

XVI.—SOME EXCAVATIONS AT CORBRIDGE, 1952-1954.

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The intention of the report which follows is to record part of the work undertaken on the Roman site at Corbridge between 1952 and 1954 by the Durham University Excavation Committee. Not all the work is described, because some leads on to inquiries yet unfinished and therefore inappropriate to record at this stage. The two pieces of work here described stand alone and are of special interest, the one as giving a first glimpse of pre-Roman structures, the other as supplying a historical cross-section of the sequence of periods on the site in circumstances which very well demonstrate the change of character of the occupation which took place in the third century. In recording the pre-Roman remains a very particular debt is due to Mr. Iain MacIvor, who made the final survey of the building and the complicated overlying structures upon which the plan (fig. 1) here furnished is based. His other records of the same area, however, are reserved until the time comes to deal fully with the buildings of the early fort, here treated only incidentally.

1. THE EARLY ROMAN AND PRE-ROMAN BUILDINGS.

During the examination of earlier buildings on the site XI at Corbridge, which comprises the large unfurnished storehouse and its courtyard, it was discovered that the subsoil of the courtyard of the building still contained foundation-trenches of the timber buildings belonging to the pre-Antonine occupation. Potentially, this was a highly important discovery, for the courtyard provided a large area where the

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SITE XI : PRE-ROMAN REMAINS BELOW FLAVIAN, TRAJANIC AND ANTONINE BUILDINGS

FLAVIAN TRAJANIC ANTONINE I
ANTONINE II

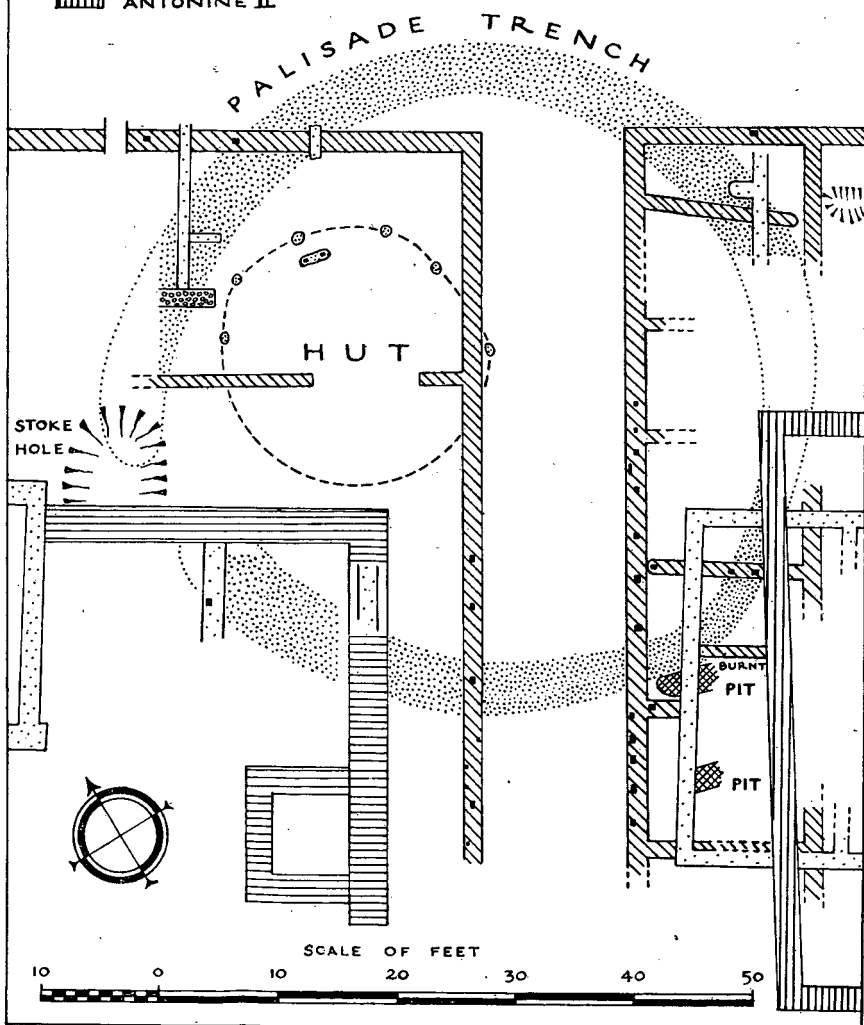


FIG. 1.

earlier timber buildings might be uncovered free from the superincumbent layers present at all other points. It has not yet proved possible to examine the whole area, but in the space between and to north of the Antonine headquarters building and the commandant's house to east of it the Roman timber buildings proved to overlie a pre-Roman native enclosure so interesting in character as to call for a special description of this part of the site.

The latest pre-Antonine building is here represented by the timber headquarters building and its stone *sacellum*, the *sacellum* surviving incorporated in the Antonine stone-built headquarters which followed very exactly the lines of the wooden building.¹ To east of this wooden structure came a street some 25 feet wide, bordered on the east in turn by a further timber building of which the north end or back was aligned to the timber headquarters. It measured 30 feet from north to south and its west end composed a compartment 12 feet wide internally from east to west. Since the granaries² contemporary with the timber headquarters building are known to exist to west of it, the newly discovered building is presumably the commandant's house or a workshop next to it. Comparable structures,³ with a main range lying far back, appear at South Shields II and it may be presumed that the east-to-west road running north of the headquarters building represents the *via quintana* of the pre-Antonine fort, but there is little trace as yet of buildings on its north frontage. One is no doubt represented by the north-to-south division, terminating in a short east-to-west clay-and-cobble foundation in the fashion of a respond, and two other fragments of contemporary north-to-south partitions have been observed. This would give a street 16 feet wide, which is reasonable enough, but more extended work will be needed before the full significance of these somewhat fragmentary remains is apparent.

The next and lowest Roman level was remarkably dis-

¹ AA⁴ xxx, 240, fig. 2.

² AA⁴ xxxi, 220, fig. 8.

³ *The Roman fort at South Shields: a guide*: plan on end paper.

inct. The filling of its trenches was deep and clear, while many of the post-holes which they contained were filled with burnt clay or with wood, plainly burnt in position. The buildings thus defined formed a pair, of which the north front lay 32 feet north of the pre-Antonine buildings. They were divided by a north-to-south street 13 feet wide and although their identification is as yet uncertain, they were widely different in character. The westernmost, of which the east wall lay 8 feet east of the Antonine headquarters, contained a north range 19 feet from back to front with at least one doorway 9 feet wide, opening on to a courtyard or further subdivision. The eastern building included a western range of rooms 13 feet from back to front, of which at least seven, with six cross-divisions were identified. The building then extends far eastwards, as if it were perhaps a courtyard building, though its eastward limit is not yet known. The fierce fire by which it was destroyed was particularly marked in a minor partition which seems to have been exclusively of timber, the second to the south in the area between the pre-Antonine and Antonine commandant's house. There can be no doubt that this early burnt level, of which vivid traces were also noted on the west side of the fort, represents the conflagration which yielded the well-known burnt coin-hoard⁴ described by Sir Edmund Craster in 1915, and which dates the destruction to not long after A.D. 98. In terms of castrametation the buildings are arranged in a triple row, unrelated to the gate⁵ discovered in 1936. Such a plan is highly uncommon but is matched⁶ at Dalswinton II, where a fort large enough to accommodate a milliary *ala* is planned in just this fashion, with a trisected *retentura*. The shape of things to come, so far as the fort of the milliary *ala Petriana* at Corbridge is concerned, thus begins to reveal itself.

It soon appeared, however, that these timber buildings were in turn superimposed upon a structure of a very different character. The first feature disclosed was a filled ditch of which the dimensions varied from just over 6 feet at widest

⁴ AA³ xii, 250-254.



⁵ AA⁴ xv, 256-257.

⁶ JRS xlv, forthcoming.

to just under 3 feet at narrowest. The ditch followed a roughly circular course, with dimensions of 60 feet from east-to-west and 56 feet from north-to-south. As examined, the section was usually saucer-shaped, its depth varying from 1 foot to 1 foot 9 inches. The shallowness is noteworthy, and seems to preclude the possibility of the ditch being a defensive work, even supposing that something has been taken off an uneven surface by Roman levelling operations, which would account for the differing depths and widths. Here the character of the filling must be taken into account. In three sections traces were noted of a difference which disclosed traces of vertical cheeks on either side of a central disturbance, while on the surface a slightly irregular central disturbance was observed in the south-east quadrant extending for some 25 feet. Taken together these points are of unmistakable import. They indicate that the function of the ditch-like excavation was to hold a palisade, later removed when the structure was obliterated by Roman buildings. There was also an entrance. Although the precise dimensions of this were not clear it was evident that in the south-west quadrant the ditch disappeared below the north wall of the Antonine headquarters and did not emerge on its north side. Again, in the north-west quadrant the ditch did not emerge beyond the stoke-hole of the room east of the Antonine *sacellum*. Evidently, then, the palisade enclosure had an entrance roughly 7 feet wide somewhat south of its east-to-west axis. A pre-Roman enclosure of this kind might be expected to have surrounded a special feature, whether domestic, religious or funerary. The entire enclosure area was therefore stripped and careful search was made for further structural remains. Six, very similar, clay-packed post-holes were found, forming an approximate semicircle, within which a slot containing two post-holes marked a separate feature. All the holes, however, were so shallow as to suggest that the whole original surface had been shaved off, so that neither floor nor associated relics appeared, and it seemed reasonable to suppose that in the southern half of

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SITE XX

-  THIRD-CENTURY
 FOURTH-CENTURY

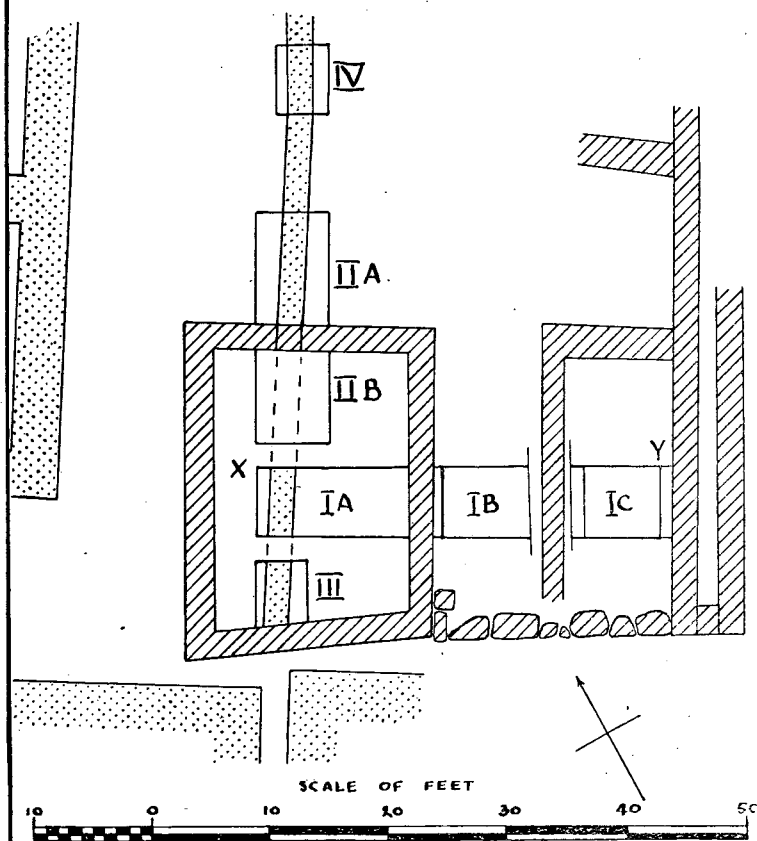


FIG. 2.

the circle the post-holes had been completely removed. The diameter of the approximately circular hut thus supposed is some 22 feet. The internal feature, consisting of a pair of posts some 2 feet apart, might well be a small loom.

Parallels for this structure are not abundant. Perhaps the closest in plan is the funerary hut,⁷ enclosed within a palisade and belonging to the Bronze Age, at Bleasdale (Lancashire), though the scale of the structure is considerably larger than this at Corbridge. But the resemblance is significant for the fact that the two structures belong to the Bronze-Age culture which lingered in the North long and late. The discovery is a reminder of the many timber structures which remain to be discovered and to which excavation may often furnish the only clue.

2. EXCAVATIONS ON SITE XX.

XX is the number given, in the report on the excavations at Corbridge in 1910,⁸ to a stone building lying a little to the east of the south-east angle of the great third-century storehouse on site XI. The building projects, obliquely, from 9 to 15 feet beyond the line of the front of site XI, and is separated from its east side by a strip of open ground, 11 feet wide, appropriate for a road. As recorded in the 1910 report, and as at present displayed, the building comprises two almost rectangular chambers, separated by a passage, with a total southern frontage of 48 feet; the two rectangular chambers measure between 26 and 29 feet from south to north. The building as a whole evidently continued much farther north than the back of the chambers, but, except on the east side, there are now no obvious traces of this continuation.

The walls, which stand 2 feet high, are built of small flat slabs of yellow sandstone. Thin courses of this kind are also met in the fourth-century modifications to temple VI.

⁷ W. J. Varley, *Antiq. Journ.* xviii, 154-168, pl. xlvi: cf. V. G. Childe, *Prehistoric Communities of the British Isles*, 151-152, fig. 47.

⁸ *AA*³ vii, 170.

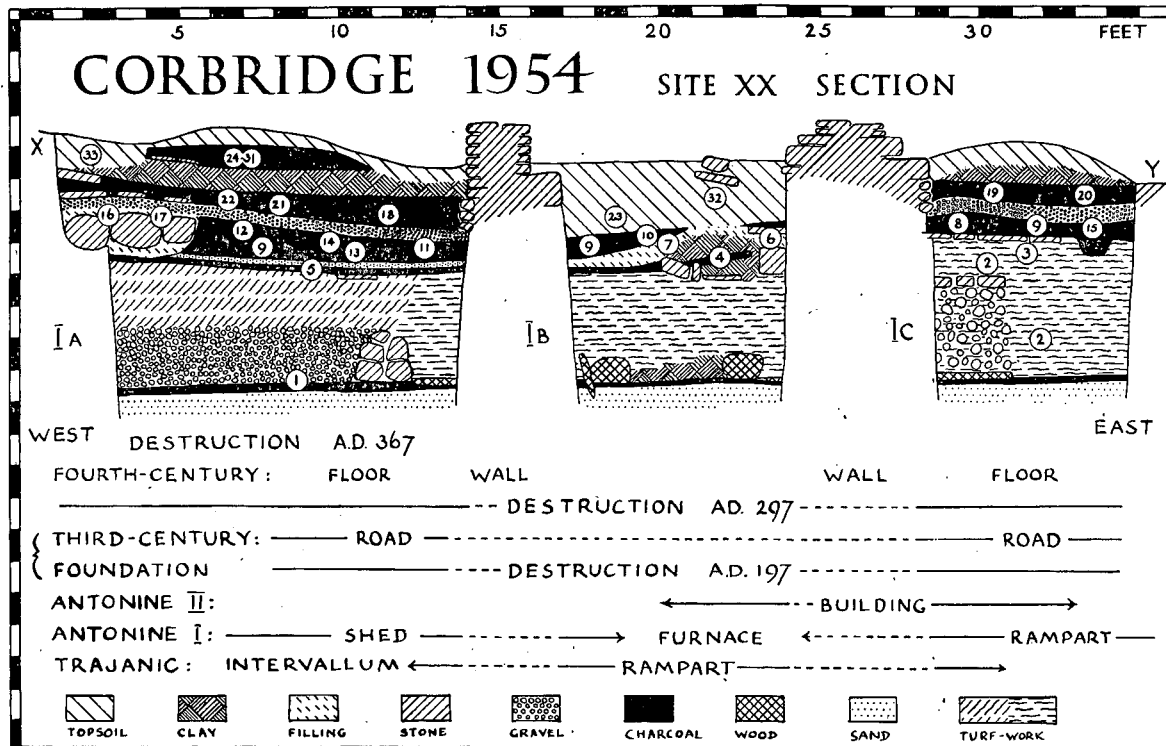


FIG. 3.

In the west wall of the eastern chamber the lower courses consist of dressed freestone blocks, which appear to be stones derived from an earlier building, rather than an earlier wall. The south and west walls contain very large roughly dressed blocks and boulders, of the kind used elsewhere on the site to face the platforms of temples. These may be observed most clearly in elevation in the south front of the western chamber, while the upper surface of the large stones is visible, where the thin upper courses are absent, at the front of the passage and the eastern chamber. It is by no means improbable that this row of large stones, or a substantial length of it, had formed part of a temple platform which was subsequently used as a foundation for the front wall of the later structure.

The 1954 excavation, described below, established that the topmost visible building is of early fourth-century date; this result is neither inconsistent with the type of masonry nor with the fact, recorded in the 1910 report, that "the last remetalling of the adjacent street abutted against the south wall of the building". There is less evidence for the purpose of the building, but there is a general resemblance between the present arrangement of rectangular chambers on either side of a wide entrance passage, and the arrangement of the dwelling-house of the villa⁹ at Great Casterton, Rutland, in its mid fourth-century phase. It would thus appear that the visible remains on site XX formed part of a fairly pretentious fourth-century dwelling-house.

The ground originally rose gently from site XI to site XX; the line of the slope is preserved in the walls of the Antonine commandant's house on site XI. Site XX was not affected by levelling-down early in the third century for the erection of the great storehouse, and it continued to receive accretions, of which the house described above was the latest. Nor was it included in the modern clearance of site XI for display, down to the early third-century level. As a result the house on site XX now lies on a bank 5 feet above the general level

⁹ P. Corder, ed., *The Roman Town and Villa at Great Casterton, Rutland, Second Interim Report, 1951-1953*, pl. v.

of the adjacent site XI. Site XX is thus one of the few places now available at Corbridge where it is still possible to cut a vertical section from a fourth-century building down to the subsoil, and so to obtain an epitome of the history of the site.

A section, 6 feet wide and 34 feet long, was cut from east to west, across both the chambers and the entrance passage, wholly within the walls of the fourth-century house (IA, IB, and IC on the plan, fig. 2, and the section, fig. 3). A second section, 6 feet wide and 19 feet long, was cut from north to south across the north wall of the western chamber, at right angles to IA and divided from it by a 2-foot balk (IIA and IIB on the plan). Trial holes, which were not taken to full depth, were later dug south of IA and north of IIA to ascertain something of the planning of features there revealed (III and IV on the plan). Section II proved to be on the site of earlier trenching, presumably that of 1910, but section I cut into levels which were undisturbed, except at the very top and to a depth of about 2 feet in IB. The sequence of levels and structures was clear and virtually complete; stratified pottery ranging in date from the late first century to the second half of the fourth was recovered.

The section¹⁰ is drawn on the north side of the trench (X-Y on the plan); the places of discovery of the fragments of coarse pottery, projected on to the section, are indicated by figures in circles. The section is described from bottom to top.

Flavian.

The subsoil, of orange sand and gravel, was reached at a depth of about 8 feet. Pits for large post-holes, which had deeply penetrated the subsoil, were encountered; as will appear, these are later than the Flavian period, and no trace of foundation trenches or post-holes for Flavian buildings was found. As the area cleared at this depth was small, it may well have fallen wholly inside or outside a Flavian building without intersecting the line of its walls, and it is highly probable that the section falls inside the occupied area of the

¹⁰ The plans and sections are based on surveys by Mr. Iain MacIvor.

Flavian fort. There is no trace of a Flavian rampart or ditch in the section, and there is no room for a set of north-to-south defences between the western end of IA and the easternmost point to which the foundation trenches of Flavian buildings have so far been traced on site XI.

In IA there is a layer of soft blackish material, containing charcoal, between the subsoil and the thick layer of gravel interpreted below as a Trajanic road. A corresponding layer could be detected throughout the section. This layer is almost certainly derived from the destroyed wattle and daub buildings of the Flavian fort; this being so it is the earliest of a series of five burnt deposits in the section.

The following coarse pottery vessel was found in IA, in the black layer below the Trajanic road:

1. Two conjoined fragments from a dish with a reeded rim, in light orange self-coloured fabric; this type emerged before the end of the first century, though it survived until the early years of Hadrian's reign; cf. *Corbridge 1951*, no. 48, early Hadrianic.

Trajanic.

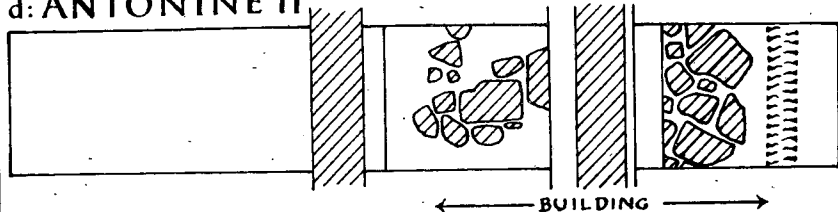
The earliest structure identified in the section is part of a rampart running from north to south. The front of this rampart falls in IC, and is founded on small logs of wood, which retain their character and form, but are stained by ferric oxide to a rusty colour. They lie parallel with one another, are set east and west, and their east ends are all on the same north-to-south line (fig. 4a & pl. XXIII). This regular termination marks the precise front of the rampart as originally constructed, and such rampart material as lies farther east is, as will appear, a later addition. The back of the rampart is marked by a kerb of broken freestone packing, running north and south, in the eastern part of IA. This kerb forms at the same time the east limit of a layer of ochre-coloured iron-stained gravel, more than a foot thick, which overlies the Flavian layer already described, and is clearly the *intervallum* road contemporary with the rampart. The width of the rampart, from the rearward kerb to the front

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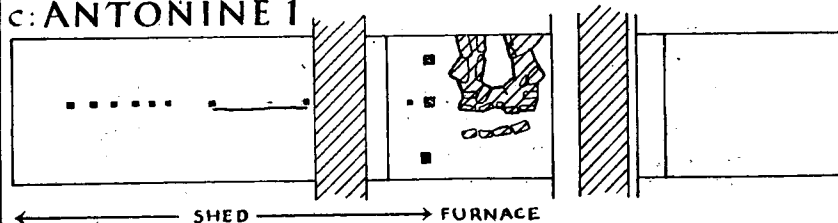
SITE XX TRENCH 1



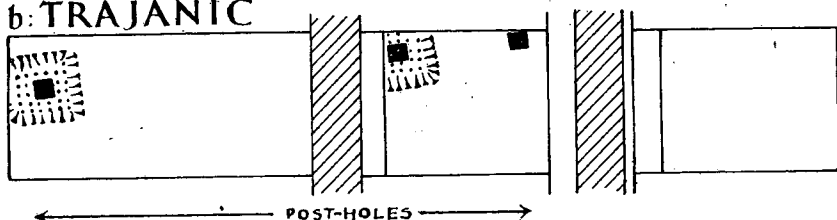
d: ANTONINE II



c: ANTONINE I



b: TRAJANIC



a: TRAJANIC

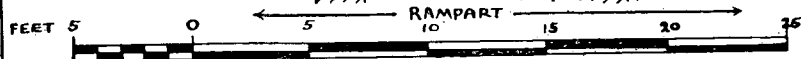
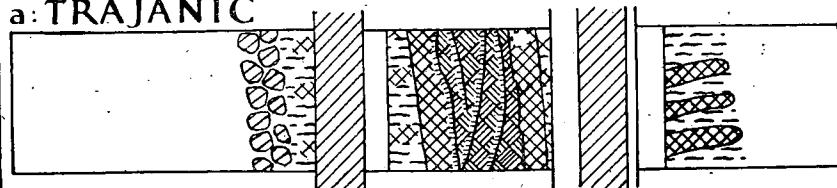


FIG. 4.

of the timber corduroy, is slightly under 20 feet; the corduroy at right angles to the line of the rampart found in 1951,¹¹ below site XLIV, immediately south of the road opposite site XX, is precisely 20 feet from front to back.

The rampart on site XX now stands to a height of 3 feet. Above the timber corduroy in IC it contains many river cobbles, each about the size of a tennis ball, supporting a layer of rough sandstone slabs. The stonework is confined to the northern half of the trench; its eastern edge is slightly behind the line of the front edge of the timber work 3 feet below. While its precise purpose is obscure, the feature is without doubt an integral part of the rampart, and is perhaps best interpreted as a special strengthening for its front as it approaches a gateway.

The corduroy under the rampart face in IC continues for about 2 feet into IB. From here westwards the rampart is founded on clean tenacious yellow clay, and on wattles laid at right angles to the logs. The upper surface of the clay is cut into three shallow steps, the highest on the east, each roughly parallel with the rampart face (fig. 4a). At either side of the mass of clay, and at the same level, a bundle, about 1 foot in diameter, of rust-coloured wattles, resembling a fascine, has been laid parallel with the rampart front. A series of holes at 1-foot intervals, left by the pegs that held the western of the two bundles, appears along its west side; the northernmost of the series is shown on the section. Above the bundles of wattles and the clay bedding, the rampart, in IB, is of a clayey consistency, orange and grey in colour. There are distinct layers of vegetable matter, heavily stained with ferric oxide, as are the timbers and wattles already described, and showing, therefore, not as black lines of carbon, but as rust-coloured lines. Individual turves are readily picked out, but the lines are discontinuous and at various angles; they contrast with the regular horizontal black lines in Hadrian's Turf Wall at Appletree.

A *dupondius* of Trajan, A.D. 103-111, no. 1 below, was

¹¹ JRS xlii, 90.

found in the body of the rampart in IB. This confirms the inference made from the burnt hoard found in 1914 that the destruction of the first fort took place after, though not necessarily long after, A.D. 98.¹² The building of the second fort came after A.D. 103.

At the points indicated on the plan (fig. 4b), in IA and IB, south of the illustrated section, there are two large and deep pits in which wooden uprights, a foot or so square, had stood and been packed tightly with broken freestone. The pits had been cut through the dark Flavian layer, though that in IA is, in part at least, overlain by the gravel of the *intervallum* road, as though the road had been laid over the pit but round the standing upright. No trace of the post-hole above the level of either pit was seen when the material which overlies the road in IA, and the rampart in the western part of IB, were excavated. A post-hole 1-foot square was, however, observed in the clay bedding near the north-east corner of IB, though the pit in which it stood was not dug out; it is probable that a similar post-hole remained undetected in the more friable material at the west end of the same trench. The three wooden uprights whose former existence is thus established stood on a single straight line. The ends of the line are 20 feet apart, and the two adjacent uprights in IB are 5 feet apart. It is therefore probable that the three recorded are the first, fourth and fifth post-holes of a row of at least five, at a regular 5-foot spacing; a sixth may lie behind the face of IC near the front of the rampart.

The posts are part of the structure of a gateway and are contemporary with the rampart and *intervallum* road, which were laid after the packing of the pits. There can be no doubt that they are of Trajanic date, or that they formed part of the same fort as the timber headquarters building discovered in 1951. The line of timbers is part of the north side of the Trajanic main east gate, the *porta principalis sinistra*. If the line of post-holes is produced westwards it intersects the Trajanic headquarters north of its front, and

¹² cf. p. 221, above.

in IB the rampart continues for at least 5 feet south of this line. This suggests that the posts are not part of the north passage wall of the gate, but the frame of the north wall of the northern gate tower. It may be that this was planted in the rampart, without a ground-floor chamber, and thus resembled the angle towers at Valkenburg,¹³ while contrasting both with the free-standing open-work towers at Oakwood,¹⁴ and with the weather-boarded guard-chambers at Inchtuthil and Fendoch.¹⁵ The line of the post-holes is at a slight angle to that of site XI, and is more nearly at right-angles to the line of the eastern pair of ditches, investigated in 1910,¹⁶ which are almost certainly contemporary with the present rampart and gateway.

Early-Antonine.

East of the front face of the Trajanic rampart in IC, further turf-work, generally similar in character to the rampart material in IB, and with the same well-marked ferric oxide lines, which in damp conditions take the place of the carbonized grass faces, showing it to be in position, stands to a height of more than 4 feet; this continues to the eastern end of the section, and doubtless well beyond it. Homogeneous material overlies the front of the Trajanic rampart, which had been reduced in height to 3 feet before the extra material was laid. There is no doubt that the extra material is in position, and has not been washed, or levelled off, from the Trajanic rampart. The impression that the added material is homogeneous is confirmed by the discovery of three fragments from the same vessel at separate points within it; one fragment was found above the Trajanic rampart, while two were found in the turf-work added in front; a description follows:

2. Three fragments, two conjoined, from the same rimless carinated bowl in hard bright orange fabric; there are distinct wheel-marks on the interior; the type is unusual, but is undoubtedly of

¹³ Conveniently in *JRS* xlii, pl. xv.

¹⁴ *PSAS* lxxxvi, pl. xviii.

¹⁵ *PSAS* lxxiii, 118.

¹⁶ *AA*³ vii, 165.

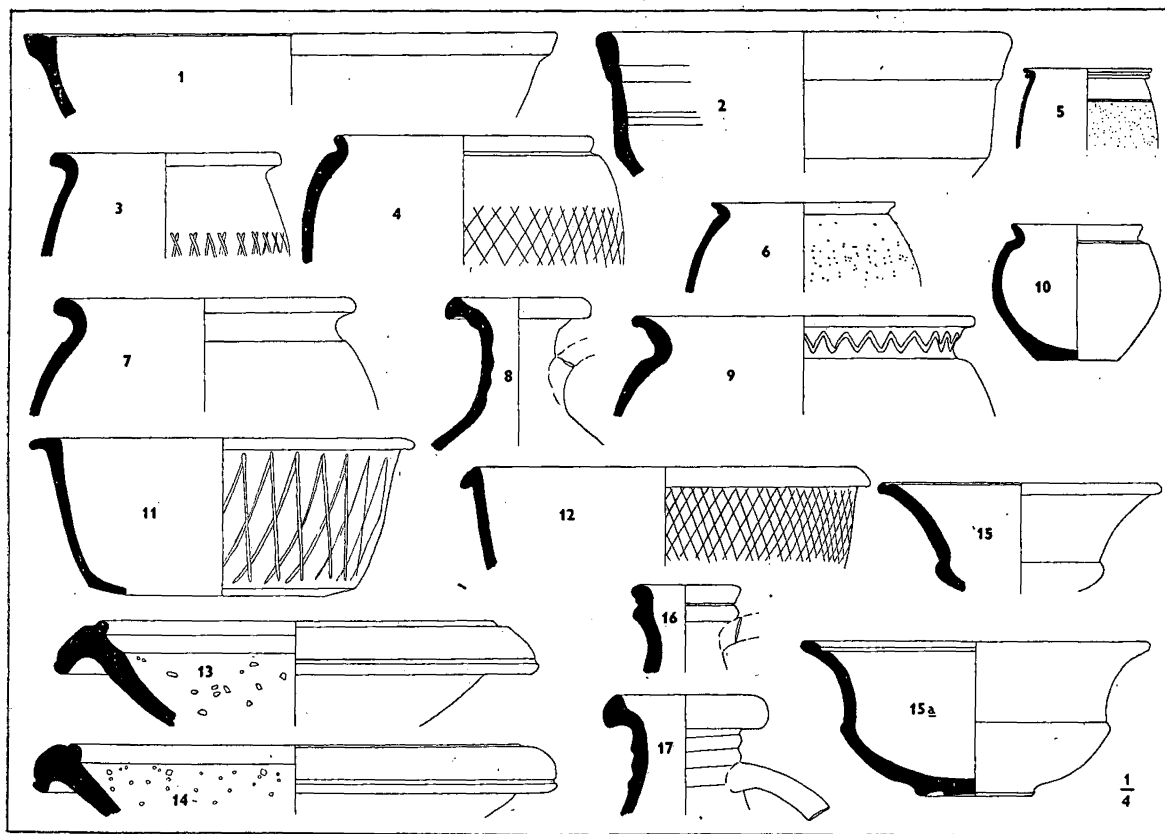


FIG. 5.

pre-Antonine date; it has some affinity with *Corbridge 1951*, no. 53, pre-Antonine.

The date of the addition to the front of the Trajanic rampart is indicated by the following fragmentary vessel of datable type found within the body of the added material:

3. Fragment from a jar, or wheel-made cooking-pot, in grey fabric, with acute-angled cross hatching. These grey jars, imitating the general form and decoration, but not the fabric or rim section, of the earliest fumed-ware cooking-pots, are common in Hadrianic deposits, and hardly ever occur outside them; cf. *Birdoswald 1929*, no. 22, *Corbridge 1951*, no. 41, and *Turret 7b*, no. 3, all Hadrianic.

As the fort at Corbridge lay unoccupied from *circa* A.D. 125 until A.D. 139, new turf-work which seals a Hadrianic vessel can only have been added immediately before A.D. 125, or in or after A.D. 139. Before A.D. 125 minor modifications were made to the plans of Trajanic barracks north of the granaries,¹⁷ but in and after A.D. 139 the Trajanic fort was wholly reconstructed in new material. The alterations to the east rampart almost certainly belong to this later reconstruction, and may therefore be regarded as early-Antonine.

In IB an early-Antonine occupation level overlies the Trajanic rampart, which is here 3 feet high; clearly the rampart stood no higher in early-Antonine times than it does now. When the rampart front was extended eastwards there was simultaneous encroachment on its rear from the west. In IA a 2-foot thick layer of material, closely resembling that of the Trajanic and Antonine ramparts in its texture, and in its grey and orange colour, but lacking the characteristic ferric oxide stains of wood and turf in position, overlies the gravel of the Trajanic *intervallum* road. The top of this mass is level with the top of the levelled rampart in IB, and it too is overlain by an early-Antonine occupation deposit. This material is clearly derived from the Trajanic rampart; doubtless, in the early-Antonine period, a level working space was obtained by cutting away the back of the Trajanic rampart

¹⁷ *AA⁴* xxxi, 216.

to within 3 feet of its foundation, and spreading the material thus obtained over the *intervallum*. There is no early-Antonine occupation deposit in IC; here, although it was levelled in its turn at a still later date, the early-Antonine rampart, incorporating the front of the Trajanic rampart, still stands more than a foot higher than the levelled Trajanic rampart in IB.

The back of the early-Antonine rampart therefore falls at a point between IB and IC; if it is as wide as its Trajanic precursor its front will fall outside the east wall of the fourth-century house. The rampart has, as it were, been moved bodily eastwards for a distance of some 14 feet. The treatment of the eastern defences contrasts with that of the western, where the line of the early-Antonine rampart more or less coincides with that of its precursor. On the west the main timbers of the Trajanic *porta principalis dextra* continued to do duty throughout the second century, and were never removed; the deep post-holes survive, rising through the later levels.¹⁸ On the east the timbers were removed in the course of the early-Antonine reconstruction, for, while the two posts in IB, in one instance certainly and in the other probably, rise through the Trajanic rampart, neither post-hole appeared in the Antonine level, and the post-hole at the west end of IA did not rise up into the material spread over the *intervallum*.

The extra space gained behind the new rampart was utilized for a wooden shed, of which traces were found in IA and IB. A line of post-holes running north and south across IB gives the position of the back wall of the shed, parallel with and some 8 feet behind the presumed back of the early-Antonine rampart. A partition is marked by an east-west line of post-holes down the centre of IA. The southern limit of the shed can hardly have fallen farther south than the edge of the early-Antonine *via principalis*, some 20 feet south of the partition, and there will doubtless have been space for an *intervallum* road between its western limit and the com-

¹⁸ JRS xliv, 88.

mandant's house; there is no restriction on its continuation northwards. The shed was doubtless long and narrow, little wider than the 17 feet of partition already traced, and occupied the *intervallum* proper, between rampart and road, in the same way as the bath-house in the *praetentura* of the Antonine fort at Balmuildy.¹⁹

In IB a furnace or oven, 2 feet by 1 foot internally, was discovered at the same level as the post-holes of the shed (fig. 4c & pl. XXII). This is smaller than the ovens normally found behind the ramparts of auxiliary forts, seems to be of a somewhat different pattern, and has been subject to unusually intense heat. It is built of stones set in clay, both now much reddened, and has a floor of stone slabs. Along its south side are two rows of stones set on edge, much like a drain or conduit. It is buried in a mass of reddened clay, doubtless from its own superstructure. It is possible that the furnace was used for some industrial purpose, rather than for cooking, but there is no direct evidence of this; the only object found in the oven is the following fragmentary cooking-pot, which came from a thick layer of charcoal inside it, sealed by the overlying reddened clay:

4. Rim and shoulder fragment from a cooking-pot with a beaker rim, its texture and surface that of burnished fumed ware, but now coloured a pale orange throughout, through being burnt in oxidizing conditions; this vessel is typically Hadrianic-Antonine; cf. *Birds-wald* 1932, no. 15, Hadrianic, and *Newstead* 1947, no. 14, early-Antonine.

A *dupondius* of Trajan, A.D. 98-117, no. 2 below, was found in the same deposit, where it must be regarded as a survival.

It is surprising to find an oven or furnace so close to the wall of a wooden shed; yet, as both are sandwiched between the top of the levelled Trajanic rampart and structures of the mid-Antonine period, there can be no doubt that the furnace and shed belong to the same period as each other. There is

¹⁹ S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmuildy*, pl. lviii.

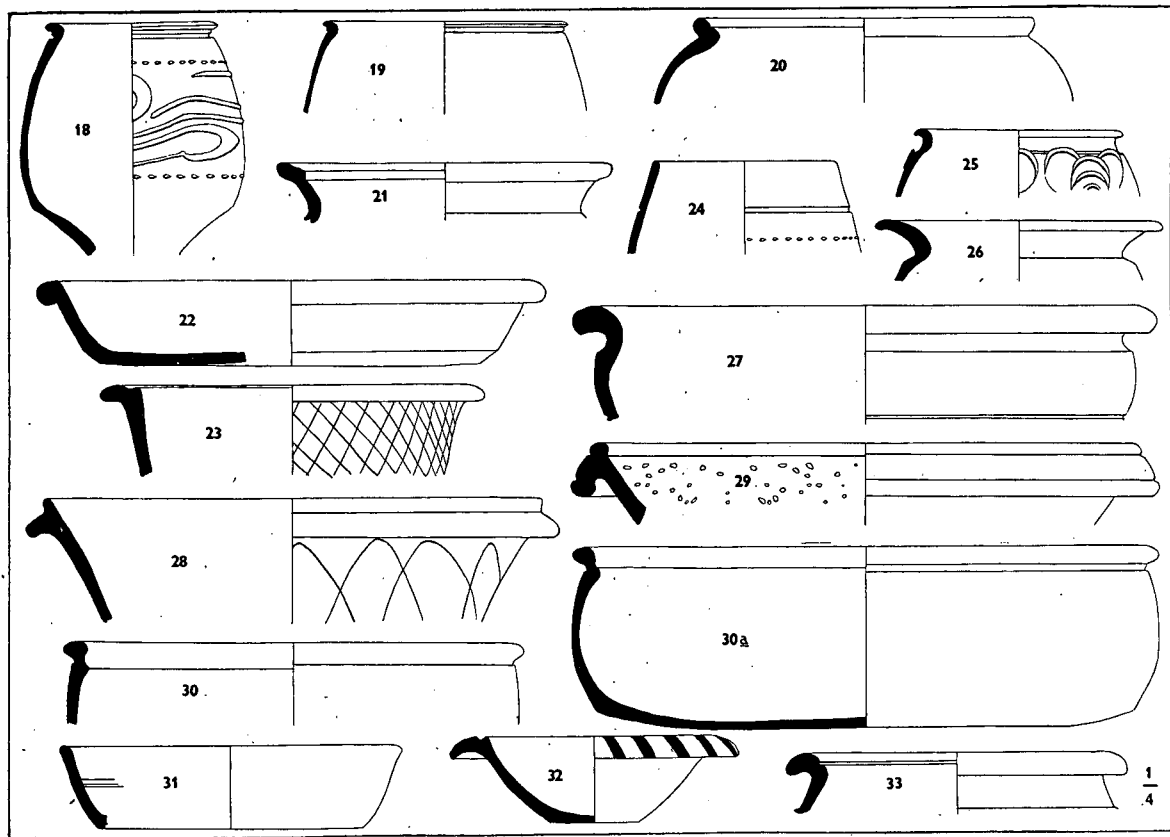


FIG. 6.

in fact dramatic confirmation that, for however short a space of time, they were simultaneously in existence. A layer of charcoal, shallow but compact, unmixed with burnt daub but containing large pieces from the posts, immediately overlies the post-holes of the shed, both in IA and in the western part of IB; it is absent from IC, where at this time the rampart was still upstanding. This layer of charcoal is in turn overlaid by a layer of clean orange sand. Nowhere else at Corbridge are there any traces of burning in the levels of the early-Antonine period; its buildings consistently reveal evidence either of clean and careful dismantling, or of modification to their structure, without any of the kind of damage that can be attributed to enemy action. The burning here is isolated. There can be no doubt of the story. The folk who placed a furnace in the 8-foot gap between the back of the rampart and a wooden shed reaped the reward of their carelessness when the shed was burnt down and completely destroyed. Its smouldering ruins were covered in sand, not soon enough to save it, but soon enough to prevent the fire from spreading to other buildings in the fort.

Several fragments of pottery were recovered from the layer of charcoal, covered by orange sand, in IA, including the following:

5. Fragment from a rough-cast beaker with a double-grooved rim, in orange fabric with a darker coating; not enough survives to reveal whether the vessel has been indented; vessels with this, the earlier, form of rim were still current in the Hadrianic-Antonine period; cf. *Birdsowald* 1929, no. 27, Hadrianic, and *Old Kilpatrick*, pl. XXII, no. 10, Antonine.

An illegible *denarius*, no. 6 below, was found in the layer of charcoal overlying the post-holes of the east wall of the shed, in IB.

Later Antonine.

The earlier mistake was not repeated, and neither shed nor oven was renewed after the fire, though this part of

the site was re-planned before the general destruction of A.D. 197.

An *as* of Faustina junior, dated to *circa* A.D. 161, no. 5 below, was found in the top of the burnt clay of the early-Antonine furnace; though now corroded, it was apparently in good condition when lost, and it thus provides a firm date for the overlying structure.

The precise date of the new building is almost certainly A.D. 163, when the planning and function of the fort as a whole was drastically changed. In the western half of IC a flagged floor (fig. 4*d*) lies immediately on top of the early-Antonine rampart, which was doubtless levelled to take it. The eastern edge of the floor comes as far forward as the original front of the Trajanic rampart $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet below, and is thus some 6 feet farther forward than the back of the early-Antonine rampart. This is evidence for the encroachment of buildings of the second Antonine period on the back of the east rampart of the first Antonine period. No convincing traces were recovered of the walls of the building with the flagged floor. In IC a gully runs north and south parallel with and about a foot to the east of the eastern edge of the flags, and penetrates the top surface of the reduced early-Antonine rampart; it is probably a drip gully outside the building. It is filled with burnt wattle and daub, which has a mottled red and black appearance in section; the nature of the superstructure of the building is therefore clear. The flags of the floor evidently run through the balk between IC and IB, and they reappear at the east side of IB. Here the floor does not lie immediately on top of the rampart, which had been reduced in height twenty-four years previously, but lies on a packing of mixed dirty grey soil which in turn seals the remains of the early-Antonine furnace. No convincing trace of either sleeper trench or drip gully was observable at the west edge of the flags, presumably because it had been formed in the loose dirty soil and also filled with it. The overall width of the room with the flagged floor is about 9 feet from east to west. There are no structural remains of

this period in IA; here the layer of burnt wattle and daub lies directly over the clean orange sand which overlies the charcoal from the burnt early-Antonine shed.

The pottery from the packing, in IB, between the early-Antonine furnace and the later Antonine floor included the two following vessels:

6. Fragment from a rough-cast beaker with a simpler and typologically later rim than no. 5, in orange fabric with a darker coating; *cf. Corbridge 1937*, fig. 7, no. 26, Antonine.

7. Fragment from a cooking-pot in grey fumed fabric; *cf. Corbridge 1911*, no. 46, Antonine.

The layer of burnt wattle and daub which overlies the scanty remains of the second Antonine period is more than a foot thick, and still thicker where it fills inequalities in the underlying surface in IC. Except where it is interrupted by later disturbance on the east side of IB, it runs continuously through all three sections. It thus provides a firm stratigraphic link between the sections which is confirmed by a large fragment from the same cooking-pot having been found in each of the three discontinuous parts of the deposit. At the west side of IC the deposit lies immediately on top of the flags of the second Antonine building, which are themselves blackened. The layer was particularly rich in pottery, mainly typical of the late second-century, though with some survivals; a description of a small but representative selection of the many vessels follows:

8. Neck of a large single-handled flagon in yellowish buff fabric.

9. Three large rim and shoulder fragments from a cooking-pot with a zig-zag line on the neck. The texture and burnished surface of all three fragments is the same but they differ markedly in colour. The fragment from IC is the normal colour of grey fumed ware; the fragment from IB is grey in fracture but has a reddish orange surface; the fragment from IA is bright reddish orange throughout and is spotted with translucent yellow glaze. After the vessel had been smashed and scattered some fragments were caught by intense heat while others escaped. While a wavy line or a zig-zag appears more frequently on Hadrianic-Antonine than on later cooking-pots,

it has previously been recorded on vessels from late second-century deposits; cf. *Corbridge 1937*, fig. 8, no. 8, mid- to late-Antonine, and *Corbridge 1947*, no. 16, late-Antonine.

10. A complete and undamaged beaker in light grey fabric, fumed and burnished; it is squatter than the average beaker. There were three unbroken vessels in the contemporary deposit excavated in 1947.

11. Two conjoined fragments from a flat-rimmed bowl in dark grey fumed fabric; this is a Hadrianic-Antonine type which must be regarded as a survival in its context; cf. *Birdsowald 1929*, no. 65, Hadrianic. Similar vessels have previously been noted in a late second-century context among more numerous examples of the same type as no. 12; cf. *Corbridge 1947*, no. 81, late-Antonine.

12. Fragment from a bowl with a down-turned rim, in grey fumed and burnished fabric burnt to a pinkish colour externally; this is a typical late second-century bowl; there are fragments of several other bowls or dishes of the same type in the deposit; cf. *Balmuily*, pl. XLVII, no. 12, Antonine, and *Corbridge 1947*, no. 80, late-Antonine.

13. Rim fragment from a mortarium in yellowish buff fabric with traces of an orange wash; the grit is medium sized, sparse and brown; this mortarium was almost certainly made by the local late second-century potter BELLICUS; cf. *Corbridge mortaria*, no. 5 iv, Bellicus, and *Corbridge 1947*, no. 52, late-Antonine.

14. Rim fragment from a mortarium identical in fabric and grit with no. 13, and made by the same potter; cf. *Corbridge 1911*, no. 102, Antonine.

15. Two conjoined fragments from a campanulate dish in smooth grey fabric, patchily reddened by fire on the outer surface. Although this is an unusual type, it has been met previously and can be dated with confidence to the latter part of the second century; cf. *Old Kilpatrick*, pl. XXII, no. 22, Antonine, *Turret 49b*, no. 14, either Hadrianic or mid- to late-Antonine, and no. 15a, below, mid- to late-Antonine.

15a. A more complete vessel of the same type as no. 15, found at Corbridge in 1953 in the stoke-hole of a hypocaust inserted into early-Antonine headquarters later in the Antonine period; this is the stoke-hole described on p. 222 which has obliterated part of the pre-Roman palisade trench. The vessel is in light blue-grey self-coloured fabric.

A fragment from a samian cup of form 33, with the Antonine central-Gaulish stamp VAGIRV, was found in the burnt

level in IA. The following fragments from two decorated bowls²⁰ (fig. 7) were found at the same level:

S. 1. Dr. 37, from IB, Bacchus in medallion; bead-row below ovolo; style of CINNAMUS.

S. 2. Two conjoined fragments of Dr. 37, from IC; scarf dancer O-360, with bar like decorative detail below which occurs frequently on vessels stamped by ALBUCIUS; Pudicita O-926 and Juppiter O-3 together in medallion, a combination which occurs on a bowl in the London Museum stamped by ALBUCIUS; Hercules O-779 and nude man O-663; bead-rows formed from alternate large and small beads.

A *denarius* of Antoninus Pius, dated to A.D. 153, no. 4 below, was found beneath the layer of burnt wattle and daub in IB, and a *sestertius* of Trajan, A.D. 98-117, no. 3 below, was found in the same layer, overlying the second Antonine floor in IC; both are survivals in their context.

A brooch (fig. 7) of Collingwood's sub-group R(ii) was found at the same level in IB; it is corroded but had been in good condition when lost. Typologically it belongs to the first half of the second century and is a survival in its context.

A well preserved wrought-iron axe head of common Roman type (fig. 7) was found in the corresponding deposit in III.

The deposit as a whole is thoroughly typical of the late second-century destruction level at Corbridge. There can be no doubt that the thick layer of burnt wattle and daub is derived from buildings fired when the Caledonii and Maeatae destroyed the fort in A.D. 197.

Severan.

None of the levels above the debris of the destruction of A.D. 197 runs uninterruptedly through the three sections. In IA a distinct layer of compact orange-coloured gravel immediately overlies the burnt wattle and daub. On the west it also overlies a double line of large boulders and roughly dressed stones inserted into the destruction deposit. They

²⁰ We are indebted to Mr. Eric Birley for the attributions and to Mr. Wilfred Dodds for the drawings.

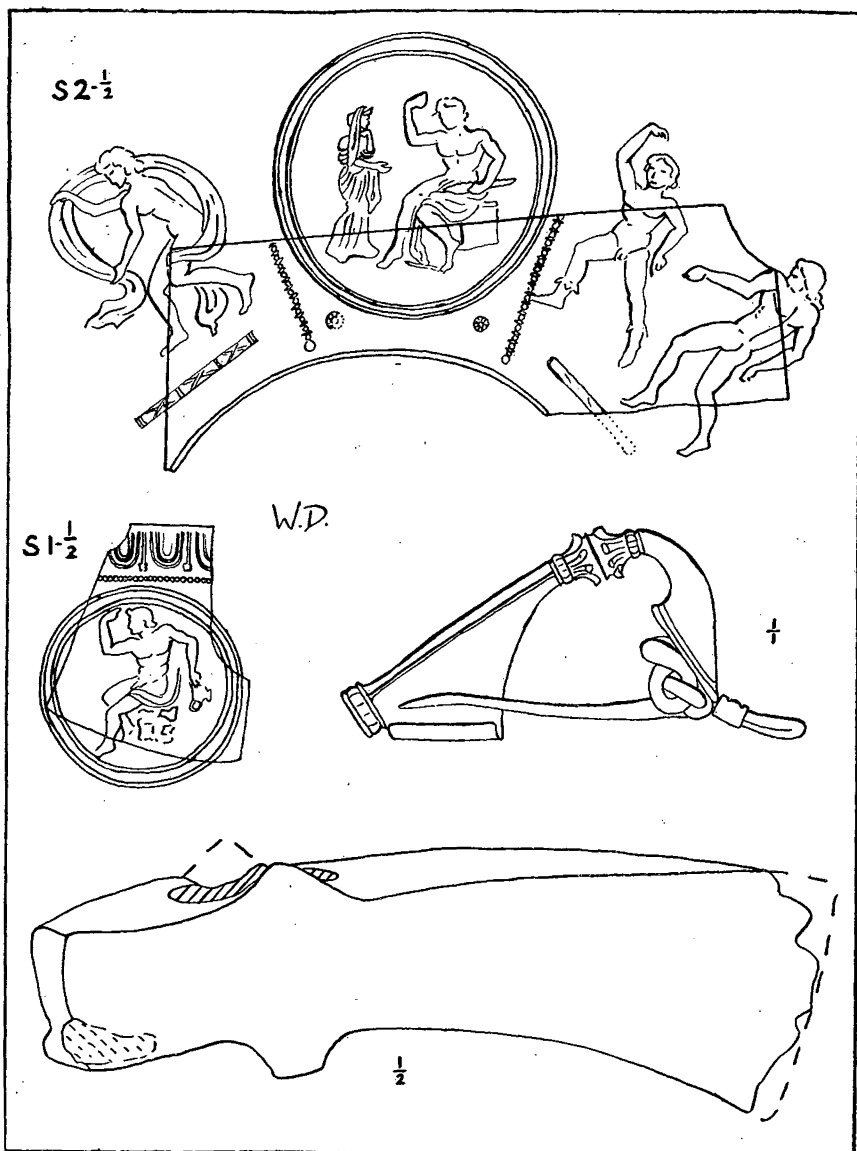


FIG. 7.

are apparently the foundation for a wall, some 2 feet thick, running north and south. The wall itself has vanished; it was certainly demolished in the Roman period, for the layer of orange-coloured gravel runs unbroken over its foundation.

Something of the plan (fig. 2) of the building of which the foundation once formed part has been recovered in trenches II, III and IV. IIB, immediately north of IA proved to be cut wholly in the filling of an earlier excavators' trench. Nothing was undisturbed until the Trajanic *intervallum*, doubtless mistaken for gravel subsoil by the earlier excavators, was reached at a depth of 6 feet. It is almost certainly this excavation that is recorded in the 1910 report as follows: "The made soil extended to a depth of about 6 feet below the floor, which was 15 to 20 inches below the present surface, and the lower stratum produced coins ranging from Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius; the coins found in the upper soil end with Gratian." If the third-century boulder foundation continued northwards and survived in 1910, it was then removed, for no trace of it now survives in IIB. At the north end of IIB, however, the end of a wall, 2 feet thick and faced with large roughly dressed blocks, can be seen below the level of the footings of the north wall of the western ante-room of the fourth-century house.

A 10-foot stretch of this wall was uncovered in IIA, to the north, but all the stratified layers, which would have provided a context for it, had earlier been removed by trenches dug along either side of it to trace its course. This trenching was presumably in 1910, for a length of 25 feet of the wall is marked on the 1910 plan of the site; the conventional shading is the same as that for the fourth-century house, but it is clear that the wall had been largely demolished before the house was built. A further section, IV, across the line of the wall, to the north of IIA, confirms its continuation, but here again earlier excavation has removed its context. Although the wall cannot now be closely dated, it is on the same line as the foundation in IA, and is probably not merely contemporary but part of the same building.

Immediately south of IA a trial hole, III, on the line of the wall, reveals that the foundation continues southwards; the stratification here is undisturbed, and is substantially identical with that in IA. The foundation, which consists in part of boulders and in part of roughly dressed stones, 2 feet or more in length, laid at right angles to the line of the foundation, runs under the inner face of the south wall of the western ante-chamber of the fourth-century house, but does not reappear on the outer face. It is highly probable, though not completely certain, that it made a right-angled turn eastwards and is now incorporated in the foundations of the fourth-century house, which, as already described, are of much the same character at this point.

The general line of the north-to-south wall, which is evidently the west wall of a substantial building, is very nearly the same as that of the west wall of temple IV. Temples IV and V²¹ occupy an awkward position, back to back, south of site XX, on the main east-to-west road, the successor to the *via principalis* of the second-century forts. These temples are known to be of early third-century date. There is evidence that the building on site XX is strictly contemporary, for not only was it the first on the site after the destruction of A.D. 197, but it was demolished and covered by the layer of orange gravel while early third-century pottery was still current. Pottery from the body of the gravel includes the fragmentary rim of a vessel of the same early third-century type as no. 22 below, one from a vessel closely similar to no. 20 below, many fragments from an *amphora*, several fragments of plain samian, and two flagon necks, which, while not closely paralleled, are similar to late second-century types, and therefore hardly later than the early third century; descriptions of the two pieces follow:

16. Fragments from the neck of a flagon in cream fabric with rust-coloured stains; it is generally similar to *Corbridge* 1947, no. 1, late-Antonine.

²¹ AA⁴ xxi, 143.

17. Fragments from the neck of a large single-handled flagon in pinkish buff fabric; it is generally similar to no. 8 above, late-Antonine.

As the earlier stone structure on site XX is thus contemporary with temples IV and V it is possible that it is itself a temple and part of the same uncomfortably overcrowded group. The rapid demolition of the temple on site XX was probably accompanied by the equally rapid demolition of temples IV and V whose remains were certainly covered by road metalling before the end of the Roman period.

There is no trace of any early third-century structure in IB or IC.

Later third-century.

After the demolition of the temple, the orange gravel already described was spread over the foundation of its west wall. The gravel layer runs uninterruptedly under the foundation of the east wall of the western ante-room of the fourth-century house, but it does not emerge in IB, where all third- and fourth-century stratification has been destroyed by later excavation. In IC a layer of grey gravel, 1 foot thick, overlies the late second-century layer of burnt wattle and daub. No finds were made in this gravel, and it differs in colour and thickness from that in IA. Nevertheless the two gravel layers are doubtless contemporary, and it would appear that for the greater part of the third century site XX was either an open space, or the site of the junction between the main east-to-west road and a side road running northwards. A number of flags overlie the gravel in IA; it is at least as likely that these represent the paving of an open space as the floor of a late third-century building, for which there is no other evidence.

An illegible *denarius*, no. 7 below, was found at the level of the flags in IA.

Both in IA and in IC the gravel layers are overlain by another thick layer of charcoal; in neither section does this contain so much burnt daub as the earlier destruction deposit.

The absence of this layer in IB is due solely to later disturbance, and it was evidently once continuous over the whole site. Like the earlier and similar layer this is rich in pottery, mainly typical of the third century. A description of a small but representative selection of the many vessels follows:

18. Fragments forming the greater part of a Castor beaker in white fabric with dark brown coating; the rim is typical of one of the two Castor beaker types which emerged in the later second century, but the scroll-like decoration based on plant forms is a third-century feature.

19. Fragment from the rim of a Castor beaker in white fabric with orange coating.

20. Rim and shoulder fragment from a lid-seated jar in grey slightly gritty fabric with traces of a surface treatment which has oxidized to an orange colour; *cf. Corbridge 1911*, no. 111, late-Antonine; Dr. K. A. Steer found an identical fragment in association with typical third-century pottery in the alley of a barrack building at Ebchester.

21. Fragment from the rim of a Dales-ware²² jar in black gritty fabric. This type is securely dated to the late third and early fourth century.

22. Two large fragments from a dish with a rounded rim in black fumed and burnished fabric; the piece is devoid of decoration, but retains a vestigial chamfer; *cf. Carrawburgh*, no. 20, early third-century.

From the same level in IC came a fragment of a decorated samian bowl of form 37, with the large stamp CINNA[—retrograde; this Antonine piece is a stray in this context.

While the proportion of early third-century survivals among the coarse pottery is high, the late third-century piece no. 21 indicates that the layer of burnt debris represents the destruction of Corbridge at the close of the third century.

The following fragment from a typical third-century vessel was found in the disturbed soil above the late second-century destruction in IB:—

23. Rim fragment from a bowl with a rudimentary flange, in black fumed and burnished fabric with cross-hatched decoration; *cf. Corbridge 1937*, fig. 7, no. 12, third-century.

Constantian.

The evidence for the early fourth-century date of the

²² *Antiq. Journ.* xxxi, 154.

visible dwelling house on site XX was obtained from the east wall of the western ante-chamber, at the east end of IA. Above its foundations this wall is built wholly of thin yellow sandstone slabs and shows no signs of work of more than one period. The foundations penetrate and are clearly later than the late third-century destruction deposit; the next layer above the destruction deposit runs up to and is structurally later than the coursing above the foundation. This layer, of clean tenacious yellow clay, seals nothing of later date than the late third century.

In IC a similar layer of clay overlies the late third-century destruction deposit; above it there is now nothing but a recent accumulation of topsoil. In the plan in the 1910 report the eastern ante-chamber is marked with the words "rough flag floor". The clay doubtless formed a foundation for the flags which are now absent.

No stratification survives at this height in IB. In IA, by contrast, fragments of the flagging which overlay the clay still survived when the recent excavation began, and above those again was yet another layer of burnt wattle and daub. On the east and west it had been cut into by the trenches of the earlier excavators, following the walls of the western ante-chamber of the house, but it survives to a height of several inches in the centre of the section. Like the earlier and similar layers this is rich in pottery, which ranges in date from the third century to the middle of the fourth; it contains no typical post-Pict-war piece. A description of a selection of the vessels follows:

24. Fragment from the rim of a plain-lipped Castor beaker, in white fabric with pinkish grey, slightly iridescent, coating; cf. *Lancaster*, no. 6, late third-century.

25. Rim and shoulder fragment from a Castor beaker with scale decoration, in similar fabric to no. 24; it is evident from the fracture that the vessel was indented; this is a third-century type.

26. Fragment from the out-splayed rim of a cooking-pot in black fumed fabric; cf. *Bewcastle*, no. 71, mid fourth-century, and *Birds-wald* 1929, no. 19, early to mid fourth-century.

27. Fragment from the rim and shoulder of a wide-mouthed jar

in light grey self-coloured fabric with a smoothed surface slightly darker in colour; *cf. Carrawburgh*, no. 44, early fourth-century.

28. Fragment from the rim and wall of a flanged bowl in black fumed and burnished fabric; there is a pattern of intersecting arcs on the outer surface; this vessel, a development of the type represented by no. 23 above, is of the latest type of fumed flanged bowl before its replacement by *Crambeck 1936*, type Ib; *cf. Carrawburgh*, no. 48, early fourth-century.

29. Fragment from a mortarium in whitish buff fabric with large brown grit; the fragment is smoked; *cf. Bewcastle*, no. 66, mid fourth-century, and *Carrawburgh*, no. 56, mid fourth-century.

30. Fragment from a lid-seated wide-mouthed jar, or bowl, in grey fabric. Although this is an unusual type something not unlike it has been met previously; it can be dated with confidence to the turn of the third and fourth centuries; *cf. Bewcastle*, no. 21, late third-century, and no. 30a, below, early fourth-century.

30a. A more complete vessel of the same type as no. 30, in pink fabric embodying a little white grit; found in 1953 a little above foundation level outside the north wall of the nave of the temple of Mithras at Rudchester, in association with an early fourth-century cooking-pot.²³

31. Fragments from the rim of a plain dish in smooth light grey fabric; *cf. Bewcastle*, no. 59, early fourth-century.

An *antoninianus* of Gallienus, A.D. 257-258, no 8 below, was found in the latest level.

Although the only coin is of third-century date, and several of the pottery fragments are of third- or early fourth-century date, there are sufficient mid-fourth-century pieces to make it reasonably certain that the deposit represents the destruction of Corbridge in the Picts' War of A.D. 367. Each of the four occasions on which the fort or town was fired by an enemy is thus represented in section IA; in addition to the record of a limited and accidental fire in the middle of the second century.

Theodosian.

No structures or levels later than the Picts' War survive on any part of site XX. A line of stones in IB overlay disturbed earth which had replaced the clay floor, recorded in 1910,

²³ *AA*⁴ xxxii, 216.

and doubtless then removed. The first of the two late fourth-century vessels described below was found below this line of stones in IB; the other was found in soil disturbed by trenching at the west end of IA:

32. Fragments making up the greater part of a segmental flanged bowl in yellowish white fabric; the flange is ornamented with dark red painted stripes; the vessel is blackened with smoke, and part of it is encrusted with rust from adjacent iron. As Dr. K. A. Steer points out in the Lanchester report, this type is probably a product of the Crambeck kilns; *cf. Crambeck 1927*, nos. 74-76, *Lanchester*, no. 48, and (from Corbridge) *Lanchester*, nos. 61-66. Similar vessels were in use in the Midlands late in the Roman period; *cf. Leicester*, fig. 22, nos. 22 and 23.

33. Small fragment from the rim of a cooking-pot of the Hunt-cliff type, in typical coarse black fabric, charged with white calcite grit; though the type possibly emerged before the Picts' War, it only became common after it; *cf. Crambeck 1936*, type 16.

Though no floors of the period now survive, the fragments of late fourth-century pottery, taken with the coins of Gratian recorded in 1910, are evidence of the re-occupation and continued use of the building on site XX after the Picts' War.

Summary.

Site XX lay within the confines of an Agricolan fort, which was destroyed by fire early in Trajan's reign. Part of the east rampart and of the main east gate of a Trajanic fort then occupied the site. Under Antoninus Pius this fort was rebuilt and extended on the east in such a way that the front of the Trajanic rampart was incorporated in the back of the new one. The space gained was occupied by a furnace and a shed, placed in such close proximity that the shed was accidentally burnt down. Under Marcus Aurelius a building encroached still farther on the rampart. Towards the end of the second century a second general conflagration destroyed this and adjacent buildings. Early in the third century, one of a closely packed group of temples occupied the site. The life of the temple was short, and its site became a road junction. Towards the end of the third century a third general

conflagration destroyed buildings in the vicinity. Early in the fourth century a substantial house of domestic character was built on the site. This was damaged in a fourth general conflagration at the time of the Picts' War. The site was re-occupied after the disaster, and its use continued for some time.

References to parallels used for coarse pottery.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Balmuildy</i> | S. N. Miller, <i>The Roman Fort at Balmuildy</i> , 1922. |
| <i>Bewcastle</i> | CW ² , xxxviii, 219. |
| <i>Birdoswald, 1929</i> | CW ² , xxx, 187. |
| <i>Birdoswald, 1932</i> | CW ² , 1, 54. |
| <i>Carrawburgh</i> | AA ⁴ , xxix, 62. |
| <i>Corbridge, 1911</i> | AA ³ , viii, 168. |
| <i>Corbridge, 1937</i> | AA ⁴ , xv, 266. |
| <i>Corbridge, 1947</i> | AA ⁴ , xxviii, 177. |
| <i>Corbridge, 1951</i> | AA ⁴ , xxxi, 222. |
| <i>Corbridge mortaria</i> | AA ⁴ , xxvi, 172. |
| <i>Crambeck, 1927</i> | P. Corder, <i>The Roman Pottery at Crambeck, Castle Howard</i> , 1928. |
| <i>Crambeck, 1936</i> | Antiq. Journ., xvii, 392. |
| <i>Lancaster</i> | Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. and Cheshire, cv, 13 |
| <i>Lanchester</i> | Trans. A. and A. Soc. Durham and Northd., ix, 112. |
| <i>Leicester</i> | K. M. Kenyon, <i>Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester</i> , 1948. |
| <i>Newstead, 1947</i> | PSAS, lxxxiv, 31. |
| <i>Old Kilpatrick</i> | S. N. Miller, <i>The Roman Fort at Old Kilpatrick</i> , 1928. |
| <i>Turret 7b</i> | AA ⁴ , vii, 150. |
| <i>Turret 49b</i> | CW ² , xiii, 346. |

3. COINS FROM SITE XX. By J. H. Corbitt.

The coins from site XX do not warrant particular comment so far as new types are concerned. Most were in a very corroded condition which prevented precise classification; the termination of obverse legends containing tribunician or consular power is often illegible.

Coin no. 2 is recognized only by the unmistakable bust of

Trajan, and although nos. 6 and 7 are undoubtedly *denarii* it is impossible to say of which Emperor or Empress.

1. Trajan. *Dupondius*.

Obv. illegible—radiate bust r.

Rev. SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI—Emperor on horseback. A.D. 103-111.

2. Trajan. *Dupondius*. illegible. Radiate bust r.

3. Trajan. *Sestertius*.

Obv. () NO AVG GER ()—bust r.

Rev. illegible.

4. Antoninus Pius. *Denarius*. M&S 222. A.D. 152-153.

5. Faustina II. *As*.

Obv. FAVSTINA AVG ANTONINI PII F—
bust r.

Rev. Illegible. circa A.D. 161.

- 6 and 7. Silver *denarii*. both illegible.

8. Gallienus. *Antoninianus*. M&S 175. A.D. 257-258.



CORBRIDGE: SITE XX, TRENCH 1b, ANTONINE I. POST-HOLES AND FURNACE.



CORBRIDGE: SITE XI, LOOKING WEST; PRE-ROMAN, FLAVIAN AND TRAJANIC STRUCTURES.



CORBRIDGE: SITE XX, TRENCH 1c, CORDUROY OF TRAJANIC RAMPART.

