

Josiah Colebrooke
An account of the monument commonly ascribed to Catigern
Archaeologia, vol. 2, pp. 107–17
London
1773

ARCHAEOLOGIA:
OR
MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS
RELATING TO
ANTIQUITY.

PUBLISHED BY
THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON.

<vignette>

VOL. II.

Sold at the HOUSE of the SOCIETY, in CHANCERY-LANE; and by Messieurs WHISTON
WHITE, ROBSON, BAKER and LEIGH, and BROWN.
MDCCLXXIII.

...

107

XVII. An Account of the Monument commonly ascribed
to Catigern. By Mr. Colebrooke.

Read at the Society of Antiquaries, June 12, 1766.

IN the parish of Addington, near Town Malling, in Kent, about 500 paces to the north east of the church, in a rabbit warren, upon a little eminence, are the remains of several large stones, placed in an oval form. The inside of the area from east to west is 50 paces, the breadth in the middle from north to south 42 paces; at the east end is a flat stone, placed somewhat like that which they call the Altar at Stone Henge: Pl. vi. fig. 1. No. 1. This stone in the longest part is nine feet, in the broadest seven feet, and near two feet thick. Behind this, a little to the north, is another flat stone, No. 2. which seems to have stood upright, but is now, by some accident thrown down. This is fifteen feet long, seven feet wide, and two feet thick. The stone No. 3. next the altar on the north side, is seven feet high, seven feet wide, and two feet thick; the top of this hath been broken off. There are but two others which appear above the surface of the ground, (No. 4 and 5) and these are not more than two feet high. One may easily trace the remains of seventeen of them; though from the distances between the stones, which are pretty nearly equal, there must have been rather more than twenty to complete the oval, which consisted of only one row of stones. The soil hereabout is very sandy, and the rain hath washed the sand so much over many of them, that by their distances from each other, I could only find them when I thrust my cane into the ground. Those of the stones which were fallen down have been carried away by the inhabitants, and applied to mend causeways, or make steps for stiles. The stones are of the

108

same species with those at Stone Henge, and being placed in the same form, seem as if they were designed for the same use.

I first viewed this monument of antiquity, or temple, in 1754. Since that time the place is so overgrown with broom, fern, &c. that I could trace out very few of the stones, when I was again upon the spot in 1761.

About 130 paces to the north west of this is another heap of large stones, tumbled inwards one on another. This originally con=

sisted of six stones, (see Pl. vi. fig. 2.) each stone seven feet wide, two feet thick, and by measuring the longest piece with the base, from which it seems to have been broken off, it must have been 19 feet in height. The bases of these are at equal distances, about 3 paces asunder, and in the circuit measure 33 paces; so that the area must have been near 11 paces in diameter. The form is circular, not oval, and the openings are due east and west: this is the same kind of stone as the former. Fig. 3. is the largest fragment, which I measured with the base nearest to it, to ascertain the original height.

I do not find any author who hath taken notice of either of these monuments except Dr. Harris, who, in his History of Kent, p. 23, under the article Addington, says, 'in a place in this parish, called the Warren, I saw six or seven stones above the ground, and the old clerk told me, that there formerly stood an oak in the middle of them; if so, they might be only designed for seats.'

It is hardly to be supposed, that a stone seven feet high (which is the height of No. 3, fig. 1) could be designed for a seat for people to sit on, and what remained of the others was too low, to give them a view of any diversions that were carrying on under the supposed oak in the centre; nor could I, when I was upon the spot, get a confirmation of this traditional account mentioned by Dr. Harris as coming from the old clerk, though I made all the en-

109

quiry I could, and was assisted by the minister of the parish, the Rev. Mr. Buttonshaw, who first informed me of them, and went with me to some of the oldest people then living in the parish. Dr. Harris doth not seem to have any idea of the true design of these stones, neither doth he mention that which I call the altar, fig. 1. No. 1. nor the other which is fallen down, and if restored would make part of the oval. The heap of stones broken and tumbled down inwards, though not above 130 yards to the north west, is not taken any notice of by him, and consequently he never saw them; for if he had seen them, he must have been led to think that two such monuments of antiquity, so near each other, could not but have been erected on some extraordinary occasion.

As there are several monuments of this kind in England, Stone Henge on Salisbury plain, Rollrich-stones in Oxfordshire, and many more, as I have been informed, in Anglesea, Cornwall, Wales, Cumberland, &c. which are of that antiquity that our most early historians who have mentioned them speak of them as of things beyond any tradition, and could barely conjecture what their uses were, I hope it will not be unentertaining to this Society, if I give my conjecture about these, as I flatter myself it will clear up a point in history which is at present obscure; I mean the place where Horsa was buried, whose monument, Mr. Philpot says, was like Kits Cot house, but time hath utterly extinguished it.

I therefore join in opinion with the learned Dr. Stukeley, that stones placed in this oval form were the temples of the ancient Britons, that this at Addington was one of those temples, and that the heap of stones fallen down at a little distance from this temple was Catigern's monument, which was more magnificent, and more in the manner of Stone Henge than Kits Cot house is;

110

and it is not likely that a monument composed of stones of such bulk and thickness could be so totally obliterated, as to have no remains of it at this day; when another erected at the same time, and on a like occasion, remains so entire.

Mr. Lambard, the earliest author who professedly wrote of this county, in his *Perambulation*, edit. 1576, quarto, p. 288 and 289, under the article Chetham, says, 'Alfred of Beverly, and Richard of Cicester, have mention of a place in East Kent, where Horsa (the brother of Hengist) was buried and which, even to their time, did continue the memory of his name.' He mentions Horsmandune, but that lying in the south part of the county, and Horsa being killed at Ailsford, he thinks it more reasonable to affirm that he was buried at Horsted. He says nothing of Catigern, nor of Kits Cot house, which if this monument (ascribed by Stow and Camden to Catigern) had borne that name in his time, he would have mentioned.

Horsted is a farm surrounded by woods, consists of one good farm house and a cottage, between which the road lies (chiefly through woods) from Chetham to Boxley, and is about three miles distant from each.

Being upon a visit at Chetham (in which parish this farm lies) in the year 1763, I was inquisitive to know where Horsted was, as I could not find it in the map of Kent, nor in Spelman's *Villare Anglicum*, and if there were any remains of Horsa's monument in that neighbourhood. My friend, to whose family this farm belongs, carried me thither, and shewed me what was reputed to be Horsa's monument by the people of the country.

On the side of a hill, in the middle of a wood, is a great quantity of flint stones, which, by length of time, and the dripping of the trees, are overgrown with moss. From the situation they seem to have been shot out of carts, to fill up an hollow or valley, and to have been collected from the neighbouring fields, where the plough

111

constantly turns up large flints in such quantities as to obstruct its working, and so to have been thrown down here out of the way, the road through the wood being close by the top of these flints. This is said to be the remains of Horsa's monument, and so far believed to be so by the country people, that stones being wanted to repair a road, some of these were ordered to be taken; but in loading a cart with them, one man happening to fall (by treading on the loose stones) and break his leg, they thought it a judgment for removing the sepulchres of the dead, and could not be induced to proceed. This story I heard on the spot. But as these stones are in a wood, and against the side of a hill, it is unlikely to be a funeral monument, which, when they consisted of loose stones, always made a hill of themselves. I have somewhere read (I think in the *Irish History*) that when an officer died in the field of battle, they buried him in a plain, and every soldier took a large stone, and threw it on the place; by which means a hillock was formed, which must have borne the shape of the barrows we see on the Downs in Dorsetshire, and other counties, where instead of throwing a stone on the place, each soldier might take a shovel-full of the soil of the country, and throw it on the place, in proportion to the dignity of the person there buried, as we see them of very different sizes, and most of them that have been opened are of the neighbouring soil; so that I think these flints could not be Horsa's, nor any other monument.

All the authors who have mentioned this battle between Vortimer, (or Guortimer), and Hengist, take their account of it from Bede; for I do not find any thing said of it by Gildas. After mentioning that the Saxons and other German nations were called in by Vortiger to assist him against the Picts and Scots, who (after the Romans had withdrawn themselves, and could no longer assist the Britons) made inroads and great havock in the country, and over

whom the Saxons gained a victory, he goes on to give an account of the country they came from, and their genealogy from Woden. His words are [b], 'Duces fuisse perhibentur eorum primi duo fratres Hengistus et Horsus; e quibus Horsus postea occisus in bello a Britonibus hactenus in orientalibus Cantii partibus monumentum habuit suo nomine insigne.' The Saxon Chronicle says [c], that A. D. 453, the Saxons were invited by Vortiger to come over to his assistance, as mentioned by Bede, and in the year 453 says, 'Hic Hengistus et Horsa pugnabant contra Vortigernum regem, in loco qui dicitur Aeillstreu; occisoque Horsa fratre suo, Hengistus postea cum Esc filio suo regnum capessebat.' Bede says positively that Horsa was buried in the eastern part of Kent. Robert of Gloucester [d], in his Chronicle, which is in rhyme, mentions the deaths of Horsa and Catigern, but says nothing of their burials or monuments. He says, that Vortimer directed himself to be buried on the sea shore at Stonar ('lapis tituli') the port where the Saxons (whom he had frequently beaten) used to land; that they, seeing his monument, might be afraid of coming to that land where even his bones were laid. Geoffrey of Monmouth says, he ordered a brazen pillar to be erected for him in this place, but that this was not complied with, for he was buried in Troynovant or London. Humfrey Lluyd says the same, and that it was in imitation of Scipio Africanus, who directed himself to be buried on that sea-shore which looked towards Carthage. Fabian says, that Horsa and Catigern slew each other, but says nothing of the burial of either. William of Malmesbury [e] says Horsa and Katigis were both killed in the first battle Guortimer had with the Saxons, but

[b] *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, fol. Cantabrigiæ, 1644, p. 58.

[c] At the end of the Cambridge edition of Bede, by Abraham Whelock.

[d] Who lived in the reign of Henry III.

[e] *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam*, London 1696, fol. p. 4.

doth not mention the burial of either. Henry of Huntingdon [f] says, that seven years after the arrival of the Saxons in England, there was a battle between them and the Britons, at Aeilestrue, in which Horsa killed Catigern, and Guortimer killed Horsa, but makes no mention of the burial of either. Ethelward [g] says, Horsa was killed in Campo Egelesthrip, but makes no mention of Vortimer or Catigern. Hollingshead [h] says, that Vortimer's second battle with the Saxons was at a place called Epiford, or Aglisthrop, in which encounter Catigrine, or Catigernus, the brother of Vortimer, and Horsus, the brother of Hengist, after a long combat, slew each other; but the Britons obtained the field, as saith the British history. John Stow [i] and Verstegan [k] both say, that though the Saxons were beaten in this battle, yet they kept the field, and the Britons retreated; and Ralph Higden [l] says expressly, that Hengist got the victory.

It seems to be agreed by all historians, that this battle was fought near Ailsford, and it is most likely that it was on that plain which spreads itself on the hanging of the hill, and looks down upon Cosenton, in the boundary of Ailesford, there being no other place in that neighbourhood so open, and so fit for such an engagement.

As I find no mention made of a monument erected for Catigern in any of the afore-cited authors, I am induced to think that Mr. Stow was mistaken, when, in his Chronicle, he says, Kits Cot-house was corruptedly so called for Catigern's monument; and that this is Horsa's monument, being not far from Horsted farm,

[f] *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam*, fol. London, 1696, p. 176.

[g] *Idem*, p. 475.

[h] *History of England*, by Abraham Fleming, 1586, fol. p. 80.

[i] *Chronicle continued* by Ed. Howes, 1631, fol. p. 52.

[k] *Antiquities*, quarto, 1628, p. 129.

[l] As quoted by Rapin, vol. i. p. 33.

114

and to the east of the Medway, where Bede says his monument was.

I apprehend the name of Kits or Keiths Coty-house to have been given to this place from some old shepherd, who kept sheep on this plain, and used to shelter himself from the weather on one side or other of this monument; for from whatever quarter a storm came, he might here find shelter.

Had Mr. Lambard, who was the first writer of the history of this county, known of this under the name of Kits Cot-house, or heard of Catigern's monument, I think he would have mentioned it; but having directed us to look about Horsted for Horsas's monument, there is nothing to be found in this neighbourhood so likely to be it as this.

Mr. Camden [m] says, 'here are four vast stones pitched on end, with others lying crossways upon them, much like Stone Henge, corruptly called Keiths or Kits Coty-house for Catigern's monument, who was buried here in great state.

Mr. Camden was too judicious an author, and too honest an historian, to have given this description had he ever seen this monument: but it is the unavoidable misfortune of authors who write at large of a country, to take their accounts from others, not being able to survey every thing themselves. The number of stones here pitched is but three, and one single stone on the top; neither is the architecture (if I may use that word in so rude a piece of building) like Stone Henge; for in this, the top stone is wider than the two that support it, and hangs over considerably at each end, and on each side; whereas at Stone Henge, the stones are laid in a different way, and the top stones, which are mortised into the uprights, are no wider than two feet (the thickness of the upright) and do not hang over the stones that bear them, but in this

[m] *Britannia*, by Gibson, fol. Lond. 1695, p. 193.

115

the stone is laid flat, and projects on each front, and at each end.

Mr. Camden, whose name I can never mention without the greatest deference and respect (as the first who digested our British antiquities, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with our own country, and the curiosities it contained) had he ever seen or heard of the two monuments of antiquity at Addington, might not have been induced to have given Kits Cot-house for a monument to Catigern, who is not mentioned by any elder historian (and I have seen most of the British chronicles) to have had one.

Whether Mr. Camden, or Mr. Stow, first ascribed this to Catigern I cannot learn, not having seen the first edition either of Stow's *Chronicle*, or Camden's *Britannia*. It is in his quarto edition in Latin, printed in the year 1600 *, and it is in Stow's *Chronicle*, continued by Howes, and printed in the black letter in the year 1631; and they have been followed by all the authors who have wrote of this country since their time.

John Stow, in his *Chronicle*, p. 52, says, 'he was upon the spot;' and as his description of it, and account of this battle, may contribute to clear up the point aimed at, I shall give it in his own words.

'The first battle Hengist and Horsus, brothers descended from

Woden, fought with Vortimer and his brother Catigern, was in a place called Aeglesthrope, now Aelford in Kent; and notwithstanding that Horse was slain in this battel, yet Hengist bare away the victory. Bede says, that Horse was buried in East Kent, where his tomb, or monument, bearing his name, was in his time to be seen; and true it is, that in Kent is a place, to this day called Horstede, about two miles from Aelsford, in the parish of Chetham, where the people of that country say the said Horse was buried.

* It is in the 2d and 3d editions, 1587 and 1590. R. G.

116

'There was also slain in the same battell at Aeglesthrope, Catigern, brother to Vortimer, whose monument remaineth to this day, on a great plaine heath, in the parish of Aelsford, and is now corruptly called Cits Cotihouse for Catigerns.

'I have myself, in company with divers worshipful and learned gentlemen, beheld it, in anno 1590, and is of four flat stones *, one of them standing upright in the middle of two other inclosing the edge sides of the first, and the fourth laid flat aloft the other three, and is of such height that men may stand on either side the middle stone, in time of storm or tempest, safe from wind and rain, being defended with the breadth of the stones, having one at their backs, one on either side, and the fourth over their heads; and about a coit's cast from this monument, lieth another great stone, † much part thereof in the ground, as fallen down where the same had been affixed [n].'

Mr. Philpot [o] says, after Mr. Camden, that Kits Cot-house was Catigern's monument, and gives a print of it, but so utterly unlike the thing, that it is evident he never saw it; for he makes the top stone quite square, and hardly, if at all, projecting over those that support it, and rather supposes what it should have been (according to modern architecture) at the first erecting, not what it was in his time, or is now. He says Horsa was buried at Horsted, near Rochester, with a like monument, but time hath utterly extinguished it.

* See Pl. vii. fig. 1. From a to b is 6 feet; from b to c 6 feet; from c to d 8 feet; from d to e 7 feet; from e to a 11 feet; f is 6 feet above ground, 8 feet wide and 2 feet thick; g is the centre stone, much scaled, 6 feet high, 2 feet 10 inches wide near the top, 5 feet 6 inches in the middle, and 5 feet at the bottom; g corresponds with the side f in all its dimensions.

† Pl. vii. fig. 2. This single stone lies about 70 paces to the N. W. in the same field. The thickness is half buried; but from its present position, it seems as if it had once stood upright. From a to b it is 7 feet; from c to d 11 feet; and in the widest part about 7 feet.

[o] Villare Cantianum p. 48.

117

It is very unlikely that the Saxons, who totally conquered Britain, and remained kings of this country for upwards of five hundred years [p], should suffer a monument of one of their first leaders to be annihilated, and let one erected for a chief of the Britons remain entire. I am apt to think that what R. Higden, Stow, and Verstegan say of this first battle is right; and though the Britons beat the Saxons under Vortimer, yet the Saxons remained masters of the field of battle, and erected this monument to the memory of Horsa; for Bede says positively that Horsa was buried 'in Orientalibus Cantii partibus,' by which he must mean east of the Medway; for England was not divided into counties till Alfred's time, about the year 889; whereas Bede died about 734, so that there was 150 years difference, and what is now called East and West Kent is a much more modern division of the county than

was made by Alfred.

If it is allowed (which I think, from the authorities before-mentioned, it must be) that the Saxons remained masters of the field in this battle at Ailsford, it is very natural to suppose that the Britons retreated to Addington, where was the temple before described, and though not used by them for religious worship, (they being Christians) yet as a place of strength, and not above eight miles from the place where the battle was fought; and that here they buried Catigern, and set up those six huge stones which are now broken, and fallen in together, as before described; and this conjecture is strengthened by the next battle, which is said to be at Crecanford, now Crayford, in which the Britons were beaten, and forced to retire to London, where Vortimer dying of the poison given him by Rowena, was buried, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth.

[p] The Saxons first came into Britain, Ann. Dom. 447, and reigned here till 1013, when Sweyne, the Dane, overcame them, and became king, and imposed the tax called Danegeld; but he was never crowned, reigning but four years; for Canute came to the crown 1017, and established the Danes in this land; but this establishment lasted only 24 years; for in 1041 the Saxon line was restored, and ended with Edward the Confessor in 1066, when the Norman conquest took place.

...

<A copy of this volume of 'Archaeologia' is available through Google books; the two illustrations can be found there. One comment was added by the editor, Richard Gough: I have printed that in blue. Thomas Buttonshaw (d. 1768), mentioned on p. 109, was rector of Addington 1741–†, vicar of Ryarsh 1742–†. — C.F. May 2011.>