

CORBRIDGE IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES (shaded areas military).

#### XIV.—CIVILIANS IN THE ROMAN FRONTIER REGION.

BY P. SALWAY.

The existence of a civil population in the frontier districts of the Empire has long been recognized by historians and archæologists. The concept of a province bounded by a military zone is only of limited validity. The presence of the army did not necessarily rule out a civilian population. In fact it both implied a native population and frequently encouraged the influx of civilians from elsewhere. The *agros . . . vacuos et militum usui sepositos*<sup>1</sup> of Claudian Lower Germany became an exception rather than the rule. In many provinces cities, towns, villages and farms grew up on the very frontier line itself.

The difficulties and dangers of attempting to make firm distinctions between classes of people or settlement are notorious. Between Roman and native they are impossible to draw. For the purposes of this paper I intend merely to differentiate between those settlements whose prosperity had enabled them to develop a recognizable degree of Romanization and those whose material poverty leaves them hardly distinguishable from pre- or post-Roman types.

On the British frontier it is fortunate that intermediate classes rarely appear.<sup>2</sup> There is a recognizable difference between the basically urban, or Mediterranean, nature of Housesteads or Corbridge and the farms and small villages of local origin which we call "native settlements". The

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* xiii, 54.

<sup>2</sup> The farm of Old Durham is exceptional in possessing a Roman bath-house (AA<sup>4</sup> xxii, 1ff.; xxix, 203ff.; xxxi, 116ff.).

latter are a vast subject on their own and I do not intend to deal with them here.

In the absence of colonies and of towns developed from

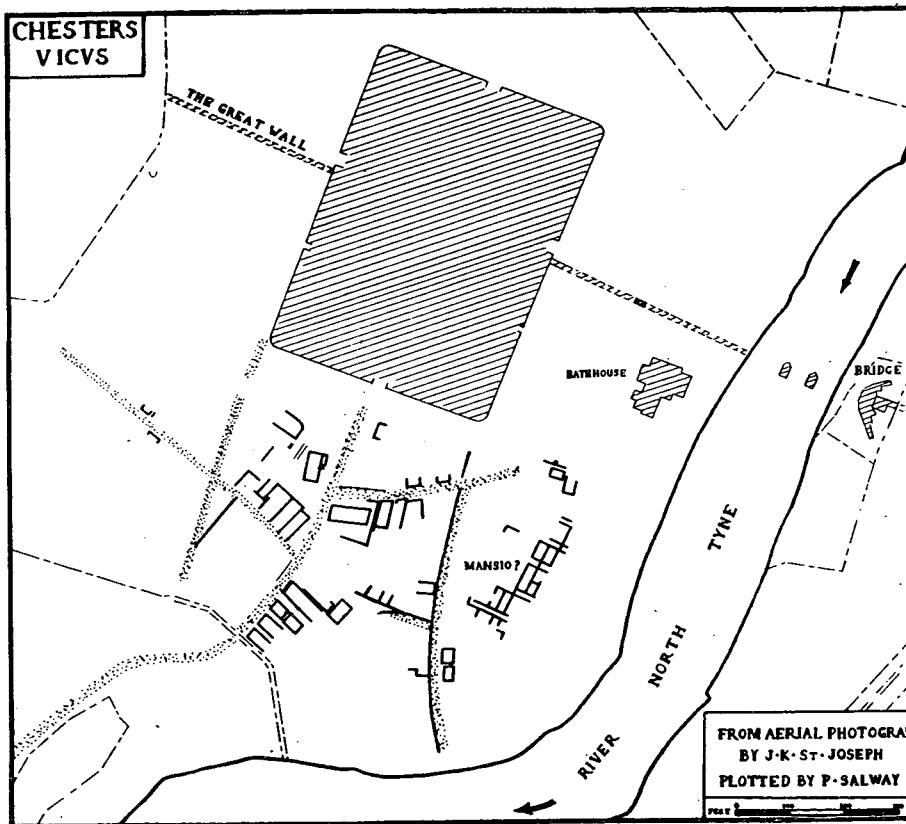


FIG. 1.

pre-existing native *oppida*, it is possible to say that the Romanized towns of this area were, in origin at least, almost all of one type—the spontaneous settlement which grew up around a military establishment. Such *vici* have a distinctive appearance and distribution. The name indicates a small

urban unit which may be a ward of a city or a free-standing agglomeration and was applied by the Romans both to the particular sort of site under discussion and to others of the same general scale.

The settlements are common along Hadrian's Wall, outside the forts south of it and in the area of third-century permanent occupation to the north. In Scotland evidence for civil occupation is extremely scanty. The exceptions are the recently discovered inscription from Carriden (which I suspect to be associated with the abnormal shipping activity at the time of the Severan campaigns) and two civil tombstones from Auchendavy—three monuments, as against the 107 from the North of England. There are no Scottish extramural indications which may not derive from purely military buildings and no small finds which may not have emanated from a commandant's family. Nor do I believe that the annexes held civil settlements. Nowhere do these display the characteristic buildings of the *vicus*. They surely act as perimeter fences to protect parked wagons and other equipment (possibly including cattle) as well as those buildings such as forges which constitute too great a fire-risk to be allowed inside timber forts. On the Antonine Wall the annexes may well take the place of the Vallum.

The reason for this lack of civil settlements in Scotland will, I hope, become clear in the course of this paper.

#### TOWN PLANS.

It is now certain that the majority of the permanent forts in the frontier area of Northern England developed civil settlements. Few of these are known in detail. The majority were groups of buildings which had grown up along the roads radiating from the fort. Sometimes minor roads were added to serve the town as it spread, but there is nowhere any sign of a regular street plan in this class of settlement. Typical is that at Chesters revealed under aerial photography

by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph and plotted on fig. 1. Here the road south to join the Stanegate provides the spine to which are added two branch roads. It is possible that the latter represent the line of the disused Vallum. They certainly also provide a convenient by-pass on which civil traffic can avoid passing through the fort.

At Old Carlisle a similar grouping around the roads has been seen. In this case it is notable that the main settlement was centred on the highway which runs clear of the fort. Mr. R. L. Bellhouse's excavations in 1956 showed at least three periods of building on the side of this main road away from the fort. There is therefore no particular reason to suspect that this is a late development. The main focus may always have been the traffic on the road.

Housesteads, the classic example in this country since Prof. Eric Birley's excavations, is, like Chesters, grouped around the main road south.<sup>3</sup> Here again it is notable that civil traffic using the Knag Burn gate could pass without entering the fort. Some of the settlements may have surrounded their forts, as is thought occurred at Butzbach on the Upper German *Limes* and can be seen at Gemellae on the African frontier. Most, however, were concentrated at one side as at Chesterholm and Carrawburgh (pl. XXV, 1).

The most difficult plan to explain is that revealed from the air at Piercebridge.<sup>4</sup> As at Old Carlisle there is heavy occupation on both sides of the main road which passes some distance from the fort. Except for the approach road to the fort, the minor streets are centred on the highway, Dere Street, which has just made the crossing of the Tees. Roman occupation at Piercebridge in the second century is attested by pottery evidence, but the fort is equally certainly a Constantian foundation. There is as yet no sign of an earlier fort. It is therefore possible that a purely civil town grew up at this important river crossing. If this is true, it is a great rarity in the area and it is impossible not to suspect an early fort as yet undetected.

<sup>3</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> ix, 226ff.; x, 85ff.; xii, 204ff.

<sup>4</sup> *JRS* xlv, pl. xviii, 2.

The influence of river-crossings is also to be seen in two larger sites: Carlisle and Corbridge. Of Carlisle's plan it would be unwise to say anything pending the completion of Mr. Robert Hogg's work on that subject. Enough is known about the history of the site to indicate that a very substantial town emerged there. It is not yet clear whether it had its origin in a *vicus* attached to the early fort on the south side of the river, in purely civilian development or in a transpontine extension of the civil settlement of Stanwix fort. A major factor in its growth must have been the junction at the river-crossing of the vital western route into Scotland with the east-west road, the Stanegate. Indeed, it is probable that the latter finished here.

At the point where the other main route to the north, Dere Street, crossed the Stanegate lies Corbridge, sited against the bridge which carries the road from the south across the Tyne. Very little is known of civil occupation when Corbridge was the site of a normal fort. The plan (v. p. 227) represents the layout of the town in the third and fourth centuries, when a large number of civil buildings clustered round the great military supply depot. Here one may see for the first time some evidence of deliberate town-planning. Certain elements remain from the pre-Severan plan. The *via principalis* and *via praetoria* of the Antonine fort are widened and incorporated in the new scheme. Important buildings remain: the two granaries play a vital part in the functioning of the base. The small bath-house is most probably a survival, since the aqueduct so obviously avoids it. Some of the houses to east and west of the site of the fort may be survivals also—or at least represent predecessors in an Antonine *vicus*.

The hand of the town-planner is seen in the attempt to adapt the existing roads into a regular street-grid. Even more is it apparent in the conversion of the central area into a monumental square, by widening the *via principalis* (or Stanegate), and partially closing one end in typically Italian fashion with a pair of temples. The general effect is much

closer to that of a Greek *agora*, with its assortment of buildings religious and secular loosely grouped about an open space, than to the closed complex, in effect a single building, characteristic of Roman *fora*. However, the closing of the area to through traffic is essentially Roman. Traffic travelling north or south along Dere Street must have skirted the southern and eastern sides of the twin compounds. Movement to the east may not have been heavy. There is at present no sign that the Stanegate was prolonged eastwards from Corbridge, other than the road running from the temples across the eastern part of the site. This may well be an internal town-street rather than a highway. In the third and fourth centuries it is not unreasonable to suppose that traffic would pass up Dere Street as far as the Portgate and there turn east along the Military Way (which linked not only the forts but also the flourishing *vici*), rather than following the bottom of the lower Tyne valley, apparently less heavily populated than the line of the Wall.

The initiative for the imaginative layout of the central part of the site was certainly governmental. Even the fountain house, whose presence is a pleasantly classical touch in the scene, was primarily intended to supply the military workshops, though it doubtless also served the people of the town. Corbridge was not the seat of a cantonal government and the square is almost entirely ringed by military buildings. Yet a series of temples, open to soldier and civilian alike, is included as an integral part of the scheme. The authority for so unusual a plan must have come at a high level. It is not contested that the main buildings were erected in preparation for Septimius Severus' Scottish campaigns. The imperial interest in monumental architecture is attested by the spectacular benefactions to Severus' home town, Lepcis Magna, where splendid new buildings were added to adapt and enhance an existing town plan. At Corbridge it is probable that one of the Severi, if not Septimus himself, was responsible for this impressive symbol of the solidity and determination of the

new dynasty, doubtless not lost on the recently rebellious province.

The existence of defences around this town is to be inferred from the ditch and clay bank with stone kerb traced in the early series of excavations.<sup>5</sup> The ditch is now known to continue along the east side of the town after making the turn at the north-east corner, having been photographed from the air by Dr. St. Joseph and again in the summer of 1957 by myself. The details of these defences are obscure. There are indications of at least one stone gate (where Dere Street leaves the town at the north).<sup>6</sup> The dating is also not clear, though it is interesting to note that the Severan aqueduct is structurally secondary where it meets the clay bank. Future thought on the problem might well consider whether it is likely that an area full of valuable military stores and workshops would be left practically undefended. But whatever the date when they were erected, these defences certainly enclosed not only the military structures but also the crowded streets of civilian shops and houses.

#### THE BUILDINGS.

The buildings which lay outside the walls of a fort fall into three main categories: the military, official civil, and private.

##### *Bath-houses.*

These structures, which very frequently lie outside the walls, were an integral and important part of the military establishment. The position is explained by the fact that the bath-house is one of those buildings constituting a fire risk and unnecessarily extending the defended perimeter which, as mentioned above, were placed outside. It is misleading to refer to such structures as part of the civil settlement, though there is certainly a strong possibility that the Severan

<sup>5</sup> AA<sup>3</sup> vi, 218; xi, 282ff.; xii, 235ff.

<sup>6</sup> AA<sup>3</sup> xi, pl. viii.



additions to bath-houses in our area may reflect the great changes in the life of the army at that time. The addition of large changing rooms, for example at Chesters and Bewcastle, perhaps indicates that the baths were thrown open to the now-recognized families of the troops and maybe their fellow *vicani* as well, all of whom received the Roman citizenship in this age. Alternatively these rooms may have served as clubs for those soldiers who no longer lived together in the barracks but dwelt with their wives and children in the *vicus*.

### *Temples.*

Unlike the bath-houses, the temples are not military in the sense of having been erected under army regulations. However, it is certain that very many of the religious structures were dedicated by soldiers. Many were paid for by fort commanders and come near to being official dedications. The *Mithraea*, for example, were largely, if not exclusively, the preserve of officers. Even the 24 civilian dedications to other deities known at present are not entirely free from military associations. In a third of the instances it is certain or highly probable that the dedicator had a direct connection with the army. At High Rochester, for example, the commandant's freedman is found dedicating to Silvanus Pantheus for the health of his master and mistress.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps more typical of dedications by the *vicani* is the little shrine to the three hooded deities found at Housesteads among a tangle of civil houses.<sup>8</sup> It may well be that many of the smaller pieces of religious sculpture found from time to time on northern sites came originally from such civil shrines.

Pending excavation it would be unsafe to classify the Romano-Celtic temple west of the Cor Burn as civil. However, the enclosure of such temples within a precinct wall as here is common elsewhere, especially on the outskirts of

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* vii, 1038 = *NCH* xv, 150, no. 26.

<sup>8</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> xi, 190f.; xii, 187ff.; *Collection Latomus* xxviii, 460.

cities (as at Colchester) and in the open countryside (as at Fontaine Valmont and Elst in the Low Countries). The normal association of such temples seems to be civil rather than military.

Knowledge of the cemeteries of these settlements remains almost as unsatisfactory now as when Professor Birley commented on it in 1934. There are clear indications that all the common types of cemetery occur, including groups of substantial tombs as those on Dere Street at High Rochester or south of the Vallum at Greatchesters. Yet we still lack the examination of any cemetery on a large scale such as was carried out under considerable difficulties in the military cemetery of Heidelberg-Neuenheim.

“*Mansiones.*”

Perhaps the most interesting of the larger extra-mural buildings is the villa-like structure which has been noted both in Britain and on other frontiers. The best known in our area is that at Corbridge, which originally resembled a corridor villa with wings and was later modified into a solid block by the addition of a second corridor and other structures between the wings at the front. Other examples are known at Benwell and Newstead and a fourth has been recorded from the air at Chesters (fig. 1).

What was the function of this building? It is generally known as a *mansio* or official rest-house. Direct evidence for its purpose is lacking, but it may be surmised that it was official, judging by the size and complexity of the structures and by the elaborate interior decoration of the Corbridge example. The most reasonable explanation is that it acted as a temporary residence for travelling imperial officials, equivalent to the modern Judge's Lodgings. In particular it may have been used by the officers of the Provincial Procurator, whose financial and supervisory authority and organization were independent from the Governor who was locally represented by the fort commandant. It seems unlikely that the building was the permanent residence of an

official. There is no epigraphic evidence for the presence of such officials on the frontier other than the *beneficarii consulares*. The distribution of known *mansiones* does not correspond with that of *beneficarii*. Had an official been in permanent residence in one of these buildings, it seems probable that he would have left some record. There is no doubt that the Corbridge house remained in use for a very considerable length of time, since it received major alterations twice and was re-decorated four times in the fourth century.

#### *Private Houses.*

The most common and characteristic of the buildings of the *vicus* are the "strip-houses", those rectangular structures placed end on to the street which are observed in every civil settlement. Although they have local peculiarities their general form is common to many of the frontier provinces. It has been argued in Germany that these buildings which often possess an open front are of Germanic origin. It might be thought that their appearance on the British frontier was due to the arrival of German troops and their families. But the answer is surely simple and obvious. The open fronts, identified at Housesteads as shops, are an humble version of the House of the Wine Merchant at Herculaneum or the tiny shops of any modern Italian town whose fronts are closed only by a bead-curtain. Now, in any shopping place street-frontage is sought-after and expensive. The inevitable consequence is the shape of structure under discussion. The small trader has his counter and display at the front and the store and living accommodation behind and perhaps above. There is often a yard at the back. The whole forms the most sensible, economical and natural use of the ground in a town.

#### THE PEOPLE OF THE *Vicus*.

Since the direct sources in Britain are almost entirely

limited to inscriptions, it is naturally only of the more prosperous members of the community that we hear—those who could afford to make a substantial dedication to the gods or to erect a tombstone. This must always be remembered when an attempt is made to answer the questions who these people were, what their status was and what their relation to the army. Fortunately, literary and legal sources together with a few papyri shed some additional light upon the subject.

It is certain that on other frontiers the veterans from the army were among the most prominent and prosperous of the *vicani*. It is surprising that in Britain there are so few references to them. This is more likely to be due to chance in the discovery of inscriptions than evidence of a major difference between the *vici* of Britain and other frontier provinces. Normally veterans, both legionary and military, were not compelled to live in any particular place but preferred to live close to where they had served their time and had strong ties of sentiment. The occasional attempts of the government to settle them in places not of their own choosing seem to have failed. Inevitably they drifted back to their provinces and the civil settlements.<sup>9</sup>

From the reign of Severus they were classed as *honestiores* and more likely than others to be prominent in public life. Indeed, before Caracalla enfranchised practically the whole Empire, they must often have been the only Roman citizens in a *vicus*. They were in no way barred from civil activities and, even though regarded as a semi-military reserve, appear as traders and as leaders of the civilian community.

The *diploma*, or document granted on the honourable discharge of a soldier, records not only the grant of citizenship to such veterans as do not already possess it but also the right to marry. Most interesting legal conditions were attached to this right. The wives themselves were not given Roman citizenship and the document implies the right to marry non-citizens, an otherwise rare privilege. Without this

<sup>9</sup> Tacitus, *Histories* ii, 80; *Annals* xiv, 27.

provision the men would have been rewarded for their service with a permanent ban on legal marriage with that very considerable portion of the local female population which did not have the Roman citizenship. With many of these women they had already formed unofficial unions during their service days.

The final condition attached to the grant of *conubium* stipulates that it shall apply providing that one man take but one wife. This clause does not refer to re-marriage. Considering the wide variety of nationality and cultural background in the auxiliary forces, it was doubtless essential to prevent the document from acting as an instrument legalizing polygamy. This presents an interesting glimpse of the social life of some auxiliaries and their civil settlements.

Before A.D. 212 the auxiliary veteran was a full Roman citizen. His wife, even if not a citizen, was nevertheless wedded to him under the Civil law. The sons of such marriages received the citizenship at birth. Those born before the soldier's honourable discharge were granted the citizenship retrospectively until the year 139, when as a stimulus to recruiting it was enacted that they should receive it only by enlisting in the army. The recognition of a legal bond between citizen and peregrine illustrates the way in which Roman law, first extended to deal with external foreigners, was gradually adapted to meet the needs of the provinces. The existence of large numbers of women and their children in the provinces with this status must have paved the way for the general enfranchisement under Caracalla.<sup>10</sup>

The major change in the life of the *vicus*—and certainly a prime cause of its expansion—was the permission granted by Septimius Severus for soldiers to live with their families in houses outside the fort. The existence of unofficial marriages had long been recognized by the State and had

<sup>10</sup> It is, in fact, an extension of the *ius civile* to a specific class of alien (see Gaius, *Institutes* I, 56-7, 76). *Iustum matrimonium* (marriage according to the Civil law) with a Latin or peregrine was possible in law by a special grant. Polygamy, however, was not permitted (Gaius, I, 63).

become a useful source of recruits. The superficially revolutionary change in military regulations was the logical culmination of this policy. The legal position, however, remained unchanged: the soldier still did not possess the right to marriage in law until after he had left the army.

Socially this last fact had no visible effect in a society where a mass of differing local customs applied to the peregrine; and the Roman law itself, like that of Scotland, recognized marriage by *usus*, or continuous cohabitation for a stipulated period. The ladies are regularly known as *coniux* or *uxor*—as often as the most respectable Roman matron. Aurelia Aia, a citizen, is called *coniux sanctissima* by her soldier husband at Carvoran on a tombstone whose magnificence illustrates the esteem and affection in which many of these women were held.<sup>11</sup>

This alteration in the living arrangements of the troops has often been represented as part of a change from a mobile professional army to a peasant militia. Nothing could be further from the truth on the British frontier. The jurist Aemilius Macer, writing after A.D. 217, states that troops are forbidden by law from engaging in agriculture in their provinces of service either in their own names or under others.<sup>12</sup> The change is, in fact, merely the introduction of a form of married-quarters. The army remains a wholly professional force. It has improved its conditions of service, dealt with a situation undermining discipline and encouraged good relations with the local population. The changes are of detail, aimed at efficiency and loyalty. The army remains the army of Hadrian and the Antonines.

The inhabitants of the *vicus* were not limited to soldiers and their families. Even within a soldier's household there might be others, for a prosperous soldier might have a servant, such as the Moorish freedman Victor who was buried

<sup>11</sup> *CIL* vii, 793=AA<sup>4</sup> ii, 47, no. 158, recently cleaned by Dr. David Smith and preserved in the Joint Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne.

<sup>12</sup> *Digest* xlix, 16, 13.

at South Shields and whose master was a trooper in *ala I Asturum* (pl. XXVI, 1).<sup>13</sup>

Another manumitted person had a monument at South Shields as impressive as that of Victor. Regina, a former slave from the highly-Romanized land of the Catuvellauni in the South of England, was remembered here by her husband, the Palmyrene Barates (pl. XXVI, 2).<sup>14</sup> Now Barates was a merchant, a dealer in, and perhaps manufacturer of, military standards—in fact a civilian contractor. This fully explains why he moved to Corbridge, where his own tombstone has been found.<sup>15</sup> Such contractors are known elsewhere and emphasize that the civilian “tail” was not just an encumbrance on the army but performed important services to it.

Another merchant is recorded by a votive plaque from Bowness. It is indeed certain that trade with the army, with the local population and with the barbarians was a most important feature of the life of the *vicus*. The reliance of the army on acquiring some of its requirements locally encouraged the growth of shops and private workshops which could execute official orders for the Service and where, together with other establishments, the soldier off duty could spend his pay.

Once established, these places naturally also served as shopping centres for the local native population. Moreover, the forts often were placed to control a track across the frontier. Thus the *vicus* was a most convenient place for both the locals and the more peaceful barbarians to buy and sell. The *vicus* became, in fact, the market town for the neighbourhood. Consider the workmanship of the tombs of Regina and Victor. Its quality is unmatched elsewhere on the frontier except at Carlisle.<sup>16</sup> Victor's stone has the

<sup>13</sup> *AA*<sup>2</sup> x, 311ff.

<sup>14</sup> *AA*<sup>2</sup> x, 239ff.

<sup>15</sup> *EE* ix, 1153a (*AA*<sup>3</sup> viii, 188ff.). I agree with Professor Birley (*Roman Britain and the Roman Army*, 1953, 81ff.) that Barates was a *negotiator vexillarius* and not a veteran.

<sup>16</sup> Only one stone at Carlisle comes up to this standard, the tombstone of the lady with a fan (*Tullie House Catalogue*, 1922, no. 103).

appearance of a ready-made item, produced out of stock. These facts imply a clientèle sufficiently wealthy to attract to the North some of the best craftsmen in the province. The patron is in one case military, in the other civil, just as for the northern potters who supplied both markets over a wide area.

At South Shields it is possible that part of the cost of both monuments was borne by the deceaseds' former colleagues. An association of slaves is recorded at Halton Chesters, doubtless a burial club of the normal type.<sup>17</sup> Its existence proves a considerable servile population, probably employed in the civilian industries of the district.

Slaves and free men, Greeks, Germans, Syrians: natives and people from all over the Empire—how was this mixed population governed? On the evidence of four inscriptions (from Chesterholm,<sup>18</sup> Old Carlisle,<sup>19</sup> Housesteads<sup>20</sup> and Carriden<sup>21</sup>) it is known that the *vicani* developed a form of communal organization. At Carriden they erected a monument by means of an agent. The inhabitants of Housesteads passed a *decretum* authorizing some work to be done, while at Old Carlisle in the reign of Gordian III the *magistri* or officers of the *vicani* raised a public subscription and set up an altar to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus and Vulcan<sup>22</sup> for the health of the Emperor. Similarly the *vicani Vindolandesses* of Chesterholm dedicated to Vulcan *pro domu divina et numinibus Augustorum*. Some communal organization is therefore certain. Yet a *vicus*, whether as a ward in a town or as a village, is essentially a subordinate part of a larger political unit. Its status is quite different from that of a *civitas*, or canton, or a municipality, both of

<sup>17</sup> *CIL* vii, 572 = *AA*<sup>4</sup> ii, 49, no. 167.

<sup>18</sup> *Brit. Acad. Suppl. Papers* iii, 31f.

<sup>19</sup> *CIL* vii, 346.      <sup>20</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> ix, 232.

<sup>21</sup> *JRS* xlix, 229f., no. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Communal dedications to Vulcan are a persistent feature of *canabae* and *vici* in the other northern frontier provinces. The most convincing explanation is that they represent a special devotion to the god of industry by communities largely dependent on manufacturing and trading for their prosperity. Vulcan would be particularly appropriate as a tutelary deity in view of the function of the *vicus* as a source for the supply of military equipment.



which possessed a considerable measure of internal self-government. The army must always have retained powers over the civil settlements as a matter of security, even as it had at Vetera in A.D. 69, when a legate ordered the civil settlement to be destroyed lest the enemy use it as cover for an attack.<sup>23</sup> Even if the Caracallan enfranchisement implies that the loyalty of the frontier peoples was now sure, the Severan policy of allowing troops to live at home probably caused the military to retain its powers over the *vicus*.

The great civil towns around the legionary fortresses, the *canabae*, very rarely were granted independence. If a civil corporation were founded, its site was regularly placed some distance away from the fortress. It is most unlikely that the small *vici* of the British frontier achieved a higher status. Like most Roman societies the organization of the *vicani* was modelled distantly on that of the municipalities which in its turn followed the Roman Republic. But the form and functions of the *vicus* are closer to those of the *conventus c. R.*, or associations of Roman citizens resident in a foreign place, from which many of the legionary *canabae* grew. Indeed, the dedicators at Carriden use the same phraseology, describing themselves as *consistentes castello Veluniatensi*. The analogy, if any, is to be found in the modern chamber of commerce rather than the town council.

Elsewhere in the Empire cantonal centres developed from civil settlements outside forts only after the forts themselves had been abandoned by the army. Traces of such a condition on the British frontier are extremely rare. Only for Carlisle, within the area itself, are there indications of an administrative centre with independent status. The *curia Textoverdorum* recorded on a dedication first noted in Beltingham churchyard has been convincingly argued by Mr. C. E. Stevens to be a vestige of the Celtic tribal subdivisions and to have no connection with Roman local government.<sup>24</sup> There is every likelihood that it represents a

<sup>23</sup> Tacitus, *Histories* iv, 22.

<sup>24</sup> *CIL* vii, 712; *AA*<sup>4</sup> xi, 138ff.

tribal gathering which survived for religious purposes only, even as the goddess Brigantia survived in the lands of the former kingdom of the Brigantes far beyond the bounds of the Roman canton of that name.

#### THE DATING OF THE CIVIL SETTLEMENT.

Archæologically the most important problem about the *vici* is their dating. Evidence for first-century settlement is entirely lacking. In the second century we should place some of the civil inscriptions. The pottery industry at Corbridge (if civil rather than purely military) started in the same period, as well as the beginnings of civil Carlisle. The earliest phase known of the *vicus* of Old Carlisle is also second-century.

For the third and fourth centuries the evidence is plentiful and varied. The later periods at Old Carlisle were clearly divided by the destruction of A.D. 297. The communal inscription from the same *vicus* is the most closely dated of those from the region, having been erected between 238 and 244. The other communal inscriptions are probably also from the same century.

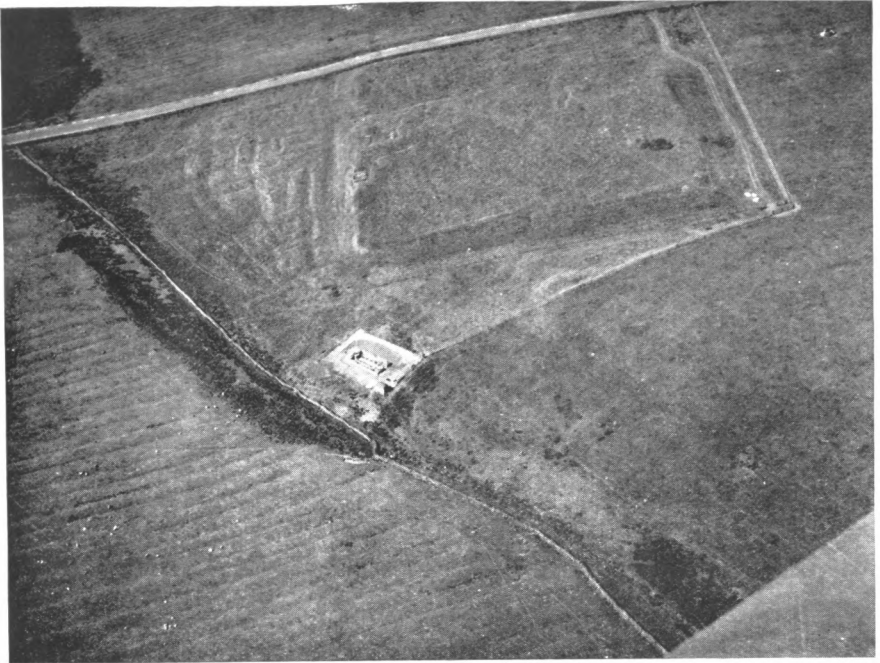
The local bronze-working industry at South Shields is fixed by its distinctive and datable brooches to the third or fourth centuries. The two monuments from the same place discussed earlier are probably Severan and reflect the extraordinary activity of the port during the build-up for the Scottish campaigns. The Carriden inscription may well represent similar activity. The building of civil houses over the obliterated Vallum at Housesteads, Benwell and probably Chesters indicate occupation from about 200 onwards.

The picture is what one would expect. Slight civil occupation appears in the second century and receives an enormous fillip from the changes and activity under the Severi. This continues and develops well into the fourth century. This, surely, is the reason why the traces are so

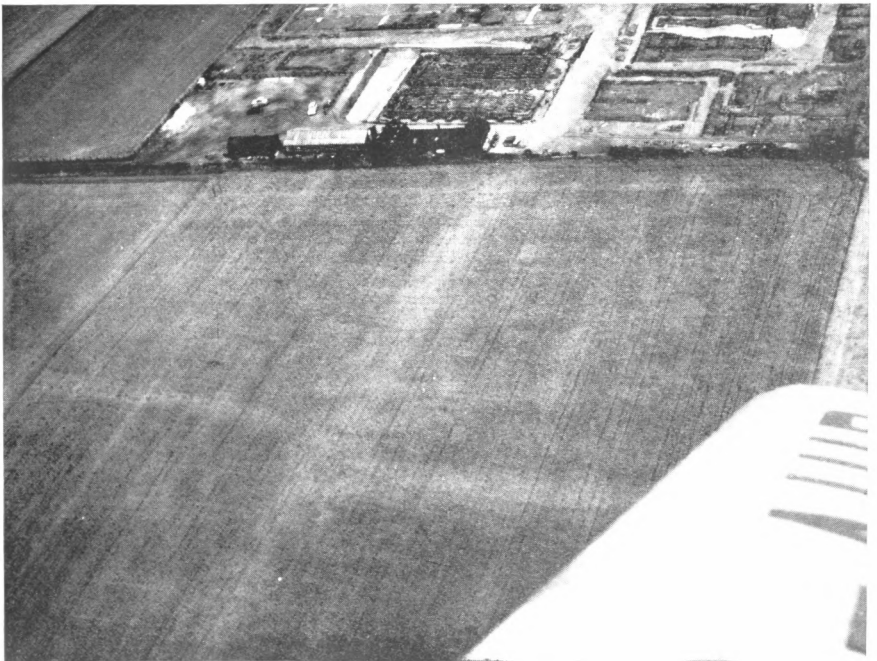
slight in Scotland: Scotland was not occupied by Rome at the time when the settlements chiefly flourished, except for a brief and temporary occupation at the beginning of the age.

The end of the *vici* is shrouded in the mystery characteristic of the latest period of Roman Britain. Whether any survived the disasters of 367 it is impossible to say. Late levels on any site tend to be scanty, simply because they are nearest to the surface. Changes in some forts suggest possible changes in military organization but do not necessarily indicate a movement of population into the fort.

There is no reason to suppose that the civil settlements survived the final evacuation of the forts. Much of the population will have gone when the troops (and presumably their families) left the region. The market which had attracted traders and farmers vanished and there was no longer the busy traffic and free circulation of coinage which once encouraged the growth of civil towns on abandoned military sites. There is some slight evidence for later occupation of a few sites (for example the Brigomaglos stone from Chesterholm), but this was probably of people merely making use of the still-standing fort walls. That there was any continuity with the *vici* is wholly unproven. The answer to this, as to most of the other problems outstanding, can only be approached by further excavation.

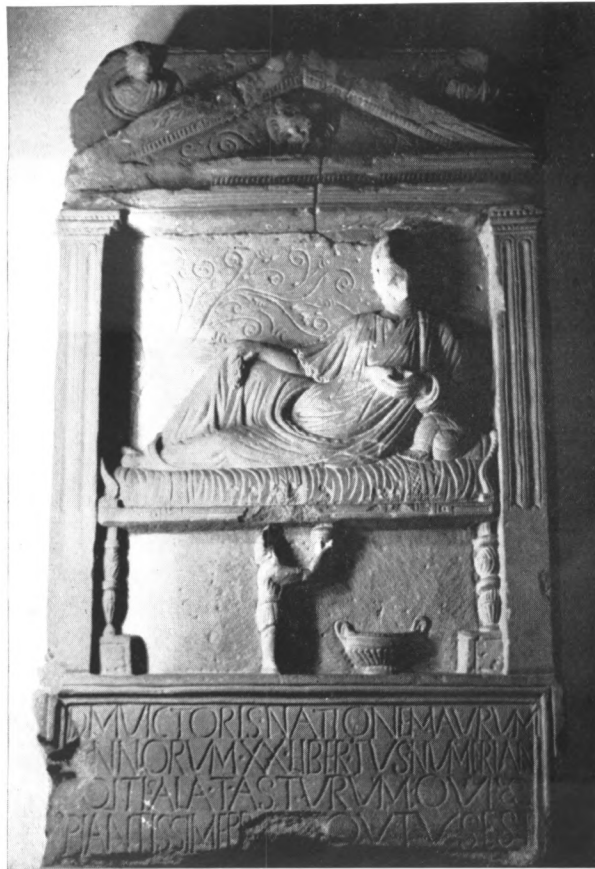


1. CARRABURGH, TRACES OF *Vicus* VISIBLE WEST OF THE FORT.

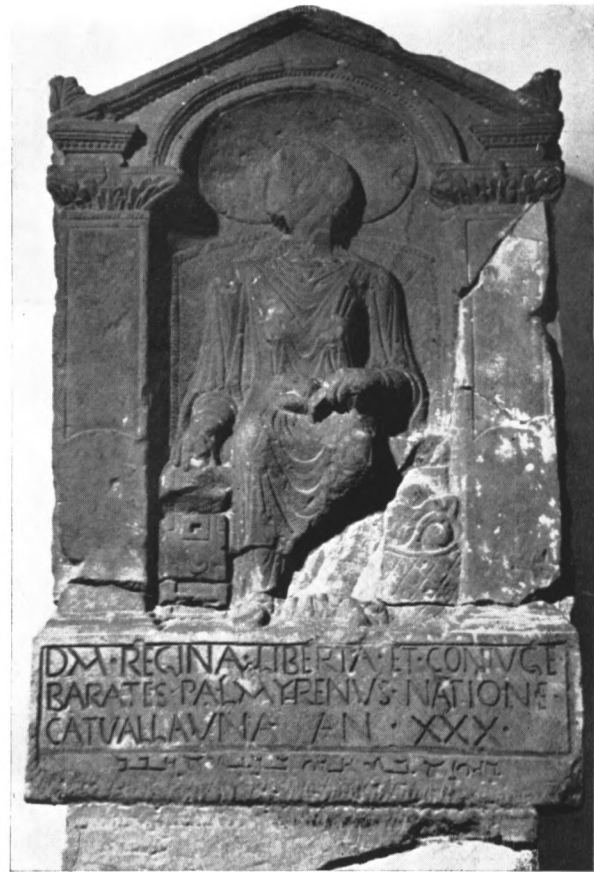


2. CORBRIDGE, STREETS AND HOUSES SHOWING AS CROP MARKS.





1. SOUTH SHIELDS, TOMBSTONE OF VICTOR, FREEDMAN.



2. SOUTH SHIELDS, TOMBSTONE OF REGINA, WIFE OF BARATES.

