bones of domestic animals. The exceptions are constituted by two lower jaws and one upper jaw of the Water-Rat, *Apricola amphibia*. These jaws have a certain interest as they are just the parts which the Polecat, *Mustela putorius*, leaves behind, and rightly as the large rootless molars and the strong incisors of this harmless vegetable-feeding Rodent would be a hard thing for his sharp scissor-like teeth. I have found large quantities of these jaws, handfuls in fact and without exaggeration, in the lairs of polecats. The polecat is a river-haunting riparian animal, but will carry even frogs a long way away from the marshy places he finds them in.

Sus scrofa, varietas *domestica*, is represented by a few incisors. The pig, being a beast familiar to man from the very earliest times as his solidarity with man in supporting the life phases of more than one Entozoon shows, is rarely absent from the earliest prehistoric finds of Neolithic times.

The Cow, *Bos* (probably) *longifrons* is also represented, but scantily.

The Sheep, *Ovis aries* or Goat (there are no differentiating parts left) is also proved to have been in existence and in availability for man's use by a larger quantity of bones and some teeth.

The Horse, *Equus Caballus*, of small size, or possibly *Equus asinus* (for I have no means of ascertaining the age of these bones, nor of saying whether they did or did not belong to those "far-off times" when "our land did breed no asses"), is represented by a single *Os Calcis*.

There are no human bones, nor canine, nor feline in this series. But the bones are so broken as to prove they were "mauled" by man

* "Ex libris Magonis et Vegoïæ," Lachman, p. 350. "Nam in locis campes-tribus rariores terminos construximus, et maxime arborem peregrinam plantavimus." See also "Liber Coloniarum," Faustus et Valerius, &c. "The Romans of Britain," H. C. Coote, F.S.A., p. 67.

for his *maw*, and some look as if they might have been mumbled or gnawed by the dog for his. With these came one of those darning-needle-like awls made out of the long bone *tibia* of a small ruminant, possibly *roe*, *Cervus capriolus*, but also possibly sheep or goat. I get them from many places in this neighbourhood, of many stages in development of the world's history. They would make good packing-needles now-a-days. I do not see why these bones should not be, as far as any indications they themselves furnish, and I have no other before me of any age, not nearer to us than some 500 years or so.

GEORGE ROLLESTON, M.D.

There is nothing, therefore, in the objects found to illustrate a period, either earlier or later than the Roman occupation. And from the position and structure of the camp it would seem to be one not intended for permanent occupation, but hastily thrown up, perhaps, as suggested by Mr. Roach Smith, F.S.A., to meet some pressing emergency. It was, however, constructed upon the same principles as those which invariably guided surveyors and engineers. It adjoins the Akeman Street, a minor Roman way, running from the east of Britain to Cirencester and Bath, and is on the confines of three counties, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire.

JOHN E. PRICE, F.S.A.

THE ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF SCYTHE-CHARIOTS IN ANCIENT BRITAIN.

IN the interesting communication read before the Institute by Mr. E. B. Tylor in April last, "On the Origin of the Plough, and Wheel-carriage," a statement occurs to the effect that the Ancient Britons used chariots with *scythes* attached to the axles. This of course is founded upon the passage in "De Orbi in Situ" of Pomponius Mela (iii. 6.) As I have not an edition in the Latin before me I can only quote the translation. "They fight not onlie on horsebacke and on foote, but also in Wagons and Chariottes, and are armed after the manner of the Galles. They call those Chariots *Couines* (Covines,) which are set with sithes round about the naues, (naves,)" page 79.* My object is to call in question the truthfulness of Mela's account. Cæsar makes no mention whatever of the *covinus*, but of the *essedum* he does, and Tacitus does not describe the scythe-chariot, although the word *covinari* occurs. (Agricola, 35-36). No writer upon Britain, known to me, of any position as an *authority*, mentions this form of chariot, and Mela must be accepted with some caution, as he never visited Britain (although this bare fact is of no value); but those

* "The worke of Pomponius Mela, concerninge the Situation of the World, etc.," by A. Golding. 1585.