IX.—CORSTOPITUM AS A CIVIL CENTRE.

By G. S. Keeney.

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During the years 1906 to 1914, extensive excavations took place at the Roman site near Corbridge,[1] and it is a misfortune that the work was cut short by the outbreak of the Great War. Attention has again been directed to Corstopitum through its transfer to the custody of H.M. Office of Works, but this merely follows from the permanent interest the site acquired, through the work done in 1906-1914, as an outstanding example of town life in the north of Roman Britain. For it is of particular significance in view of the general opinion that, while southern Britain was mainly civil, the north, beyond the legionary fortresses of York and Chester, was almost entirely military. This is held to emphasize the well-known geographical contrast between the low-lying south-east and the hilly and usually more backward north and west. The justness of the distinction is apparent from the thickness with which villas are found in the south, and their virtual absence in the north, and from the far greater prevalence of towns in the south. The only examples of Romano-British towns in the north are Aldborough-Isurium Brigantum, Carlisle-Luguvallium, and the site we are considering, Corstopitum.

The significance of Corstopitum was clear at the time of its excavation; it was known to be a civil site of some importance. Yet it was also in some part a military centre, and this aspect of its existence was allowed to over-

[1] Cf. AA[3] III-IX, XI, XII; NCH X, pp. 474-522.

shadow its civil life; so while Haverfield could say that Corstopitum was a place in which military and civil are unusually mixed,[2] it was the military side which received greater attention, and the place was never acknowledged as owing its importance to its civil element, nor really recognized as a Romano-British town. This last point is probably the more important; while no one ever supposed that there were no civil inhabitants, the contrast mentioned above implied that in so far as it was Roman, life in the north was military, and the civil elements were native and un-Roman. At Corstopitum, while the military side was recognized as Roman, the civil element (though seen to be important) was considered rather anomalous, and its significance was hardly appreciated. Yet in the three hundred years of comparative peace which even the north enjoyed during the occupation, one might expect some Romanization of the native inhabitants; and it is because of the light that it may throw on this question that the attempt to re-examine the extent of civil settlement at Corstopitum, and its possible Roman traits, is undertaken.

Some account of the nature and chronology of the site forms an essential preface to such an examination. Of the site itself, it is sufficient to say that it lies on the left bank of Tyne, some distance above the modern village of Corbridge, and that its area of forty acres is roughly half the size of such towns as Silchester or Wroxeter; its general lay-out can be seen from the accompanying ground plan (plate XXI). Its chronology, however, presents a certain amount of difficulty, and there are some points which may only be settled by further excavation. It will be as well, therefore, to give the outline put forward by the excavators, suggesting where it may need modification. For while the chronology has an importance of its own in the history of the site, it has little effect on the main thesis of this paper. One certain conclusion of the excavators was that the site had been occupied by Agricola. No structures dating to his time were found, indeed, but

[2] AA[3] V, p. 398.

there was south Gaulish samian assignable to the early eighties.[3] The first phase, it was thought, ended with Agricola's advance into Scotland, and a new one (beginning about the year 100, on the abandonment of Scotland) was represented by plentiful Domitian-Trajanic pottery.[4] Of this phase also there were no structural remains, and the evidence was confined to deposits from rubbish pits, the occurrence of occupation-strata below later buildings, and occasional post-holes. The occupation was mainly on the east side of the site, near two ditches, which produced early pottery. About the year 115, this second phase was held to have come to an end, for there was a distinct change between its pottery and that of later levels, and in no deposit were both periods represented.[5] There was a break then in the occupation of Corstopitum till after the building of the Wall, and this gives further evidence of the troubles in Britain which brought about its erection.

From the time of the building of Hadrian's Wall, the history of Corstopitum was based on the occurrence throughout the town of three road-levels, the two later levels dating to about A.D. 200 and 370 respectively,[6] and associating the town with the disasters which we now know to have overtaken the Wall in 196 and again in 368. It is noticeable that no destruction can be related to the rising which overthrew the Wall in 295; it must be assumed that the town was for some reason immune. For the years 158-60 moreover, while there are some signs of destruction to connect Corstopitum with the supposed rising of the Brigantes at that time, these occur only in isolated buildings, and as the Wall also seems to have been immune,[7] it was concluded that while there may have been some petty destruction, there was no general overthrow of the town.[8]

Such in outline is the chronology of Corstopitum as it

[3] Cf. J. P. Bushe-Fox in *Archæologia* LXIV, p. 312 f.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 313.
[5] AA[3] VIII, p. 169 f.
[6] AA[3] IV, p. 214; VI, p. 211; VII, pp. 149, 168.
[7] AA[4] VII, p. 171 f.
[8] AA[3] VIII, p. 187.

was reconstructed by the excavators; after 130, when its main history seems to begin, and when we have structural evidence to rely on, the general scheme of an occupation broken in 196 and 368, and lasting at least until 395,[9] seems reliable enough. In their ascription of dates to particular buildings, however, there seems less certainty; and this is especially so with sites such as XXVII-XXXVII or XI, which they assigned to the second century. This is the first direction in which work now in progress suggests a modification, but the point can be more conveniently dealt with when we come to treat of the buildings concerned. The second modification, however, relates to the earlier phases of the occupation of the place, and can most appropriately be dealt with now. As we have noted, the excavators suggested a break between the Agricolan and late Domitian-Trajanic occupations, extending over the years 85 to about 100, largely because of the absence of samian of form 29 dating to this period. It is well to remember, however, that while form 29 may be absent, there are examples of form 37 which bridge the gap. The evidence of pottery suggests that the occupation until 115 was unbroken,[10] while the abundance of later Domitian-Trajanic wares may represent some increase of population on the organization of the Stanegate frontier.

With such a chronological background, we may now examine the nature of the occupation of Corstopitum. It is with the period after 130 that we shall be concerned, for although in the absence of structural remains the nature of the earlier occupation cannot be known definitely, it was doubtless military; the conjecture that there was a fort lying to the east of the two early north-south ditches,[11] although unconfirmed, is in all probability correct. When we turn to the Antonine period there were undoubtedly military interests in the town, and indeed it is at this time that it is usual to regard Corstopitum as an important military depot. The two large granaries (sites VII and X)

[9] AA[3] VIII, p. 241.
[10] I owe this observation to Mr. Birley.
[11] AA[3] XII, p. 229.

were both in existence by 140,[12] and they are clearly military buildings, their plan recalling the regimental granaries found in forts; while an inscription records a military official in charge of the granaries, and undoubtedly these two sites are indicated.[13] The other site which appears to be definitely military in origin is no. XI, the so-called "Forum." This building is of imposing size, and certain voussoirs and dressed stones have been found, which suggest that it had elaborate features; yet the plain form and utilitarian clay and flagged floors harmonize much better with the idea of a military store than with a municipal town hall. This is one of the buildings which were ascribed to the second century by the excavators, but may very well date to a later time; for there was second-century pottery under the lowest floors in several rooms, and under one a coin of Hadrian occurred;[14] and not only did the number of floors vary from room to room, but in no case do the deposits recorded from above the floors make a second-century date certain. The building may equally well date to Severus; only further work can solve the question. However, it is not till the death of Severus that the military position of Corstopitum is held to have changed; and to whatever date we assign site XI, it and the granaries show that prior to 211 the place was "a base and supply depot for the Wall and for the Roman forces beyond it."[15]

Despite the undoubted military origin of the site, however, and its military interests in the second century, there is no reason to discount the possibility of considerable civil occupation. That a military origin is no obstacle to civil development is amply illustrated by the rise of Eboracum, and the same thing may well have happened on a smaller scale at Corstopitum. Moreover, we must remember that, especially in outlying districts, military or official structures are naturally more obtrusive,

[12] AA[3] V. p. 314.
[13] NCH X, p. 498, no. 8; EE IX 1144.
[14] AA[3] VII, p. 151 ("chamber 6").
[15] R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain* (1932), p. 73.

but this must not obscure the fact that a solid and materially sound civil settlement can be housed in less imposing quarters, particularly when it is the artisan class that is concerned. In this connection, the judgment of Haverfield that " we can already discern a place in which military and civil are unusually mixed " assumes interest, for he adds, " The two granaries are plainly military. The stately structure to the east of them may perhaps owe its size and massiveness to the same origin. But the buildings round them are not, for the most part, of military character."[16] It is, then, to these buildings that we must turn; an analysis of their character may reveal the extent of purely civil settlement.

The sites which first demand attention are those which lie immediately west of the granaries, and front on both sides of the Stanegate.[17] These may be considered as one group, as they possess a certain homogeneity. They were dated by the excavators to the second century, but the evidence is not decisive; for although second-century samian occurred on each site (generally at a low level) and indicated occupation in that century, it is not certain that the buildings whose plan was recovered were so early; an examination of the evidence as recorded rather opposes such a supposition. Sites XXVII and XXXV were built of re-used material; in site XXVII there were two floors at the north end and one at the south, while irregular flagging lay in the middle, and it is not clear whether the floor-levels were related to the surviving walls. Again, in site XXX the occurrence of second-century pottery and a coin of Marcus Aurelius is recorded, but even at the time it was suggested that in the second century it may have been an open space. Finally, in site XXXI the stratification was very confused, and earlier levels seem to have been cut through when the foundations of the existing building were laid. The evidence suggests that (while the pottery indicates some second-century occupation) the buildings

[16] AA[3] V, p. 398.
[17] Sites XXVI-XXXVII; cf. AA[3] VIII, p. 146 f.

themselves were of the third century at earliest. This conclusion can only be tentative till further work is done, and it is only mentioned as a necessary caveat, for to whatever date these sites may prove to belong, their significance for our main purpose is the same.

That this is so will be seen by an examination of their nature; they were obviously civil in character. This is shown in the first place by the masonry, which, although strong in most cases, was throughout rough and far from uniform. The same lack of uniformity is seen in the shape of the buildings, which vary considerably in size; their sole common feature is an approach to the rectangular. Their final disqualification for any military purpose is the fact that in several instances the walls were discontinuous; thus all the buildings on the south side have a front open to the street. The use of these buildings is not certain, but they were clearly connected with industrial operations, as was shown by the occurrence of furnaces, hearths, and signs of continuous and prolonged burning. Sites XXXIV, XXXI and XXVI produced the conclusive testimony of a furnace; elsewhere small ovens, patches of flagging, and signs of burning suggest a like industrial use. What form the industry took is not clear; but the furnace in site XXXI, which had a flagged floor and was surrounded by stones, was suitable for smithying or metal work, and the same occupation is indicated by the small furnace and tank in site XXXVII. On the other hand, the furnace in site XXXIV, which had a stone floor and clay sides, rather suggests use as a bread oven. Taken altogether, however, the many signs of severe burning certainly indicate an industrial occupation such as metalwork, and this may be taken to characterize the area.

Because of the fragmentary nature of the walls, it has been suggested that some of the sites, such as XXX or XXXI, were open spaces or at best sheds; but as Sir George Macdonald pointed out in his report on the 1911 hoard of gold coins,[18] it is hardly possible to explain them

[18] JRS II, pp. 1-20.

otherwise than as houses; it is not fanciful to see in them the home of a domestic industry, where the whole industrial process was carried through under one roof.

Before considering the full significance of this industrial quarter, it will be as well to turn to another area where a similar chronological doubt exists. This is the area south of the granaries, where there was certainly occupation in the second century, but the stratification was even more confused than in the previous sites. Here the occupation was not of such a uniform character, but there are indications of civil life. In the first place there were some buildings similar to those we have just considered, namely sites XLII, XLIV and XLVI;[19] in them small hearths and furnaces in conjunction with unpretentiousness of structure suggests the same humble use. The only difference is that these buildings are more isolated, and look perhaps like separate workshops, or dwellings and industrial yards combined, rather than shops.

To the west of these buildings, however, are two sites of an obviously different nature. Sites XLI and XXXIX, from their division into compartments, are far more suggestive of dwelling-houses. As such site XLI can lay no claims to splendour; it is bare in outline and devoid of all such amenities as hypocausts or mosaics. Site XXXIX, originally two separate houses, is slightly more elaborate. Its southern portion contained a central courtyard with rooms ranged round it, and there is a possibility that it was heated by an open fire in this courtyard. Again hypocausts are absent, as are the other comforts of the usual Roman house, but even so the presence of a comparatively elaborate house of purely civil type is not without significance. The northern portion does not present so clear a plan, but there seems to have been a rather rough hypocaust in its north-west corner. The two houses, to judge by their size, are undoubtedly dwellings of comparative importance.

Mention must be made at this juncture of the " pottery

[19] AA[3] IX, pp. 235-6.

shop,'' site IV.[20] The building obviously represents a combined store and workshop, such as we have suggested that other sites contained. At the back the walls are fragmentary, and an open yard may be inferred. The inference is supported by the presence of a furnace accompanied by huge lumps of iron and a pair of tongs. The frontage of the building is half composed of the actual shop, and half of a space that doubtless represents a dwelling. The identity of the shop is clearly proved, not only by the great variety of pottery present, but also by the symmetrical arrangement in which it was found; it was lying where it had fallen from the shelves when the fire (which was indicated by the copious signs of burning) occurred. The date of this building is confused by the discovery of a hoard of late coins (Tetricus to Gratian) on the site, but the potters' names (Genialis, Marcus, Saturninus) are cogent evidence that it was the second century which saw its destruction, even if we must assume that the site remained unoccupied when the coins were dropped. The converse view, that second-century pottery was being sold in Corstopitum in the fourth century, would suppose an altogether improbable antiquarianism on the part of the inhabitants of the town. Here, then, despite the doubt associated with it, we have perhaps the best authenticated example of an actual building remaining from the second century, and its position in the centre of the town, immediately opposite the granaries, supports the dating. As such it may serve as the prototype of the industrial buildings of Corstopitum, although of a standard of construction not achieved in the later examples.

Our conclusion as to the importance of these civil sites will be greatly assisted if we remember that even in the second century Corstopitum was never the permanent home of a regiment. Both under Iulius Verus and Calpurnius Agricola it is legionary *vexillations* that are mentioned; and they cannot have been stationed permanently at Corstopitum as a cohort or *ala* might have been. But there

[20] AA[3] IV, pp. 247-58.

is no place in the town where troops could have been permanently housed. The only military buildings are the granaries and site XI, which could not serve as barracks. Indeed it is remarkable how few such buildings really were; inevitably the resident military population at Corstopitum must have been small.

The permanent inhabitants of the town, therefore, must be sought in its civil quarter, and they form its vital economic background. But, as has been noted, the civil and military elements were extremely mixed in Corstopitum, and it is in their inter-relation that the solution we are seeking will be found. Springing as it does from an early military centre, the site's civil element grew out of the pre-existing military nucleus. Its industries sprang up to satisfy military needs, and its economics in the earliest phase must have been those of a military base or depot, which created the market which in turn called into existence the manufactures of Corstopitum. Yet we must remember that the nature of the market does not fundamentally alter the conditions of the industry. The civil elements of the place came together because its military importance created a market, but this origin does not alter the fact that once in existence Corstopitum was a civil centre, of small pretensions, but nevertheless genuine. If all the sites we have considered date to the second century, the evidence for the rapid growth of a civil population, which far outnumbered the military, and which must have had some independence, is overwhelming. Turning now to the greater probability that they are to be ascribed to the third century, still the signs of some previous occupation, and the general limitations of its military life, show the same process well in progress in the second century. A point of greater importance for the civil occupation of Corstopitum is that with the third century its military importance declined, leaving it to rest exclusively on its civilian elements. The conclusion was most clearly voiced by Sir George Macdonald, when he wrote " the character of the town underwent considerable change. The large

central buildings were put to less exalted purposes than those for which they had been first intended, and we may suppose that the population now consisted mainly of civilians."[21] As a depot for troops, with the loss of Scotland a decline in its military position was only to be expected, and there is archæological evidence to support this supposition. First of all there is the negative evidence: no inscription or memorial of any sort exists to indicate the presence of troops after the time of Severus. This loses some of its weight when we remember that inscriptions are everywhere rarer after Severus; but contrasted with the epigraphical information we possess for the activities in Corstopitum of Lollius Urbicus, Iulius Verus, Calpurnius Agricola and Virius Lupus,[22] the silence is significant. Perhaps of greater weight is the remarkable fact that although the granaries were in full use in the second century, the coins in both are of third and fourth century date. This has been taken to show that they underwent some change of purpose which caused a greater use of money in them; that is to say, a commercial flavour now adhered to them. The most clear indication, however, comes from a minor site, XIV. This building has a raised floor such as was found in the granaries; it was destroyed in Roman times, and the "watercourse" runs across it. That it was not unused, however, is indicated by certain patches of flagging at a higher level, and the discovery of a pottery mould indicates the use to which it was put. Site XI also, while it remained in continuous use till the end of the occupation, was never completed at its northern end, and the re-used material in such places as site XXXV (mentioned above) in all probability came from here, a state of affairs that suggests that its purpose was changed and its completion regarded as unnecessary. All these signs show with sufficient clarity the decline of the official element and the survival of the civil portion alone. From a military point of view Corstopitum was

[21] JRS II, p. 4.
[22] AA[3] IX, p. 267.

dead, and Mr. Collingwood supplied the epitaph when he said "The great days of Corbridge fell in the second century; in the troubles that marked the end of the century it was wholly destroyed, and, when Severus rebuilt it, it took the form no longer of a great depot but of a comparatively insignificant village."[23] The civil nature of the site for the rest of the occupation, then, is well established. The question is to what extent and in what perspective it was "comparatively insignificant."

This perhaps can best be seen by realizing that the town must in any case have been insignificant when compared with some of the towns of south Britain, on the ground of size alone. What, however, Mr. Collingwood would seem to imply is, that the removal of its military element left it in an artificial position, with only a parasitic civil element lingering on, in a decadent condition, after the real source of its subsistence was gone. He suggests a contrast between a flourishing state in the second century, indicated by the term a "great depot," and a rather lifeless rustic community in later years. It is then decadence, and decline as compared with a previous prosperity that is to be conveyed by the term "insignificant." This, however, would place the civil side of the town's life in a definitely secondary position; it would mean that it had not acquired sufficient vitality to make it independent of the military market which called it into existence. The limitations on the military side even in the second century, and the inevitability that the permanent inhabitants were civil, strongly oppose this assumption. When its existence in later years is reviewed, it becomes clear that any decline could only have been in official and military eyes, for from the point of view of its own economy and of its significance in the Roman north, the importance of Corstopitum increased in the third and fourth centuries.

The first point of importance is that the town grew in size. Whatever the date of the sites we have already considered may be, their continued existence is certain, and

[23] *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

we have noted the probability that they represent rebuilding on a previously occupied area. This, at any rate, is sufficient to show that the town did not shrink in size; and the proof of its positive growth is equally clear. All the sites to the east of XI seem to be of late date;[24] they overlie the early ditches, and it seems that this part of the area was not occupied after the early phase until the third century. This was also the case farther north,[25] while the fragmentary remains on the extreme east of the town are also uniformly late.[26] These buildings were of an extremely rough character, but they show that the town was growing rather than shrinking. Even the granaries and site XI were not allowed to lie empty; successive reconstructions and floor levels testify to their continued utility. The town, then, only achieved its fullest extent when there could be no question of military causes.

What is perhaps of more importance than the mere appearance of new buildings is the growth of the town's industries to which they witness. The houses were all rather mean architecturally, but as in other humble dwellings in Corstopitum they showed signs of industrial occupations. This sign of the spread of industry, however, is not confined to the new buildings on the outskirts of the town; it also appears in a slightly more imposing form in the larger buildings nearer the centre, some of which had previously served different purposes.

Site XIV, as we have noticed, is one of those affected. Previously an official granary, its walls were later rased and only patches of flagging remain to show that it was put to some other use. But the discovery of a mould seems to show that this area saw the manufacture of pottery in the third century, especially as a specimen from a similar mould was found only a few yards away. This building is not alone in having undergone a conversion to industrial uses. Lying not far from it is site XVII,[27]

[24] AA[3] VII, pp. 170-4; sites XX-XXV.
[25] AA[3] XI, pp. 290-6; sites XLVIII-LVI.
[26] AA[3] XII, pp. 242-8; sites XXIII E, LX, LXI.
[27] AA[3] VI, pp. 233-42.

potentialities of the place, there is a building, site II,[32] which offers valuable information. In the first place, it was a corridor house, similar in plan to the usual Romano-British type. It was supplied with an elaborate system of drainage, and its heating was provided for by a hypocaust situated in the corridor to the north. On the south side of the house was a cobbled pavement and a terrace looking on to the river and providing an imposing approach. Here, then, is a dwelling of the usual residential type which is found amongst the better classes of the Roman population. Its existence at Corstopitum is significant, and suggests that there was some occupation of a more usual Roman standard. What is equally important, however, is the fact that this house is the only one of its type which occurs in the town. Sites XXXIX and XL, it has been seen, were dwelling-houses, but of an inferior kind, and the former was later turned to industrial uses. Thus at one and the same time site II reveals a distinctive feature of the town's civil life and also its general limitations.

It is perhaps these limitations that have caused its civil importance to be underestimated. Yet despite the unusual features of its rough industrial buildings, there is no doubt that Corstopitum was a Roman as well as a civil site. Its buildings may be rough, but they are not native, and the town plan, with its fairly regular *insulae* and streets at right angles, is Roman. The material basis of the town's life, even in its latest phases, is shown by the discovery of the late gold hoard found on site XII.[33] This hoard proves the comparative wealth of Corstopitum, and is a sign of its continued connection with the Roman world. The small finds, too, which occurred in great profusion, have a typically Roman flavour. The pottery presents no great variation from the normal, and the same can be said of the various implements and trinkets which were found. The most distinctive feature is provided by

[32] AA[3] III, pp. 174-7; IV, pp. 215-40.
[33] AA[3] V, p. 343.

certain finds whose style shows them to be examples of the "Celtic revival." There is first the piece of sculpture known as the Corbridge Lion[34] (found on site II), whose vigorous if rather grotesque design shows signs of native genius. The *fibulae* provide a more clear illustration, the dragonesque or S-shaped brooches showing in their curvilinear *motif* obvious signs of Celtic workmanship; in addition to these there are certain trumpet-shaped *fibulae* which seem to be of purely native origin. Even the Celtic revival, however, was a movement which resulted from a blend of Roman ideas and native genius, and it was undoubtedly influenced by Roman technique and classical conceptions of design. Its occurrence, then, is one sign of the Romanization of the natives, and it is what we should expect of the civil population of Corstopitum.

As for language and religion, the evidence is naturally more intangible, but such signs as exist are wholly Roman. Thus the fact that Latin was used and presumably understood to some extent by civilians is shown by two tombstones,[35] that tell of the existence of normal family life in Corstopitum. Of definitely civilian religion, few traces remain; in addition to the possibility that site XL was a temple, one of the tombstones referred to shows in its dedication *Dis Manibus* an acceptance of orthodox Roman views; while a Greek inscription to "Hercules of Tyre,"[36] set up by the priestess Diodora, tells of the influence exerted even in this region by the mystic eastern cults. Although they have left little evidence of their presence, then, normal Roman beliefs were not unknown in the town.

Such, then, is the information which the excavations at Corstopitum revealed; we must now review the cumulative effect of the signs of civil life that have been discovered. In two important respects this town suffers from comparison with those of the south of Britain. As a residen-

[34] Figured in AA[3] IV, facing p. 205.
[35] NCH X, p. 503, nos. 30, 31; EE IX 1153 and CIL VII 478.
[36] NCH X, p. 497, no. 2; CIL VII, p. 97.

which passed through many vicissitudes. Probably originally of late date, it seems to have begun as a plain rectangular building; later a hypocaust was added, and two apsidal rooms, one of which may have been used as a bath. However, the presence of " hand-bricks " suggests that, still later, the convenience of the hypocaust caused the building to be used as a drying-house for pottery. At any rate, it is in intimate connection with industry, as just outside, to the north, was a forge or furnace (near which was found an immense lump of pig-iron and sundry other pieces of metal), which clearly indicates the nature of the manufacture. The last instance of such a conversion is site XXXIX.[28] This constituted one of the dwelling-houses we have noticed, and was originally divided into two. At some later date, however, the whole block was joined together and various alterations made; these included the insertion of a pottery kiln, and a plentiful supply of both clay and of sherds bore witness to its activity.

This example, with the other instances, tends to show that the industries of the place grew and intensified as time went on. What is more, the signs of pottery manufacture are a clearer indication of a definite industry, as opposed to the local repairs which probably characterized sites XXVII-XXXVII; and the same can be said of the traces of smelting in the furnace near site XVII. The industries of Corstopitum, then, would seem to have been continually assuming greater proportions, and this remains true despite the inevitable limitations in the output of which the town was capable.

Can we discover any traces of civic life to correspond to this greater material prosperity? Such an assumption would run counter to the signs that site XI was used as a quarry for stone, but (till 368 at least) there is every reason to believe that this only involved the incomplete and unused northern end. Before then, site XI continued to be occupied in its southern half, as coins and later floor levels show, and, moreover, there are indications that from

[28] AA[3] IX, pp. 239-43.

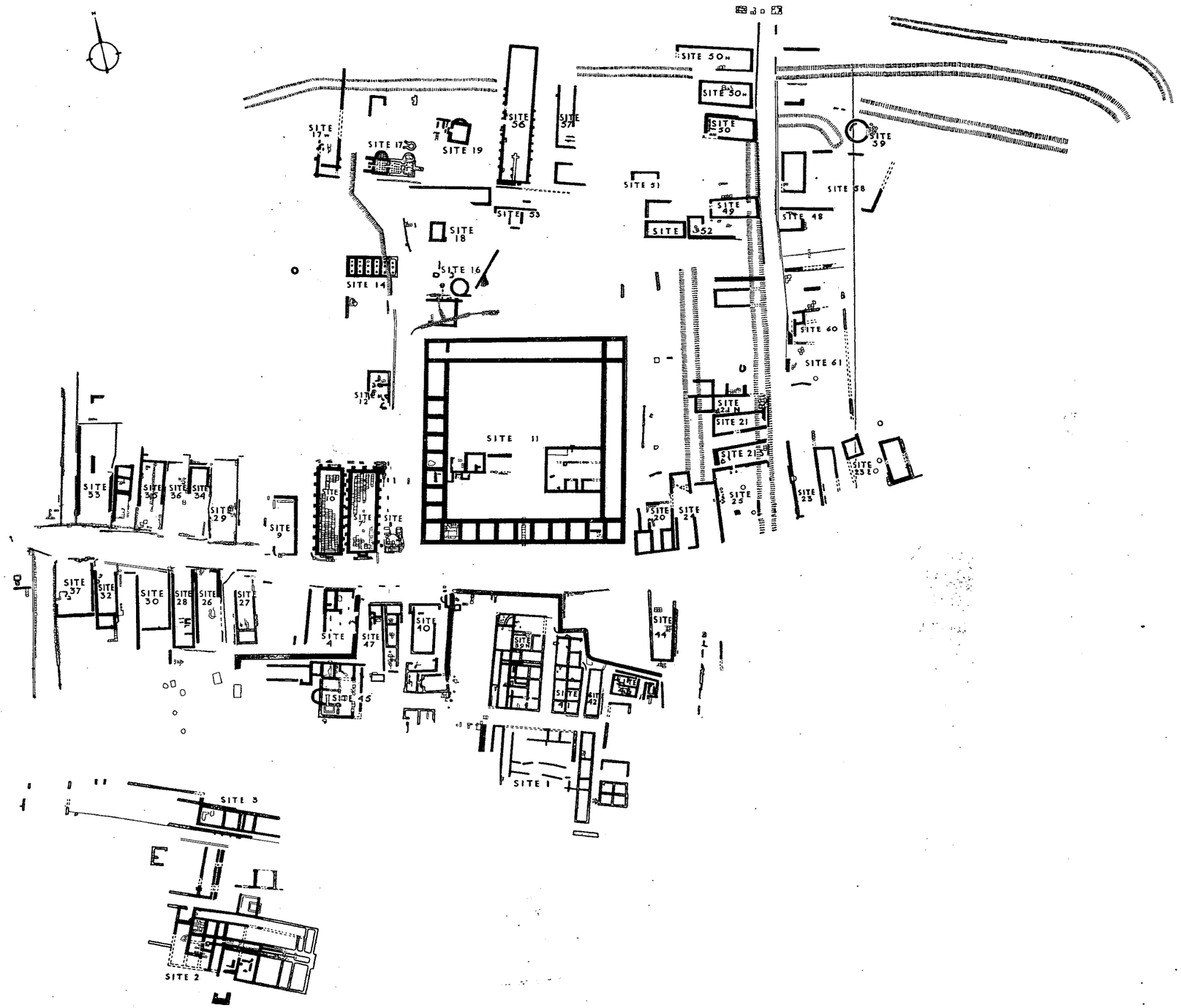
the time of Severus it was fronted by an elaborate portico. This would match the two porticoes which from this date adorned the front of the two granaries.[29] That is to say that these buildings acquired new architectural features at the very time when their military use ceased. In the same category we must include site XLV, which seems to be Severan.[30] This building is of an obviously official character, being divided into a nave and two aisles, terminating in an apse at the west end; it includes a sunken strong room of the familiar military type. Yet even if the inscription of Virius Lupus, which was found in it, means that it owes its foundation to military initiative, it dates to a time when military interest in Corbridge was almost at an end. What is more, the apse, a definitely official feature, is of later date, and there are signs of reconstruction as late as 368. These indications, taken with the improved condition of the granaries and site XI, are the only signs of civic activity that Corstopitum affords. Inscriptions are altogether lacking and direct evidence is unattainable, but here is a suggestion that at least a minimum of public life existed. Otherwise the purpose of site XLV would be impossible to surmise, and the continued use of site XI is hard to explain. Finally, there is site XL,[31] a small rectangular building, with an apse at one end. This feature, and the irregular angle at which the building lies, have suggested its use as a temple, but there were no associated remains to confirm the conjecture. However, it is clear that it did not serve a merely residential purpose, and as the occupation went on, it did not fall into disuse but acquired new courts and outbuildings. These buildings, then, while in the absence of further evidence they cannot be said to prove the existence of civic life at Corstopitum, do at least show that there was a need for the use of fairly large public buildings throughout the occupation.

Before proceeding to a final consideration of the civil

[29] AA[3] VI, p. 209.
[30] AA[3] IX, pp. 259, 260.
[31] AA[3] IX, pp. 243-7.

CORSTOPITUM (CORBRIDGE) PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS

SCALE 30 FEET TO 1 INCH W.H KNOWLES DEL. MENS CLIVE PEARE DELT.



tial centre its claims are practically negligible, and its domestic architecture is of the meanest. Again, there is an absence of definite traces of civic life, which at best can only partly be supplied by the possibility that such sites as XI or XLV served as public offices for the transaction of local affairs. Even this, however, can never prove that Corstopitum held any important position as a political centre, or that it affords a key to the problem of local government in the north. On the other hand, we have the evidence of material culture Roman in character, signs of comparative prosperity, and an industry which absorbed the attention of the greater part of the population. Such features do constitute a civic life and bind the town together by economic bonds as strong as mere political organization.

Remembering, therefore, the geographical distinction at the start, it must be emphasized that this did not prevent the Romans, as it prevented many invaders, from reaching the north. For over three hundred years the north was in their possession and under their influence. Romanization was not a process of wholesale immigration, but the effect on the outlook and habits of the native population of contact with the Roman world, and in the first place with the Roman soldiery. The more backward state of the original population, and its sparseness, were undoubtedly factors which caused the north to lag behind the south of Britain in such a process, but we suggest that this was a difference of degree rather than of kind. Corstopitum we claim as the proof, seeing in it a real element of civil life, limited in importance by its small size, but nevertheless significant as a successful concentration of civil elements into the surroundings of a town, in which Roman influence predominated, and which linked the normal life of the north to the social conditions of the rest of Roman Britain.