

ART. XVI.—*Three Notes on Roman Cumberland: Bewcastle, Bowness-on-Solway, Petrianae.* By ERIC BIRLEY.

I. BEWCASTLE.

IN June, 1930, the writer visited Bewcastle with our member, Mr. James MacIntyre, who had recently discovered that a water-pipe was being laid across the fort, from the Demesne farm past the south-west corner of the churchyard to the vicarage—thus crossing the line suggested by Mr. R. G. Collingwood* for the west wall of the presumed rectangular fort. No trace of such a wall appeared in the trench, but there were a number of walls running approximately east and west, and considerable masonry debris. There were stone buildings inside the fort, then; and the fort itself must still be regarded as a multangular one.

The finds included the rim of a hammer-head mortarium similar to *Birdoswald* no. 12, and a Huntcliff ware rim as *Birdoswald* no. 20b. Both of the *Birdoswald* pieces belong to period III (i.e., c. A.D. 300-368); here, then, is a suggestion of occupation in the fourth century, when it has been supposed that no site north of the Wall remained in Roman hands.† On the unsupported evidence of two pieces of pottery, it would not be wise to reject the prevailing view; excavation alone can shew the character of the fourth-century occupation at Bewcastle; but there is other evidence that tends to confirm that supplied by the recently discovered pottery.

1. A Bewcastle sherd, no. 119b in the Tullie House *Catalogue* (these *Transactions*, N.S. xvii) comes from a rouletted beaker, of a

* These *Transactions*, N.S. xxii, p. 175.

† Cf. H. H. E. Craster in *A.J.* lxxi, 25-26.

type particularly characteristic of the fourth century; *Birdoswald* no. 45 is somewhat similar.

2. In the Alnwick collection there is a sherd from High Rochester (no. 812 in Bruce's *Catalogue*) that appears to belong to the second half of the fourth century: "The upper portion of a vase, with ring handle attached. It is ornamented . . . by strokes of a brown pigment upon the light ground of the vessel." Cf. *Birdoswald* no. 47 (period IV). The fragments of "exceedingly light and delicate earthenware vessels," no. 813 in the same *Catalogue*, may also belong to the fourth century; cf. *Birdoswald* no. 30.

3. In addition to the pottery evidence, which by itself might be considered no more than suggestive, there are three inscriptions whose significance must be examined: two (*a* and *b* below) from Bewcastle itself, and one from Netherby.

- a.* (C. 974) Sancto Cocidio Aurunc(eius)* Felicissimus
tribun(us) ex evocato v(otum) s(olvit)
l(ibens) m(erito).

[The received reading unjustly attributes various misspellings to the stone-cutter, who was really only indulging in "fancy" letters.—Ed.]

Evocati, time-expired men recalled to the colours, were often singled out for rapid promotion in the centurionate (cf. Parker, *Roman Legions*, p. 201); but promotion direct to the rank of tribune is a very different matter.†

- b.* (E.E. ix 1227) Deo sancto Cocidio Q. Peltradius Maximus
trib(unus) ex corniculario praeff. praetorio
eemm. vv. v. s. l. m.

Such *cornicularii* appear in other instances (Dessau 1325, under Pius: 2743, under M. Aurelius: 2652) to have been promoted ultimately to high posts: but in such cases promotion was through the centurionate and not, as in this case, direct from *cornicularius* to tribune. The *praeffecti praetorio* are styled *eminentissimi* at least as early as A.D. 218 (Dessau 465); but at that period it was still to the centurionate that the *evocatus*, at least, looked for promotion.‡

* This rather than *Auruncius* appears to be the correct form of the *nomen*; cf. Dessau III 1, p. 29.

† The only near parallel that I have found as yet is Dessau 7173, from Viminacium, recording a *vet(eranus) leg(ionis) VII Cl(audia) ex b(ene)f(iciario) co(n)s(ularis)*, who died in Britain, apparently while serving as *prae(f)ectus coh(ortis) I Aq(uitanorum) vet(eranae)*.

‡ Cf. Cassius Dio, lxxix, 5, 3.

c. (C. 953) Deo sancto Cocidio Paternius Maternus
tribunus coh(ortis) I Nervan(a)e ex evocato
Palatino v. s. l. m.

The cohort is styled *I Nervia Germanorum m(illiar)ia* in the diploma for A.D. 122, and *I Nervana Germanorum m(illiar)ia eq(uitata)* on the British inscriptions C. 937 and 1066 (from Birrens and Beaumont). The omission of the name *Germanorum*, and the spelling *Nervane*, favour a late date for the inscription. Here again we have a *tribunus ex evocato*; but this time the information is more explicit—*ex evocato Palatino*. This epithet should date the inscription at earliest to the time of Constantine, as a result of whose army reforms the *Palatini* first appear.* It is permissible to infer that the two Bewcastle inscriptions belong to the fourth century also; and this may explain why the dedicators had not served as centurions, if at this period the military post of centurion no longer existed.†

In the early years of the third century, the garrison of Netherby was *coh. I Aelia Hispanorum m. e.* (C. 965, etc.); this inscription, therefore, if the dating suggested for it is correct, provides evidence of a change of garrison after the time of Severus, presumably at the time of the Constantian reorganization. There is no other clear evidence of such a change, except that *coh. I Baetasiorum* appears in the Notitia at Reculver, where it can hardly have been before c. A.D. 275; its Maryport inscriptions are undated, so that it is impossible to say where the cohort was in the first half of the third century.

There is some ground, then, for believing that Bewcastle, Netherby, perhaps High Rochester and, in that case, Risingham,‡ were still held in the fourth century; if that be so, it explains and justifies the remark of Ammianus Marcellinus, that the *arcani* (if that be the real form of the name) were an old-established institution;§

* Cf. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, p. 62.

† Cf. Grosse, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

‡ A tombstone from Risingham at the Black Gate (C. 1021) was regarded by Haverfield as a Christian monument of A.D. 300-350. Certainly the style of its lettering is fourth-century. This may be taken as proof that the *vicus* at Risingham, at least, was inhabited in that century; and in such a case the *vicus* would hardly be inhabited unless the fort were garrisoned.—Ed.

§ xxviii, iii, 8: *genus hominum a veteribus institutum*.

the third-century organization of the frontier had been perpetuated by Constantius Chlorus.

It may be worth while to note the resemblance of Bewcastle to Margidunum, the other British example of a multangular Roman fort. In the middle of the first century, there was an earth and timber fort there for a short time, irregular in shape; then, after three centuries of civil occupation, the site was once more fortified, this time by a stone wall, again in an irregular shape.* At Margidunum, as at Bewcastle, there appears to have been no necessity for the departure from normal methods of lay-out. The two sites had very different histories; there had been no garrison at Margidunum for many years when Hadrianic Bewcastle was built.† There is, indeed, no necessity to suppose that that fort was of the same shape and size as the surviving one; the Constantian fort at Chesterholm was slightly different in size to its predecessor, and the legionary fortress at York was considerably altered at that time. Is the hexagonal fort at Bewcastle a piece of Constantian planning? If so, it would be a noteworthy departure in our district, though there are parallels further afield.

Until further excavation has been carried out, it would be rash to carry speculation further; but the discovery of the two fourth-century sherds at Bewcastle has at least re-opened a question that at one time seemed finally settled.

II. BOWNESS-ON-SOLWAY.

In May, 1930, the writer carried out three weeks' excavation with two men at Bowness, in the hopes of finding out the thickness of the Wall, and its relation to the east and west walls of the fort.

* Felix Oswald, *Margidunum*, Nottingham 1928.

† Cf. R. G. Collingwood, *l.c.*, p. 177.

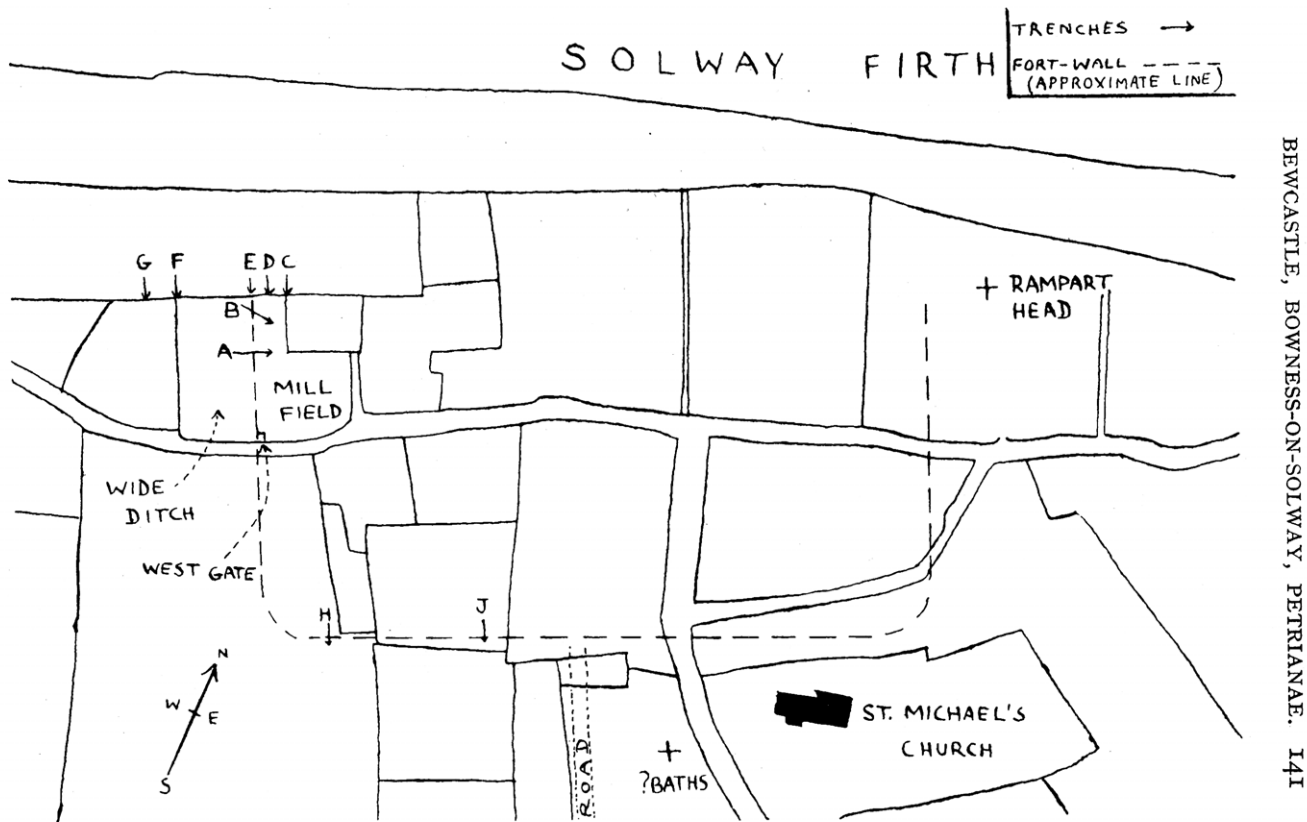


FIG. 1.—Sketch-map of Bowness, based on the Ordnance Survey. 25" = 1 mile.

The only marked surface-indications of the fort are on the west side, where, in the Mill Field north of the road, there is a remarkably wide ditch (fig. 2) that runs through to the lip of the escarpment that forms the northern edge of the hill on which the village of Bowness stands (fig. 3). In this field, trench A (*cf.* fig. 1) was cut to locate the west wall of the fort, and to obtain a section of the ditch. Of the wall, the clay and cobble footing alone survived, five feet six inches thick; its outer face was thirty feet from the present lip of the wide ditch, but it was found that the true berm was only nine feet wide, there being an inner ditch, twenty feet wide and six feet six inches deep from the present surface, of which there is no surface-indication. In the bottom of this ditch (fig. 4) were a number of fallen facing-stones; in the top three feet of the dark forced soil that filled it, some medieval pottery was found (including fragments of green-glazed ware) and a silver penny of Edward I. The wide ditch contained no masonry debris, and only one piece of medieval pottery, at bottom; its filling was all clean silt. The difference in the filling as well as the great width of the outer ditch, suggests that it is medieval, perhaps a Plantagenet enlargement of the outer of two Roman ditches at the time when the inner one was filled.

Trench B, across the supposed north-west corner of the fort, showed that the west wall was still running due north; and three short trenches (C, D, E), carried south from the lip of the escarpment, produced no trace of the north wall, but a mass of rammed gravel, extending three feet south from the lip. Further west, trenches F and G failed to produce any trace of the Wall. The wide ditch at this point runs, as has been said, right through to the edge of the escarpment; it would seem that the whole of the north-west corner of the fort, and its north wall, together with the westward extension of the Wall, have been eroded; the mass of rammed gravel will represent the southern edge of the intervallum road.



FIG. 2—THE WIDE DITCH LOOKING NORTH-WEST.



FIG. 3—THE ESCARPMENT, LOOKING EAST.

The wide ditch runs through just behind the figure.

Photos. by E. B. B.

TO FACE P. 142.



FIG. 4—TRENCH A.

The wall-footing is just beyond the pick; the second man stands in the inner, the first man in the wide ditch; Miss Wills stands on the present lip of the wide ditch.

Photo. by E. B. B.



FIG. 5—MASONRY OF THE WEST GATE, LOOKING SOUTH.

Photo. by Thomas Hepple.

TO FACE P. 143.

At the south side of the field, the north guard-chamber of the west gate of the fort was found, and partly excavated.* Here alone was masonry found *in situ*, so completely has the site been robbed of its stone (fig. 5). In the field south of the road, the south-west angle of the fort can be made out, though here the ditch has been almost obliterated by ploughing. The gate should be in the centre of the west side; in the absence of further excavation its centre cannot be determined exactly—it might, for example, have had a single passage with two guard-chambers, though a double gateway is perhaps more likely—but in any case, twice the distance from the south-west angle to gate-centre will reach a point well over the present edge of the escarpment; thus the evidence of the earlier trenches is confirmed.

Two further trenches (H, J) were cut to locate the south wall of the fort; in each, the footing alone survived, approximately six feet wide, of clay and cobbles six inches deep. With the position of two of its walls only determined, it is not yet possible to give an exact estimate of the area of the fort; but the east wall is almost on the line plotted on the O.S. map (to judge by the indications in a garden north of the road), and, assuming the west gate to have been a double one similar to that at Rudchester, the area of the fort, from outside face to outside face of its walls, must have been about seven acres. If the west gate was a single one, the east and west walls will have been rather longer, and the area rather more; in either case, the fort was larger than any other on the Wall.

A final trench was cut through the east side of the mound known as Rampart Head (just east of the fort), which has been supposed to lie on top of the Wall. A Roman occupation level was found, but no trace of the

* The internal length was $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet; the breadth could not be ascertained owing to the destruction of the south wall by the present road, which runs through a slight cutting at this point.

Wall itself, which may be supposed to have run further north, to join the north-east corner of the fort, now perished.

It is perhaps desirable to indicate where further excavation is necessary, and where good results might be obtained. The size of the west gateway might be checked by further excavation in the field south of the road, though stone-robbing and ploughing have interfered considerably with the site. The position of the east wall might be easily ascertained, but digging could only be done here in the autumn or winter, when there would be no chance of interfering with gardening. In the field opposite the church, there are considerable indications of buildings, and west of them a road running south. The position is not unsuitable for a bath-building; and here alone is there a prospect of finding stratified remains of the Roman occupation undisturbed. Excavation here might well produce evidence for the garrison of the fort, for which we have as yet no evidence; the inscriptions mentioning a tribune (C. 949, 949a) are too late to prove the presence here of a *cohors milliaria*, though such a cohort, or an *ala*, might be expected in a fort of this size, if indeed there were not other formations there as well. It may be as well to point out that *cohors I Aelia Classica* was *quingenaria*.

The thickness of the Wall.—According to Horsley, the Wall is nearly nine feet thick near Bowness. To test this account, two trenches were dug between Bowness and Port Carlisle, in a field (O.S. Cumberland xv, N.W. ed. 1926) where there seemed a prospect of finding part of the Wall preserved. In the first trench, the north face of the Wall had perished, footing and all; but the south face was better preserved, with one stone of the first course over the footing still in place, and a well-defined setting-out line showing where further stones of this course had been. The offset above the footing was as much as seven inches (fig. 6).



FIG. 6—SOUTH FACE OF THE WALL, EAST OF BOWNESS.
Solway Firth in the distance.



FIG. 7—SECTION OF THE WALL FOOTING, EAST OF BOWNESS.

Photos. by E.B.B.

TO FACE P. 144.

The second trench produced a complete section, though of the footing alone (fig. 7); the breadth was nine feet three inches. Allowing for the offset, the width of the Wall must have been eight feet eight inches or rather less, if there were further offsets; if Horsley was right, the width must have been at least $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet. The Wall here is rather narrower, then, than the "broad Wall," but definitely broader than the "narrow Wall"; this fact must be considered in conjunction with the evidence of Haverfield's tentative work at Drumburgh, for its possible bearing on the date of the building of the most westerly stretch of Hadrian's Wall.

The finds.—No pottery was found of sufficient interest to warrant immediate publication. In the guard-chamber of the west gate of the fort, a well-preserved mason's hammer was found, among masons' chippings, at foundation level; and among the top soil here was a denarius of Crispina, the wife of Commodus.*

III. PETRIANAE.

Horsley and other writers identified Petrianae with Castlesteads; the Banks forger† and his Cumberland contemporaries wished to locate it at Lanercost; but, since Dr. McCaul first made the suggestion, most antiquaries have agreed to regard Old Carlisle as the just claimant to the name.‡ The *ala Petriana* had the title *Augusta*: a number of inscriptions prove the garrison of Old Carlisle to have been the *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata*: ergo, that regiment must be the *ala Petriana*, that has dropped its original name for the honorific *Augusta*.

* It is hoped to publish the Bowness finds, together with an almost perfect 37 from Bewcastle (stamped on the rim by APOLAVSTER), and further Birdoswald pottery, in the next volume of these *Transactions*.

† Cf. R. G. Collingwood in these *Trans.* N.S. xxix, 91.

‡ E.g. Haverfield in these *Trans.* N.S. xx, 147; R. G. Collingwood, *ibid.* N.S. xxviii, 108.

But why was the place called by that title that the *ala* no longer used? Why does the *ala* appear as *Petriana* again in the Notitia? There is another objection to the received identification. The *ala Petriana* appears on one inscription, indeed, as *Augusta* (C. 929, from Carlisle); but on that inscription, as well as the diploma for A.D. 122, and C.I.L. XI 5669 (of the time of Trajan), it is also *m(illiaria) c(ivium) R(omanorum)*, whilst the diploma for 135 too records it as *m(illiaria)*. The regiment at Old Carlisle appears nowhere with either title, although both were honours habitually recorded on official, and often on unofficial, inscriptions. When it is remembered that there were two other *alae Augustae* stationed in Britain, neither *milliaria*, the prevailing identification loses its last claim to consideration. The *ala Augusta Vocontiorum*, recorded in Britain only at Newstead (C. 1080), appears in the 122 diploma as *c. R.*, and so may be left out of account; there remains the *ala Augusta Gallorum Proculeiana*, which was neither *milliaria* nor *civium Romanorum*. This must be the garrison of Old Carlisle; and it is perhaps significant that on the 122 diploma it appears merely as *Augusta Gallorum*.

If this identification is correct, where was *Petrianæ*? We require a site where the regiment was in garrison at least from the time of Severus, but preferably from the second century; the naming of the fort after its garrison suggests age-long occupation of the same site.* Again, the Carlisle inscription suggests that *Petrianæ* was somewhere near Luguwallium; and the Notitia entry, that it was on the Wall, west of Birdoswald.† Castlesteads is out of the question; the fort appears to have been too small for an *ala*;‡ whilst in the third century its

* Cf. *Legio VII Gemina* and *Cohors Gallica* in Spain.

† The Hexham inscription (E. E. vii, 995) appears to be earlier than the time of Hadrian, and therefore hardly a necessary guide to the position of the *ala* in or after his principate.

‡ R. G. Collingwood, *Trans.* N.S., xxii, p. 204.

garrison was *coh. II Tungrorum* (or a part of it),* and, before that, other cohorts were stationed there. Burgh-by-Sands had an *ala* (*I Tungrorum*, C. 941) in garrison at one time, and it is not far from Carlisle; the size and garrison of Stanwix, the nearest fort to Carlisle, are unknown, but the recent discoveries there† prove that there were mounted men in garrison in the time of Hadrian, though it is not certain, of course, whether they belonged to an *ala*; a *cohors equitata* too contained *turmae*.‡ On the whole, Stanwix seems to be a more likely place than Burgh; it is nearer to Carlisle, and has produced no evidence of any other regiment in garrison; but without further evidence, it would be unwise to assert the identification positively.

The writer does not propose to enter at this time upon the greater problem of the identification of the places that follow Petrianæ in the Notitia list; the evidence of the Rudge Cup, and of Ravennas, require a fuller consideration than he is at present able to give them; but it seems desirable to emphasize the impossibility of the identification of Petrianæ with Old Carlisle.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to the Misses Wills, Mr. Wills, J.P., and Mr. Barrett, of Bowness, for permission to excavate on their land, and for their interest in the progress of the work; to Mr. James MacIntyre, for his ready assistance in investigating the trench at Bewcastle, and the finds that had been made there; and to Mr. R. G. Collingwood and Mr. C. E. Stevens for considerable advice and encouragement in the examination of the epigraphic evidence.

* It is noteworthy that the three dedications by the cohort, C. 879, 880, 882 are all recorded as done under the charge of the (*decurio*) *princeps*; with C. 893, from Castlesteads, that mentions this officer but no cohort, we have, from one fort, about two-thirds of the inscriptions from the whole empire that refer to the post. Mr. Collingwood doubted (*loc. cit.*) whether there was room for the regiment in the 2½ acre-fort; was the *decurio princeps* in command, there, of a part only of the cohort? It is possible, of course, that by the third century all cohorts were of the same (quingenary) size.

† Cf. R. G. Collingwood, in the present volume.

‡ C. 919, from Stanwix, the tombstone of an *eques* with lance and shield, might also be taken as evidence of an *ala* being in garrison there.