

## CONCLUSION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN DERBY

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The present state of information on Roman Derby from excavation and observations have been summarised for ease of reference in a table (Table 8) and full bibliographical reference is given there.

### LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 1 *c* AD 80-120

Study of the samian pottery from the south and south-east defences (J. Bird and C. Marsh, unpublished), the West Gate, and the North-West Sector, indicates occupation beginning in the 80's. The area occupied was probably larger than that enclosed by Stukeley's defences, since occupation material and slots and post-holes for timber buildings have been found outside and beneath the east, west and south defences. Parallel timber slots, apparently forming a granary type of building were observed by Brassington (1982a, Site M) on the presumed line of the northern rampart, but there was no opportunity for excavation. Certainly occupation had begun at this date in the North-West Sector (Fig.15). Here, in the first opportunity for more extensive work inside Stukeley's defences, timber buildings, and possibly stockade features succeeded each other between *c* 80 and 120 AD. No defences of this date have yet been identified, so the presence of a fort cannot be proved, but the high quality of the material culture, the types of building construction, the rapid replacement of buildings and the Romanised character of this early occupation all indicate a military presence. The apparent irregularity of plan in the north-east interior, the presence of an apsidal building, and of sub-compounds suggest that the first military installation lacked the formal plan familiar from later forts, or that this area was outside the main defences, possibly within an annexe.

At this time too, the Racecourse kilns came into production (Brassington, 1968, 1980) with a fully Romanised repertoire, and no native elements in their style. The roadside mausolea were built between 100-120, and the jug burial deposited (Fig.98). These fully Romanised rites of burial suggest a sophisticated and prosperous community. Roadside tombs are known in Britain from both military and civilian contexts, e.g. High Rochester (Bosanquet, 1934) and Winchester (Clarke, 1976). But even major towns with extensive cemetery excavations such as St Albans or Colchester have not produced plans so Italian in style. Either these were burials of officers, or Derby was much more important a settlement than has been thought. The pottery industry on the Racecourse may also have been intended for a military market. This burst of activity in the late first and early second centuries on both the Little Chester and Racecourse sites, coinciding with the dismantling of the early fort at Strutt's Park suggests a single impetus, perhaps the stationing of a new (and possibly very large unit) in a new fort at Little Chester, either in connection with the supply routes for military campaigns in the north, or linked to the lead and silver workings in the Peak district at *Lutudarum*.

### LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 2: HADRIANIC

A slackening of occupation in the Hadrianic period has been suggested by the reduction in the relative quantity of samian pottery recovered in the excavations of the south and east defences by Webster and Todd respectively. The same reduction occurred in the samian pottery from the south-east corner excavations and the north-west interior but

the quantity of mortaria reached a peak in the Hadrianic period. The diminution in samian wares therefore probably does not reflect a lessening of occupation at Little Chester, but is related rather to the samian supply to Britain (Marsh, 1981, 216). The areas available to Webster and Todd were too small to allow a comparison of feature types before and after the Hadrianic period, and the results of the 1971-2 excavations of the south-east defences should be most helpful on this problem. In the North-West

LITTLE CHESTER FORT

OTHER

DERBY RACE COURSE

Cemetery

Strut's Park	South 1960	South-east Defences 1971/2	Eastern Defences 1966	West Gate 1967	Interior North-West 1979-80	Miscellaneous East Side	"Vicus"	Kilns	Industrial Site	Cemetery
50 Neronian Fort									?Iron Age	?Iron Age? + some Roman occupation close to road.
80 Demolition v. sparse civilian? occupation ? Coin hoard	Phase 1 & 2 timber buildings	occupation outside & between later defences timber buildings ?	? timber buildings + occupation outside later defences ?	Occupation + timber buildings	Phase 1 annex? Timber buildings shrine? Animal compound Phase 2 sparse occupation civil? fort annex? pits Phase 3 — Fort interior; gravel deposits granary-type buildings; timber bldgs. wells; pits. Phase 4 gravel deposit; end of military control? Industrial phase End of military control? Humic dump	Platform for raised building floor replaced & burnt layer under Clay Rampart Site A	Vicarge Garden E-W road	Kilns 1 2, 3, 4, 7	Road Wells	Roadside mausolea and jug burial & cremations outside wall
120										
150	Phase 3 4 5 timber buildings	Burnt bldgs. clay rampart ?with 2 ditches		stone gate				Kiln 6 Kiln 8 Kiln 5	industrial activities Wells	
200		Replacement ditch	Ditch							"military burials" Burials in wall area wall construction
225				gravel layers ? stone wall ?		gravel layers	Road			Crem-at-ions
280	? Stone wall	Stone well + replacement ditch			Humic dump Site C		Road 'Colonnaded' building 'outside S.E. 'corner(2)			
325	? ? ?				Phase 5 Stone sill building. Phase 6 Pits	Stone platform. Site C	'Extramural 'occupation SE Hypocaust? building Parker's piece(3)			Inhumations
350										
500-600		Anglian burials								latest burials
(Brassington, 1970 & Dool below p. )	(Webster, 1961)	(Sparey-Green, unpublished & Wilson et al 1973: 285)	(Todd, 1967)	(Annable, below p. )	(Wheeler, below p. )	(Brassington, 1982 a)	(1) Dool 1972 (2) Sparey-Green unpublished (3) Brassington,	(Brassington, 1968)	(Dool, below p. )	

Table 24 Chronology of Roman Derby.

Sector, the crowded pre-Hadrianic pattern of buildings gave way to an apparently open area with only a handful of features, on a slightly different alignment to the phase 1 buildings (Fig.18). A contrasting picture however is presented by Brassington's site A (1982a, 74 and pers. comm.). In a cutting through the eastern defences north of the East Gate a platform of several layers of rubble, with provision for drainage, was built up, containing Trajanic pottery including mortarium of Albinus of c 100 AD, on top of this raised area a floor, larger than 1.5m by 6m, and composed of small pebbles and stones well compacted, but without mortar, had been laid. This was subsequently replaced by a second similar floor with a partition bedded into it. The partition had been removed and in the filling of its bedding slot was pottery dating to after 125. The floor had been in use for some considerable time before it was covered with a layer of ash on which the clay rampart was laid. On the tail of the rampart on the western side, a large quantity of rubbish had been dumped, including *opus signinum*, charcoal and burnt material and large quantities of pottery, some 250-300 sherds within a 1.5m length of rampart. Of this pottery approximately one third each was figured samian, plain samian, and coarse wares. The samian dated to the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods and was considered by the excavator to have come from the immediately preceding occupation. Similar samian was found immediately beneath Stukeley's stone wall, but the presence of sherds which joined material from the rampart showed that this material was derived from the rampart when the wall was inserted. The structure was clearly an important and large building over which considerable care had been taken. The excavator suggested that it might be a *mansio*, (Brassington, 1982c, 9, 11-12), but if the presence of a Trajanic fort is accepted it might be part of the commandant's house. The pottery from this rampart section is clearly of crucial significance to the understanding of the Hadrianic period at Little Chester.

The end of production of the earlier pottery kilns on the Racecourse which is dated to c 110-120 (Brassington, 1971, 44) might be related to a reduction or removal of the garrison, though kiln groups 5 and 8 remained in production until the mid-second century. Simple cremation burial continued in the Racecourse cemetery (Fig.108). Elsewhere, in the Vicarage Garden site, Stukeley's "gravel'd road", north of the fort was in use by this time, and traces of timber buildings were found alongside its eastern extension.

### LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 3 MID- TO LATE-SECOND CENTURY

With the Antonine period came a completely new fort, with a clay rampart, fronted by timber on the line of Stukeley's wall. Two defensive ditches, one immediately in front of the rampart, and a second some 30m beyond it were identified outside the south-east corner. The rampart has been identified there, and at several points on the eastern side (Brassington, 1982a). Immediately beneath it on the south-east corner and on Brassington site A on the eastern defences, was a layer of burning, but this has not been identified on the western side of the fort, either beneath the defences or in the interior. It might relate to a deliberate and quick clearance of timber buildings in preparation for the construction of the rampart. Inside the North-West Sector, a levelling deposit of gravel was laid, and on it timber buildings were constructed inside the new defences (Fig.20). One building rested on deep parallel trenches, like a granary, other(s) on sleeper beams with post-holes. Large pits and wells were dug in this area. The samian pottery from Webster's, Todd's, Sparey-Green's and the author's excavations, occurred in increased quantities in the Antonine period. In the cemetery the three apparently military inhumations whose accompanying grave goods, suggested soldiers' graves, dated to the early Antonine period (Fig.105 nos.218, 220, 221). The earliest burials in the northern area and the construction of the walled cemetery took place at this time

(Fig.108). Within the walled cemetery men, women and children were buried and there was nothing to link it with exclusively military use. By the mid-second-century pottery production on the Racecourse had come to an end and Derbyshire ware was becoming the predominant coarse pottery type. The Racecourse remained an industrial area with hearths and fairly flimsy timber buildings some of which may have had stone sills (Fig.61) until the mid-fourth century. The northern ditch of the road from Little Chester to Sawley was filled in and built over in the Antonine period. Our skimpy knowledge of events in mid-second century Britain makes it uncertain whether the refortification of Little Chester was in response to a local problem, or was part of a wider redeployment linked to campaigns in the north of Britain.

#### **LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 4: LATE-SECOND TO LATE-THIRD CENTURY**

In about 200, the two fort ditches were replaced by a new single ditch examined in the south-east corner. Above the demolished timber buildings thick levelling deposits of gravel were laid. Similar gravel layers have been found on the West Gate site, and on Brassington's site C in the north-east sector. In the north west a series of hearths and kilns indicated industrial activity, served by a coalpile and new wells (Fig.25). Whether this indicates an end of military control of Little Chester or a specialised working area within the fort is unclear. Again the evidence from the 1971-2 excavations in the south-east will be important for this period. The industrial activity was short lived, and after the first quarter of the third century a thick dump of dark soil was laid over the whole area uncovered by the 1979-80 excavations. Similar material was recorded by Brassington in his site C in the north-eastern sector. The soil had the appearance of a humic, perhaps a cultivation deposit, and even if the industrial phase was within a military establishment it may be doubted whether Little Chester was held as a fort after 225. There is little evidence of occupation from the interior of the fort from this time until the late third century. On the Racecourse the cemetery remained in use with increasing inhumation at the expense of cremation rites, and industrial activity continued to the west.

#### **LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 5: LATE-THIRD TO EARLY-FOURTH CENTURY**

In the late 3rd century a stone wall (later recorded by Stukeley), some 3m thick was built into the front of the Antonine rampart and a new ditch was dug. The wall has been identified by excavation on the south, east and west sides, but its date was uncertain before the 1971-2 excavations. It was known to be later than the second century, but suspected of being earlier than the fourth. Whether this defence was intended for civilians is uncertain; certainly the interior in the North-West Sector has no appearance of military occupation. There a timber building of some sophistication rested on a stone sill (Fig.29), and a colonnaded building of similar construction was found at the junction of Rykniel Street with the road through the fort (presumably the *via principalis*). In the north-east sector of the interior a stone platform may indicate further rebuilding on Brassington's site C. Extra mural occupation continued outside the south-east corner of the defences to the mid-fourth century. The refortification at this time may be connected with the Carausian adventure.

#### **LITTLE CHESTER PHASE 6: FIRST HALF FOURTH CENTURY**

The stone sill building of the North-West Sector was demolished in the earlier fourth century. Evidence of occupation until the mid-fourth century consisted of rubbish pits and stone tumble (Fig.32) with fourth century pottery including Oxford wares. The coin list suggested there was no occupation beyond 330 AD. Similar material was found on Brassington's site C in the north east sector. Outside the fort, a building with hypocaust, tiled roof and painted plaster, which was excavated at Parker's Piece in

1924-6 (Brassington, 1982b), was probably constructed in the earlier fourth century. A coin of Gratian found on its floor, may date its demolition. On the Racecourse both burials and industrial activity apparently came to an end in the mid-fourth century. No other evidence for later Romano-British activity on the site has been found, perhaps because the late Roman levels were the most vulnerable to later damage and perhaps because of the difficulty of dating material closely in this period. A number of Anglian burials were dug into the south-east defences in the sixth century. The detailed evidence from the 1971-2 excavations should make a useful contribution to our understanding of this period. No evidence of post-Roman activity has been found elsewhere at Little Chester, or in modern Derby. The date of, and reason for the change of site remains puzzling. For the history of Little Chester itself the most useful place for future excavation would probably be on the central range of the fort, should any further rebuilding in that area take place. This might be expected to solve the problem of when the fort passed out of commission. The other outstanding problems seem to be the location of the defences of the suggested first fort, and the position of Dark Age Derby.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Having worked on the problems of Roman Derby intermittently since 1969, the pleasant task of acknowledging the help of many scholars, enthusiasts, landowners, workmen, students and supporters could equal the report in size. For many individual contributions which must inevitably go unrecorded, I express my thanks here. I am especially grateful to Derby City Council who own both Derby Playing Fields and the Racecourse, who gave permission for all the excavations reported here, and assisted both in kind and in cash. The greatest part of the funding was from the Department of the Environment and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, England although the cemetery excavation was mainly financed by Derby City Council and Derbyshire Archaeological Society, with contributions to both fort and cemetery sites from Derbyshire County Council. The staff of both the Parks Department and the Museum were unfailingly patient and helpful. I want to thank especially my erstwhile colleagues in the Trent Valley Archaeological Research Committee, most of whom were involved in Roman Derby, often unexpectedly. In particular, Colm O'Brien, Pat Losco-Bradley, Richard Sheppard and Ruth Birss all shared in the direction of excavations. Richard Sheppard prepared the drawings for these reports (unless otherwise acknowledged) and Ruth Birss not only prepared pottery reports but co-ordinated the post-excavation study and prepared the archive, the appendices and the typescript. Peter Brady in the field and Betty Cockayne and Joyce Wade in the finds shed worked on all the excavation sites with their usual enthusiasm and cheerfulness. Students and workers, paid and unpaid, worked through long and arduous winter seasons. I am grateful to all the specialists who have reported on various aspects of the finds (listed on p.14), many of whom visited the site and spent time discussing its implications. I am especially indebted to Mary Harman for discussion of the cemetery and information about similar material.

Many scholars have given me the benefit of their advice and unpublished work. Josephine Dool and Christopher Sparey-Green have both contributed much to my understanding of Roman Derby, while Malcolm Todd and Andrew Poulter have patiently answered my questions. My greatest debt of scholarship is to Maurice Brassington with whom I have argued and discussed the problems of Roman Derby since 1969. He has kindly allowed me to quote his unpublished material, and while I have not accepted all his views, he has kept the limitations of our present state of knowledge firmly before my eyes.

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