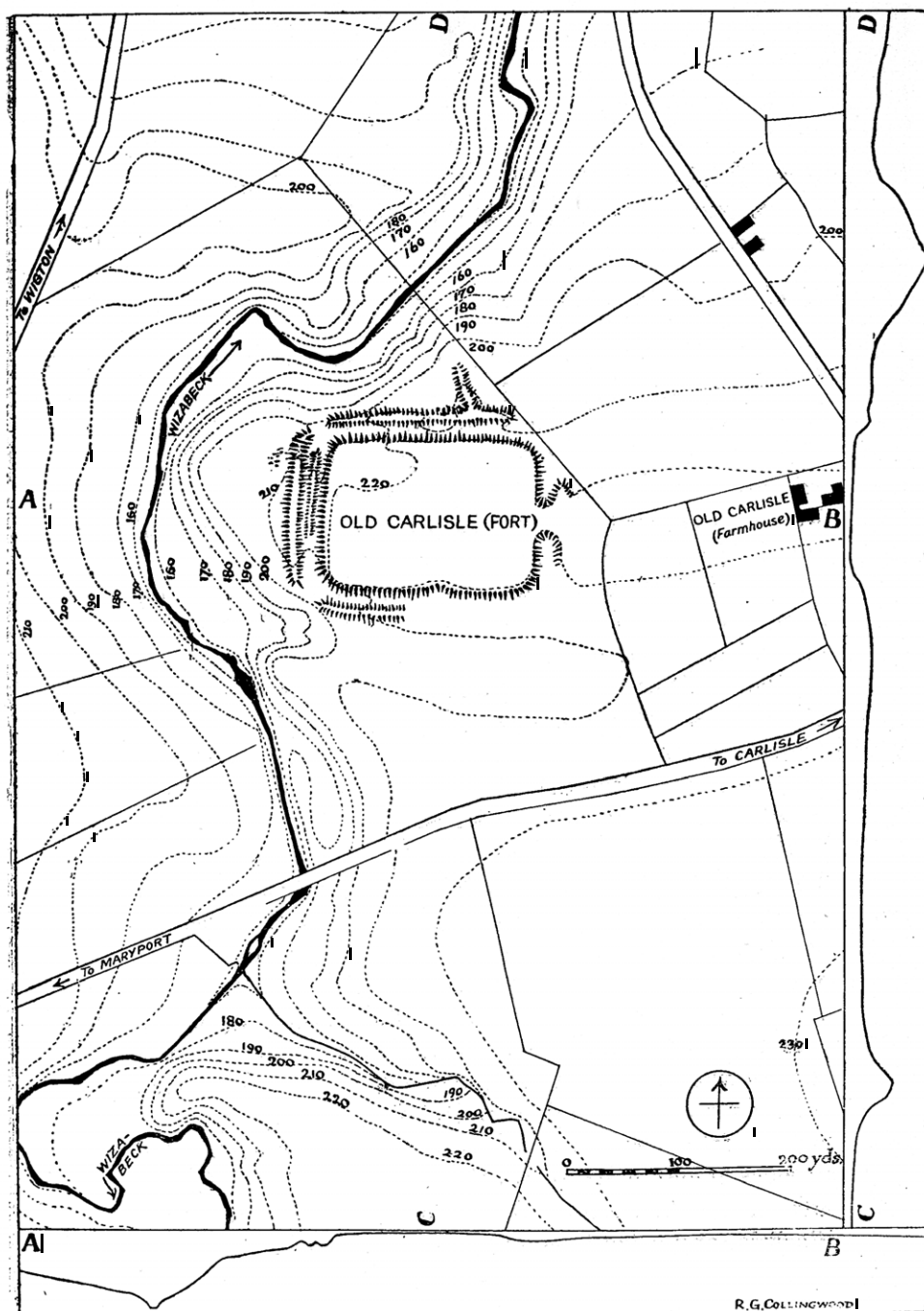


ART. XIII.—*Old Carlisle*. By the late Professor F. HAVERFIELD, LL.D., D.Litt., F.S.A., F.B.A., President.

Read at the site, August 19th, 1919.

OLD Carlisle, a mile south of Wigton, some 10 miles south-west of Carlisle, and 11 south of Bowness-on-Solway, is close behind the left flank of the Roman Wall. Strategically, this flank is ill-protected. Much has been written about the weakness of the line of the Roman wall just east of Carlisle, between Hare Hill (Lanercost) and Stanwix, but all its defects are trifling compared with the defects of the western extremity near Bowness. For this end of Hadrian's wall, like both ends of the northern wall of Pius, is faced by a range of hostile territory, which stretches beyond it and allows it to be easily outflanked. In this respect there is a marked contrast between the Cumberland end of the wall and the eastern end at Wallsend-on-Tyne near Newcastle. There the frontier works end near the coast, but it is a straight line of coast, which offers no opportunity for flank attacks. Here (in the west) the Scottish coast continues far beyond the Wall and almost encircles it; on any day when visibility was low, enemies from Gallo-way could slip across the water, land in West Cumberland, and execute a raid south of the wall, returning maybe, like the medieval moss-trooper, with a booty of cattle and of women. Such raids too, might easily have had a larger and more serious object than merely beasts or women-folk. We can conceive that two concerted attacks might have been attempted together, a frontal attack, on the shore of Solway and the Wall, near Port Carlisle, and a flank assault on the coast of Bowness at,



say, Moricambe Bay, just 7 miles from where we stand. The Solway is not, even at Bowness, so deep or broad a waterway as to prevent a largish force from creeping across in misty weather. To prevent such a mischance, the Romans adopted two measures :—

(1) In the first place they took a step with which we are not now especially concerned; they planted a series of forts along the coast at suitable landing-places, and at intervals of 8 or 10 miles, and thus provided by the garrisons of these forts soldiers enough to confront any attempted landing of barbarians, and to repel surprises. Such forts existed at Whitrigg (near Kirkbride) on Moricambe Bay, at New Mawbray (Beckfoot) * $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Maryport, at Maryport and at Moresby Church 10 miles further south. Hence the line stretched on past a more dubious site at Egremont to the unquestionable remains of a Roman *castellum* and its ruined "bath building" at Walls Castle, overlooking the landlocked harbour of Ravenglass, where Eskdale comes to the coast.†

(2) Secondly, behind the coast an internal network of roads and *castella* was arranged, sufficient to enable Roman troops to concentrate rapidly on any threatened points; sufficient also to provide fortified posts ready to hand, wherever danger was naturally to be feared. In this system of internal defence, the fort at Old Carlisle played an important part. The backbone of the whole scheme may be said to be a Roman road which ran south-west from Carlisle, past Old Carlisle to Papcastle (24 miles), a Roman fort on the Derwent near Cockermouth. This road formed the chord of an arc, or curving line of forts, which fringed the coast from Carlisle to Maryport, and Papcastle was connected with Maryport by a short further "stretch" of Roman road which can be clearly

* Excavated 1879-80: see these *Transactions*, o.s., iv., 318; v., 136-148.

† Excavated 1881, *Transactions*, o.s., vi., 216.

traced along modern highways. It would seem that in view of any Caledonian raid, which might involve the destruction of bridges, etc., this road was thrown as far back from the sea and from the frontier as could conveniently be arranged, as far, indeed, as the furthest outlier of Skiddaw. There was quite possibly also a coast road connecting fort with fort, but it is not clear to-day; the traces of Roman structural remains in the Cumberland lowlands are, indeed, seldom very clearly preserved, and, though our former President, Chancellor Ferguson, in his "Topographical Index to Cumberland and Westmorland" (Soc. Antiq. Lond., 1893) boldly marks a road as leading from Maryport to Mawbray, and thence through Kirkbride to Bowness, I doubt, after going over the ground, if the evidence for these roads is sufficient.

On the chief and certain road—from Carlisle to Papcastle—there is only one fort, that of Old Carlisle in which we now stand. This is certainly among the most important Roman forts in north-western Cumberland. One may, indeed, doubt whether roads which Chancellor Ferguson marked as diverging from it to the north-east, north and north-west, can all be proved; if proved, they would bear strong testimony to its importance. But in any case, there can be little doubt of that importance. The site has been known as Roman for over 300 years, ever since William Camden, the father of Romano-British topography, visited it about 1580. Camden was a Cumberland man connected on his mother's side with the Curwens of Workington; we have his representative to this day on our Council. He—that is Camden—in his edition of 1600, attests that he had visited the place and found the "corpse" of an ancient city, which elicited from him the moral reflexion "that nothing in this world is exempt from the lot of mortality." He also copied there several Roman inscriptions.

During the next (17th) century, we hear little of Old Carlisle, but with the quieter days of the eighteenth century, archaeology began again to flourish, and about 1710-25, Old Carlisle was visited by such noteworthy writers as John Horsley, who probably came first, and William Stukeley. Both speak of abundant remains. Stukeley, a man who enthused easily, calls it "the fairest show of foundations I ever yet saw; one might almost draw the entire plan of it and of every dwelling" (*Iter Boreale*, p. 54). Horsley, too, warms; "the ruins here are very grand and conspicuous" (*Britannia Romana*, p. 112). Both writers, however, give provokingly few details, and since their time hardly any one has troubled to go further than they did. Indeed, without excavation little more can be determined. However, inscriptions have been recorded in some plenty; a dozen are now in Tullie House. I may leave till this paper is printed any criticism of these inscriptions in detail. For the moment it will suffice to note that in the main they are military, and their distinguishing feature is that they mention a cavalry regiment which is otherwise known, but which seems to have some special connexion with this fort—the *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata*. The full name of this regiment seems to have been *Ala Augusta Gallorum Petriana bis torquata miliaria civium Romanorum*, though the full version occurs on no British inscriptions as yet known. This title indicates that the regiment had seen much service and had earned distinction, for which it was granted such epithets as *civium Romanorum*, just as French towns in the recent war have received the Cross of the Legion of Honour. I do not imagine that when a cohort or Ala carried the appendix *c.r.*, denoting "Roman citizens," we have therefore to conclude that each soldier in the regiment was a Roman citizen.*

Much is known of the history of this regiment. It

* See G. L. Cheesman, *Auxilia of the Roman army* (Oxford, 1914), p. 46.

was formed, most probably in the reign of Tiberius, by one T. Pomponius Petra, hence the epithet *Petriana*. Some years later we find it stationed on the Rhine (A.D. 56), but after the civil wars of 68-9 it was moved to our island. In Britain we have precise evidence of its presence in A.D. 98. It occurs also on the famous relief of a cavalry soldier at Hexham Abbey.*

The fact that the garrison of Old Carlisle was an *Ala Petriana* may help us to find the fort a name, and I venture to suggest that that name should be *Petriana* or *Petrianæ*. That is a name which used once to be assigned to the fort at Castlesteads on the wall of Hadrian near Brampton. But as I have several times pointed out in these *Transactions*, the evidence for this view is inadequate. The Ravenna list of Roman forts in north England names a *Petrianis* in such a connexion as to suggest that it was either the next fort to Birdoswald along the Wall, or else somewhere near Papcastle and Maryport, and it states that an *Ala* was in garrison there. Generally it has been supposed that this *Petriana* or *Petrianæ* (the exact form of the nominative is dubious) was Castlesteads, and that the *Ala Petriana Augusta* lay there in garrison. This, however, is hardly credible. Not only have the inscriptions of Castlesteads yielded no reference to any such *Ala*, but Castlesteads itself, one of the smallest, if not the smallest, of the forts along the Wall, is too small for a garrison of a thousand horsemen (*Ala Miliaria*).†

* Bruce, *Arch. Ael.*, ix., 167 and Handbook p. 79; F. Haverfield and H. S. Jones, *Journal of Roman Studies* ii. 126 foll. Bruce assigned the stone to the second century, perhaps following a suggestion of Emil Hübner. From internal reasons, I have been inclined to propose an earlier date, such as A.D. 70-80.

† Castlesteads is reckoned at two and three-quarters acres, which is too small for a full *ala miliaria* (1,000 men with horses) so far as can be judged by Roman practice. Stanwix, sometimes reckoned at two and a half acres, as by MacLauchlan, is hardly certain enough to argue from. In general, two and three-quarters acres would seem to have been regarded as inadequate for an infantry cohort of 500 men, much more for a cavalry *ala* of 1,000. Gellygaer in S. Wales, which has been carefully excavated, is declared by its buildings to have accommodated a cohort *quingenaria* (500 men) in three

I am not even sure that Old Carlisle is quite large enough to have housed this regiment. Stukeley reckoned its length and breadth at 400 by 500 feet, and it appears from Mr. R. G. Collingwood's plan that Stukeley was in this place more correct than he often was. This would give Old Carlisle an area of a little over $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres, which is perhaps sufficient, but barely sufficient. It must, however, be remembered, that it is not easy to calculate precisely the area of a Roman fort from the grass-grown mounds which represent its ramparts. When we can (as at Chesters) measure from the face of a stone wall which the spade has laid bare, precision is attainable, but the limits of an earthen rampart are always a little uncertain. It is therefore possible that the area ascribed to Old Carlisle, a trifle over $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres may be a little too much or indeed a little less than the truth. Any theory as to the identity of the fort and its garrison must therefore be left to the future. In the words of a certain statesman, we must wait and see.

Indeed, I can imagine few sites in West Cumberland which would better deserve excavation than this site of Old Carlisle. It stands free from all later buildings or structures, and though no doubt parts of it have been robbed to provide stone for adjacent farmhouses and field dykes, the fields hereabouts are large, the neighbouring farmhouses are not very numerous, and the damage is not likely to have been great. One might, in Old Carlisle, obtain what has not yet been obtained in Britain, the complete plan of a fort occupied by a Roman cavalry regiment.* I will confess that some years ago I

and a half acres. The accommodation needed for the *ala Augusta mil(iaria)* must have been nearly double. The fort at Chesters, which accommodated an *ala miliaria*, had an internal area of five and a quarter acres, and if the *Ala Augusta Petriana* occupied Castlesteads, we should expect the area of that fort to be also over five acres, instead of being less than three.

* Newstead should be excepted from this general statement, but it was not altogether a normal fort. Chesters, which might have told us much that we could learn from Old Carlisle, has unfortunately not been excavated in full.

had hope that the site of Old Carlisle might have been purchased and excavated by a wealthy Cumbrian, but that hope did not materialize, and the recent war, which has in so many ways wrought untold harm to archaeological study, has put the excavation of such a site beyond the means of an ordinary subscription list. Before the war, it is possible that a fort of this character might have been cleared out for £500. To-day, when, as I am told, is the case on a site in Yorkshire, the labourers have to be paid wages which exceed those of a fairly well paid University lecturer, I imagine that they who would clear Old Carlisle had better see their way to a full £1,000 before they begin.

Therefore, I will not urge on any one present the undertaking of any such scheme. But I am clear that if good fortune should ever make it possible, abundant reward would follow. The left flank of the Wall needs, indeed, a good deal of examination, preferably with the spade. The great *castellum* on the hill above Maryport would probably repay uncovering, no less than the fort in which we now stand. The remains preserved in the Portico and Gardens of Netherhall include much that is of great interest, and that justifies all the labour which Mr. Bailey of Maryport has lately spent in arranging and cataloguing.*

But in the new World and the new Europe that are before us, much that used to be possible must be surrendered as beyond attainment, and we can only do what we can individually, not altogether by spending money, but by solid work, to minimise the evil, which one of the learned nations of the world has in our time brought upon learning.

* These *Transactions*, N.S., xv. (1915), 135-172.