

I.—THE INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMANDER'S
HOUSE AREA, ON SITE XI, CORBRIDGE,
1958 TO 1970; THE STRUCTURES

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Introduction

After Mr. Tait's untimely death, the surviving collaborator in the joint paper decided that a report which included finds as well as structures, which is what had been envisaged, could not be completed in time to appear this year. Rather than see the whole report delayed, especially as, to the distress of colleagues elsewhere, it had not proved possible to publish interim reports, it has been decided to report at once on the structures, and as soon as possible thereafter on the finds. No conclusion reached here depends on any unpublished finds.

Before there were any Roman buildings on that area of the site at Corbridge now known as site XI, the general slope of the natural ground surface was downwards from NNE to SSW., but it was not completely even. The highest part of the site was above what is now the eastern part of the courtyard, about 20m. south of the north edge of site XI. From here the ground had sloped down in three directions, gently to the north, more steeply to the west, and more steeply still to the south. Most buildings of the first and second centuries followed the natural contour, and as ground level rose with successive occupations it tended still to match the natural slope, except that an occasional special building was erected on a site prepared for it by digging-down to a horizontal plane. When site XI came to be built, the ground was levelled for the four ranges of rooms, or intended rooms, on its four sides, which involved in places

the removal of large quantities of both occupation material and subsoil. The result is that only in the south range is preserved the stratigraphic record of the history of the site before site XI was begun. The southern part of the west range preserves a little which was on or just above ground in Roman times, while the rest of it, and the north range, preserve part of the depth of those post-trenches and pits which had penetrated the subsoil. Except at its south end, the east range is devoid of all traces of earlier buildings.

The courtyard was never completely levelled by the Roman builders, though this had obviously been intended. In the mid-1930s the courtyard was scrupulously levelled to match the surrounding ranges, except where previously recorded and obvious stone buildings survived, wholly or in part above the general level. The larger of these survives on a platform in the south-eastern part of site XI. The vertical distance from the modern turf, which roughly represents ground level when the Roman builders stopped working on site XI, to the undisturbed sand or gravel subsoil, is inconsiderable north of the consolidated building, 0.85 m. within it, 0.7 m. south of it, and 1.5 m. in the south-range of site XI.

A small scale excavation within the western wall of the building, as a continuation, in 1952, of the investigation of the first- and second-century headquarters building, had revealed the presence of post-trenches. The subsequent development of work on site XI had been in the northern and western parts of the courtyard, in the west range, and in the north-east corner. In 1959 it was decided to use part of the student labour force on each of Durham University's annual training courses for the slow and careful excavation of the stone building, the "commandant's house" as it had begun to be called. The choice was made because the greater height of the area gave promise of a succession of intact stratified levels, unobtainable elsewhere in the courtyard. This promise was fulfilled only in part, but exceptionally clear structural traces with ascertainable interrelationships

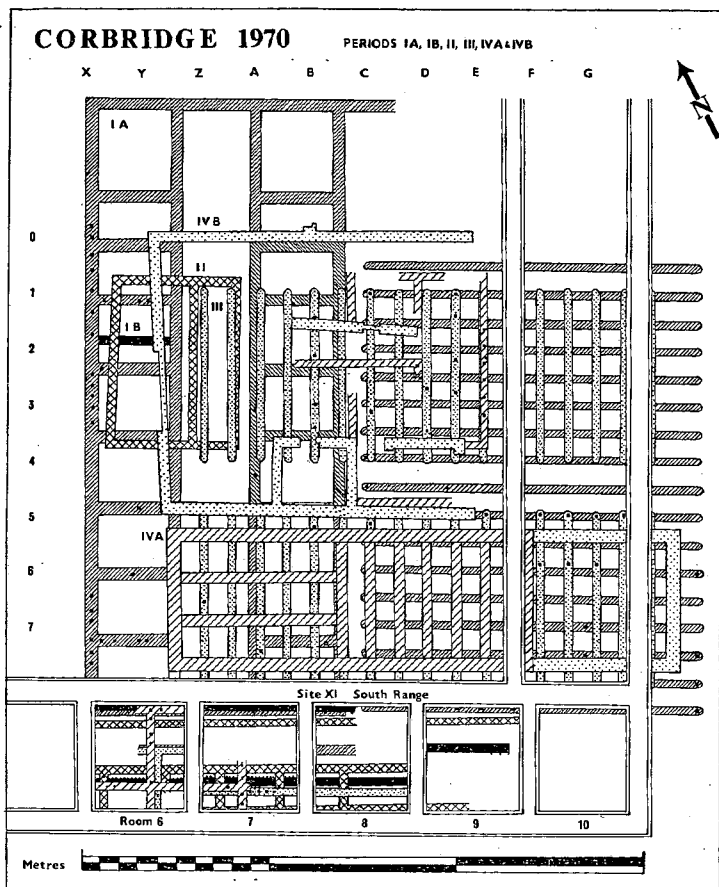


FIG. 1

were uncovered. The excavation was extended on all four sides, as far as the headquarters building on the west, as far as the former high ground on the north, where all traces had vanished in the levelling, into and across the east range, and into the south range, where alone a full succession of levels survived (fig. 1).*

* Positions on Fig. 1 may be indicated by reference to the coordinates on the plan.

This enlarged area was self-contained, as it corresponded to an *insula*, bounded by the *via quintana*, the east *intervallum* road, the *via principalis* and the road between the headquarters building and the buildings under investigation. The forts of Periods II, III and IV all certainly faced south, and the road which bounded the south side of the excavated area was the *via principalis* (fig. 2). The fort of Period I may have faced north, and the road may then have been the *via quintana*.

The method used was to clear small areas, 2.4 m. square (8 ft.), steadily from the topsoil on to and into the subsoil, recording at intervals, to obtain the best possible picture of post-trenches and other structures, in horizontal section. After the vertical sections had been recorded, areas were often widened to obtain a fuller picture, but at no time was more than a fraction of the total area stripped. Anyone beginning afresh, were that possible, would doubtless use different methods, but the method adopted in 1958 was adhered to throughout, and it proved to have certain advantages.

The stratification below the stone building proved to be far from clear-cut. One patch of clay flooring survived, and another patch of burnt floor boards, each over only part of the area, and belonging to each of two phases out of the six identified. The material encountered was mainly gravel, which varied a little in colour and in the size of the constituent pebbles, but was otherwise remarkably similar, whether naturally or artificially deposited. There had been levelling-down for buildings, followed by levelling-up for further buildings, and this had left a puzzling record, which was, it is hoped, eventually understood. On the other hand, the clarity of the post-trenches, especially when seen against the layer of red-orange sand which underlies the highest natural gravel layer over much of the area, meant that plans could be obtained, and structural relationships established, accurately, confidently and easily.

The structural sequence being certain, the structures are

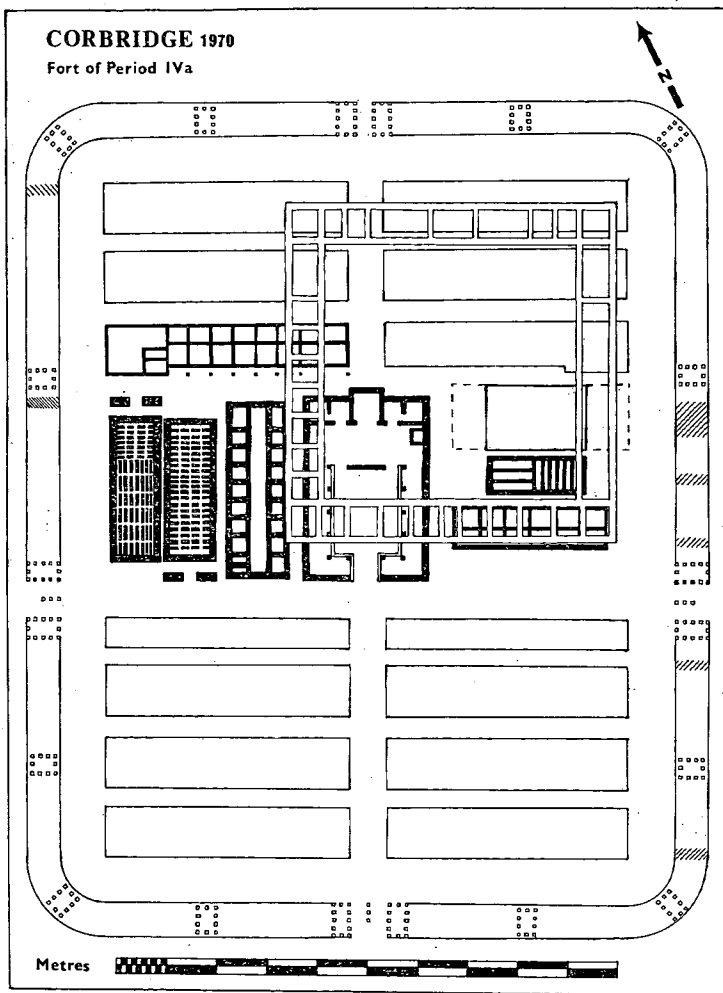


FIG. 2

described and discussed under numbered periods, without any reference to dates. A Roman number refers to a building or group of buildings which replaced previous buildings completely, to a new plan; the letters A and B refer to

separate phases within the period of use of a building or group, when there had been modification not amounting to complete new planning. A table at the end of the report relates the periods to dates, but the evidence for this, inscriptions, coins, samian and coarse pottery, came from the site as a whole, and not merely, nor even largely, from the area reported on. One part of the site as a whole is readily linked to another, by stratification, destruction deposits, types of timber construction, types of masonry, and, above all, by the consistency or otherwise of the internal planning of the successive forts.

The area outside the west wall of the consolidated stone building, and to a limited extent immediately inside it, was investigated by the late Sir Ian Richmond before he left the region. Professor Eric Birley has throughout been a director of the excavation as a whole. The twelve-year investigation of the commander's house area was supervised for various periods of time by Miss Charlesworth, Mr. Cole, Mr. Daniels, Mr. Detsicas, Dr. Dobson, Miss Harbottle, Dr. Heywood, Dr. Larwood, Dr. Mann, Miss Maxfield, Dr. McCord, Miss Stephens, Dr. Wilkes, Mrs. Woodfield and the writers. Permission for the work was given by the Ministry of Works, as it was called when work began; there was helpful co-operation at all times and at all levels.

Period IA (fig. 3)

The buildings to be considered were eventually destroyed by fire. Before that happened some of them underwent structural modifications. The period of time between the first construction and the modification is defined as Period IA, and that between the modification and the destruction as Period IB.

The earliest Roman structure in the south-eastern part of site XI had been a timber-framed hospital. Its plan is almost completely preserved by surviving post-trenches. The

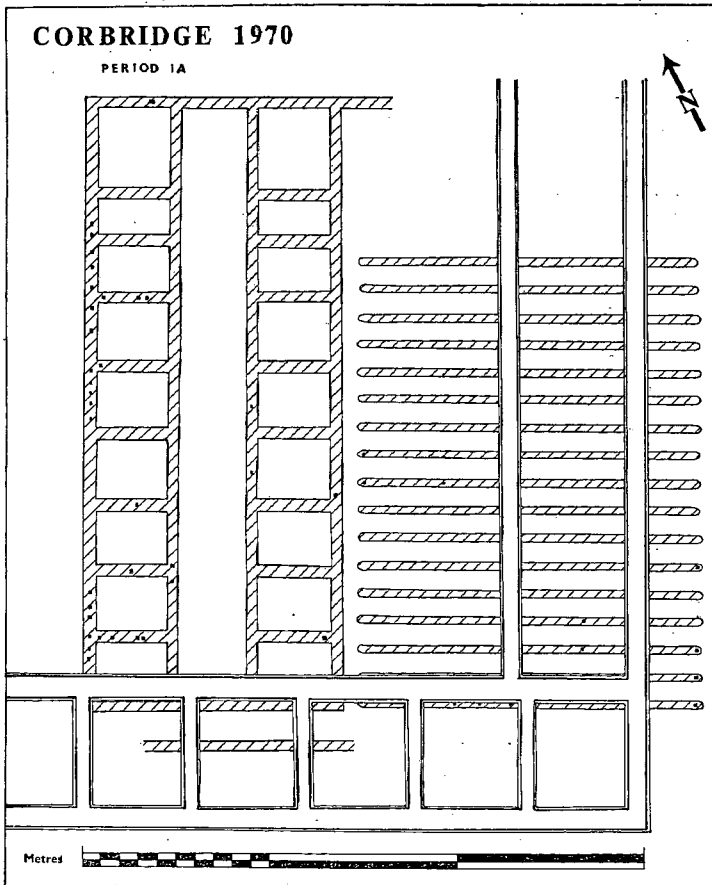


FIG. 3

trenches were 0.95 m. deep and 0.6 m. wide, as were those of several other contemporary buildings at Corbridge; this is wider than all later post-trenches. The post-holes were 130 mm. square, and usually quite empty; they fell at their closest at intervals of 0.74 m. ($2\frac{1}{2}$ Roman feet). The trenches were filled with a clean mixture of sand and gravel, derived from the layered sand and gravel subsoil into which they

had been dug. They contained no charcoal, no fired clay, and normally no artefacts. The discovery of masses of fired clay and charred wattle, derived from the burning down of the hospital at the end of its second phase of use, indicated that it had possessed timber-framed clay walls, as had the headquarters building.

The building was separated from the contemporary headquarters building, to the west, by a lightly gravelled street, 3.9 m. wide. It has been interpreted as a hospital because of its close similarity to major elements in undoubted *valetudinaria* in legionary fortresses in Britain and abroad. No finds which would confirm the interpretation were made. Over its post-trenches the hospital measured 32.8 m. on its long north to south axis, by 13.5 m.; this compares with 33.5 by 13.7 m. at Fendoch and 35.5 by 12.8 m. in Period IVA at Corbridge. The northern end wall was on the same line on the *via principalis* as the north wall of the headquarters building, but the southern end wall was separated from the *via quintana* by a further structure.

The central hall, 4.2 m. wide internally, was doubtless lit by a clerestory, as there were outside walls only at the ends. There is a range of nine rooms on each side. The most northerly room is half as big again as the majority, while the second room is slightly smaller than the majority, which measure 3.0 by 4.0 m. internally.

Except on another part of the site, where plastered clay walls still stood, it was never possible to establish the position of a doorway from the post-trenches; buildings of all types appear without doors. Variations in the spacing of the post-holes might have helped, but in practice did not.

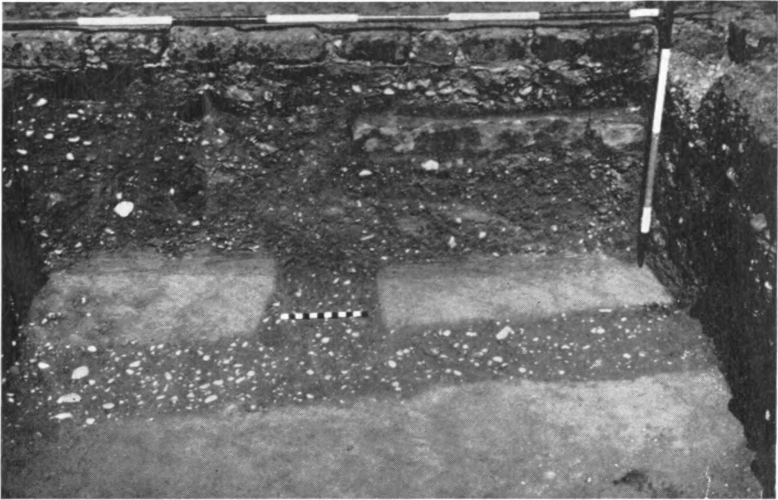
Two short lengths of an east to west post-trench were found in rooms 6 and 8 of the south range of site XI, south of the hospital and at the same level as its south wall. The trench, was structurally primary, and was intersected by two subsequent post-trenches. It was clearly a structure of Period IA, but, unless it resembled the buildings which succeeded it in the same part of the area, its character and



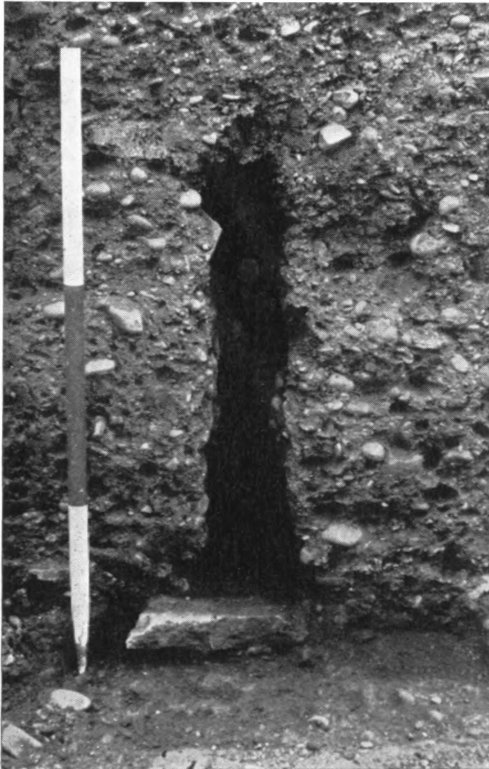
1. X5 from the south. Post trench of west wall of hospital of period IA



2. A2 from the south west. Post trench of wall of hospital of period IA, overlapped by support trench of north granary of period III



1. D4 from the south. Support trench of granary of period IA, overlapped by south end of support trench of north granary of period III



2. D2 from the east. Section of post-hole in support trench of north granary of period III



1. F5 from the south. Support trench of granary of period IA, overlapped by north ends of support trenches of period III, with a full and an empty post-hole. North wall of period IVB extension to stone granary of period IVA, in foreground



2. Z5, A5 and B5 from the west. Clay and cobble foundation of north wall of stone granary of period IVA. Stone wall of Commander's House of period IVB, on left



1. E6 from the south-west. Sleeper wall of stone granary of period IVA. East range of site XI in background



2. E5 from the south east. Broken east end of south wall of Commander's House of period IVB, directly overlying support trench of granary of period IA. Walls of period IVA and of site XI, in foreground

function are unknown.

Parallel with the hospital of Period IA, and 1.2 m. to the east, lay a granary. Its long axis was north to south. It had seventeen post-trenches, each 0.4 m. wide, with post-holes at intervals of 1.48 m. (5 Roman feet); these ran across the building at right angles to the axis. The figure seventeen seems strange at first; all four timber granaries at Corbridge had seventeen post-trenches, and granaries elsewhere in Britain usually have an odd number. Seventeen post-trenches imply seventeen uprights to each side wall, and thus sixteen bays, readily subdivisible into groups separated by partitions. There were no side walls at ground level. The granary was 24 m. long from north to south, and the post-trenches, measured from corresponding edges, were 1.48 m. (5 Roman feet) apart. The granary was 18 m. wide. As far as is known it is the widest timber granary discovered in Roman Britain, wider by 5.5 m. than the granaries at Inchtuthil. As a result, and in spite of its comparatively short length, it is also one of the largest; only the Inchtuthil granaries cover each a larger area, while each Fendoch granary is slightly less than one third the area.

The fort of Period I was wider than its successors, but the precise position of its ramparts is not known. If, like Stanwix, it was 177 m. wide over all, there will have been room for a second granary of the same size and type, to the east of the known granary, though the short lengths of post-trench so far recorded below the rampart of Period II do not look like parts of a granary. A single granary of 430 sq. m. was perhaps sufficient for the garrison.

The north end of the granary was used for loading and unloading, for a building stood between its south end and the *via quintana*, while between the north end and the *via principalis*, apart from a single unexplained post-trench, there was an open space. Of the seven known fort granaries of various dates at Corbridge, two opened on to the *via principalis* of the day, one on to the *via quintana* and four on to an *intervallum* road.

Period IB (fig. 4)

At five points on the Corbridge site as a whole there have been found examples of a method of construction different from that in the undoubtedly primary work of Period I. Two examples have already been published;¹ one was a very recent discovery; two are described here. In all instances sleepers, sunk into a trench only to their own depth, had formed the foundation for upright timbers. Twice sleepers survived, preserved by fire or water, once traces of a sleeper survived, and twice the former presence of a sleeper was implied by the absence of post-holes within a shallow trench. In four instances there were small holes, or the preserved sharpened ends of rods, along the outer edges of the beams; in three instances certainly, and two probably, this method of construction was later than a structure of Period IA and earlier than the fire.

In the fourth room to the north in the west range of the hospital, an extra east to west partition was inserted in Period IB. The trench was intersected by a post-trench of Period II. A thick band of charcoal marked the greater part of the length of the partition. From this Richmond inferred that it had been exclusively of timber; this is almost certainly correct, but it does not explain the distribution of the charcoal. Normally the products of partial combustion are found at the sides of a trench; less frequently they are found over a trench, but, if so, they are also found on either side. Charcoal conforming exclusively to a wall line can only have been structural, like the sleepers found later, preserved in position, on another part of the site. Here, in marked contrast to the post trenches of Period IA, instead of being planted on the bottom of a deep trench, the main uprights had been mortised into a sleeper sunk into the ground to a depth no more than its own thickness, which is unlikely to have been greater than its width, 0.3 m. No small

¹ *A.A.A.*, XV, 1938, p. 257, ad *A.A.A.*, XXXI, 1953 p. 218.

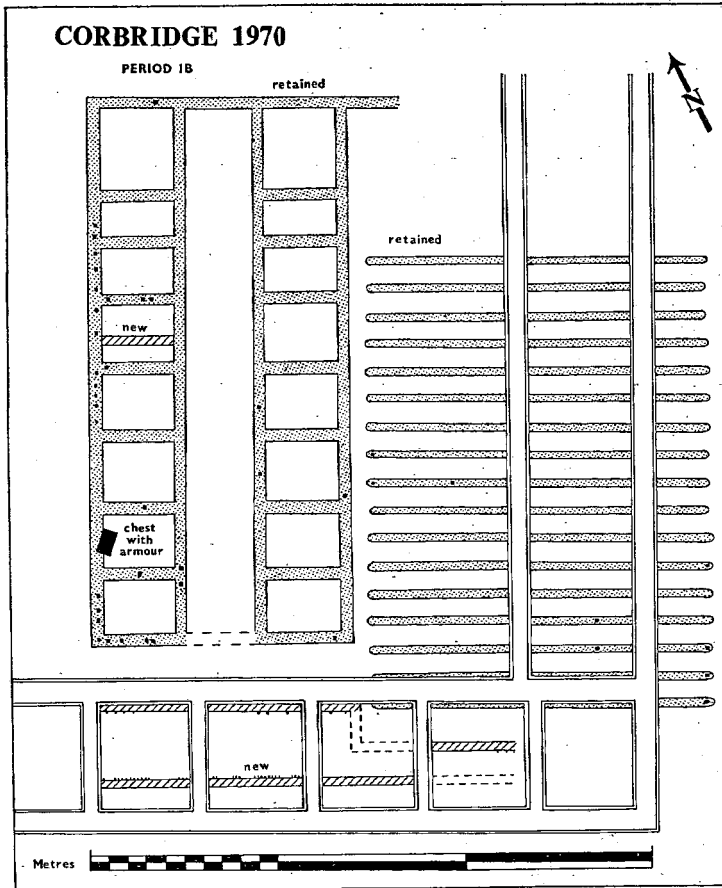


FIG. 4

holes were observed along the edges of the charred sleeper.

South of the hospital, in rooms 6, 7 and 8 of the south range of site XI, a continuous east to west trench, 17 m. long, was discovered. It nowhere intersected a post-trench of Period IA, but it was clear from the sections that it was later. It was intersected several times by post-trenches of Period II. Its position in the sequence, Period IB, is not in doubt.

The trench was 0.4 m. wide, and along both sides, at intervals of 0.3 m., sometimes immediately outside and sometimes immediately inside the filling, were holes, 35 mm. in diameter, empty, and 0.4 m. deep. No main post-holes were visible along the centre line of the trench. Had any existed some would certainly have been observed in a length of 17 m., when at least thirty-two of the smaller holes were observed. There can then have been no post-holes, and that implies that the trench had held a sleeper, with its top at ground level, in the same way as the secondary partition in the hospital. Parallel with this sleeper-trench, 4.1 m. to the north, measured over one trench, was a further trench, similar in character. Its north edge underlay the foundation of site XI, while its south edge had partly cut away the north edge of the post-trench for the south wall of the hospital of Period IA. It had also cut through the south end of each of the post-trenches for the four north to south walls of the hospital. It was nowhere in contact with structures of Periods II or III, but stratification showed it to be earlier than either; it was cut into and partly covered by a T-junction of post-trenches of Period IV, but not obliterated by it. The small holes on the north edge could not be uncovered. On the south edge were eleven small holes surviving, never less than 0.5 m. apart. The more northerly sleeper trench was not observed beyond a point 2.9 m. short of the most easterly recorded part of the more southerly. In room 9 of the south range of site XI, a third sleeper trench of the same character ran parallel with the more southerly, 1.8 m. north of it, measured over one trench. The probability is that the building of Period IB, whatever its function, had become narrower at a point in room 8, in order to avoid the south end of the granary of Period IA. This interpretation is followed on the restored plan on fig. 5. Whatever its relationship to the granary, the building of Period IB had certainly caused modifications to the hospital. On the other hand, the new partition in the west range shows that the building as a whole was not demolished. This is confirmed by the distribu-

tion of the fired clay and charred wattle, which shows that the building was still standing at the time of the fire. The inference must be that the hospital was reduced in length. On another part of the site the commanding officer's house was reduced in size in Period IB.

The regularly spaced small but deep holes along the sides of the sleepers probably held vertical rods, upon which a skin of wattles was horizontally woven, and to which the plaster face of the wall was applied.

In the third room from the south in the west range of the hospital, up against the west wall, was found an iron-bound wooden chest, 0.97 by 0.5 by at least 0.3 m. The chest was covered by charred floor boards. It held a remarkably diverse and fascinating collection of objects and materials, including an almost complete cuirass, in laminated plate, the new type of legionary armour, and part of a second.

The end of Period IB came when the fort perished in flames. On the west side of each of the four main post-trenches of the hospital, coming precisely to the edge and no further, were layers of charred wattle and fired clay, 80 mm. thick, tailing off to the next trench on the west. It is possible to picture the blazing building collapsing westwards all at once. Some of the post-holes of the hospital were partly filled with charcoal, plainly from posts charred in position. The sleeper of a partition, charred in position, has been discussed. Between the hospital and the *via quintana*, patches of charred wattle and fired clay overlay the post-trenches of Period IA, and accompanied the sleeper-trenches of Period IB. There was no fired clay, and little charcoal, on the site of the granary, though both had been found further east. The drastic levelling-down in Period III, would inevitably have removed the debris, but even without it, the evidence, which is by no means confined to this part of the site, is impressive and conclusive. The whole fort was burnt down, and there is no reason to suppose that it was by accident.

Period II (fig. 5)

The post-trenches of the buildings of Period II were 0.4 m. wide; that is narrower than those of Period IA. The filling was not exclusively of mixed sand and gravel, but, in addition there were varying amounts of charcoal and other débris. This held moisture and caused the post-trenches of Period II to stand out against the sandy subsoil even more plainly than those of Period I. The drastic levelling-down in Period III had removed most of the buildings of Period II from the south-eastern part of the courtyard of site XI. The new ground level for the granaries of Period III was evidently lower than the bottom of the post-trenches of Period II, but not so low as those of Period I, which had been dug from a lower level and had also penetrated more deeply. In the north-western part of the area, partly to west and partly to east of the west wall of the stone building, a small building was represented in its entirety by post-trenches. It cut through post-trenches of the hospital of Period IA, through the partition of Period IB, and through the débris of destruction; it was cut by post-trenches of a granary of Period III. It measured externally 9.1 m. from north to south, and 6.8 m. from east to west. It was divided by a north to south partition 2.3 m., over one trench, from the east. It was far too small to have been the commander's house, and its function is unknown, but there was a closely similar building at Fendoch, which suggests that it was of a standard type.

In rooms 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the south range of site XI, were the post-trenches of a building which cut through a sleeper-trench of Period IB, and the associated layer of burnt wattle and daub; they were cut at several points by post-trenches of Periods III and IV. From what remains of the building it is clear that its long axis was from east to west; 20 m. survives, and it is probable that it was originally 33 m. long, running from a point 5 m. east of the headquarters building to a point on the edge of the east *inter-*

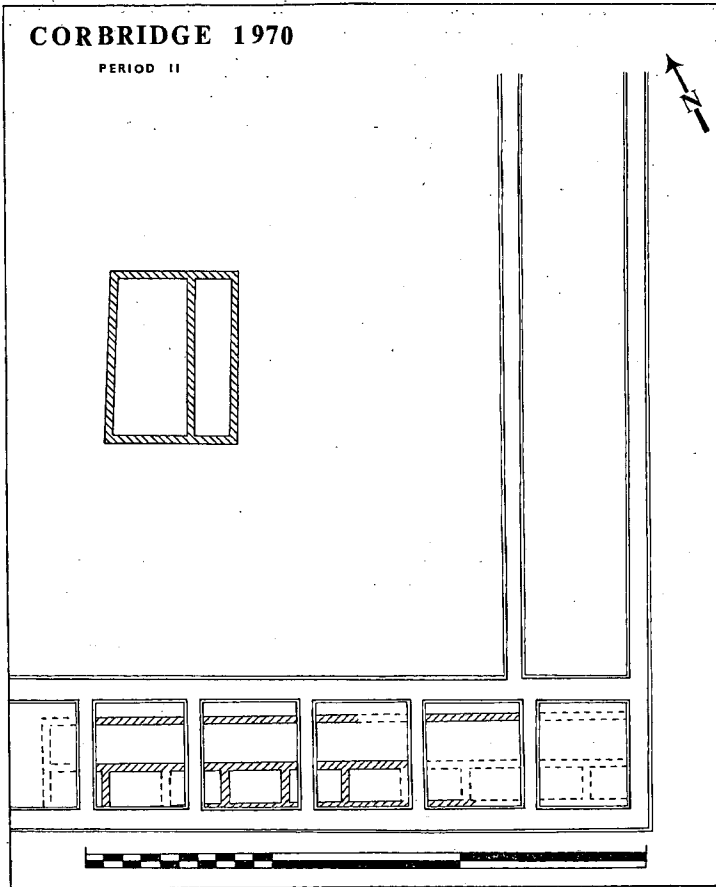


FIG. 5

vallum road. The building was 5 m. wide from north to south, and was longitudinally divided from east to west, fractionally south of centre. The northern half was unsubdivided, while in the southern there had been north to south partitions. These were 3.25 m. apart, measured over one post-trench, or in one instance 6.5 m., implying an intermediate partition obscured by post-trenches of Periods III

and IV. This suggests a total of ten rooms of regular size. Apart from its obvious resemblance to a barrack block, there is no hint of the building's function, but there was a closely similar building at Pen Llystyn, which suggests that it was of a standard type. A possible function is discussed below.

The missing structure, which occupied the eastern and southern parts of the area, in the courtyard and east range of site XI, was almost certainly the commander's house. The only other possible area, in the western part of the central range, was occupied in Period II by at least one granary, and possibly a hospital, as it was to be again in Period IV.

Period III (fig. 6)

Occupying most of the commander's house area within the courtyard of site XI, and in the east range, were found exceptionally clear traces of two parallel granaries, each with its axis east and west, one north of the other. At Pen Llystyn there was a pair of granaries on the sinister side of the headquarters building, at right angles to the axis of the fort. Each was 24 m. long and 9.4 m. wide. The post-trenches of the western part of the north granary intersected both those of the hospital of Period I, and those of the smaller building of Period II, without destroying them. Further to the east, where the original ground level had been higher, levelling down to a completely horizontal plane, obviously to ensure a horizontal floor, had removed all traces of buildings of Period II, and reduced the surviving depth of post-trenches of Period IA. Still further east, at the extreme edge of site XI, later levelling, possibly when the east range was built, possibly more recent, had removed all traces of timber buildings. The trenches of the eastern part of the south granary, which was on lower and more level ground, intersected those of the granary of Period IA, forming a grid pattern of 1.48 m. squares, composed of

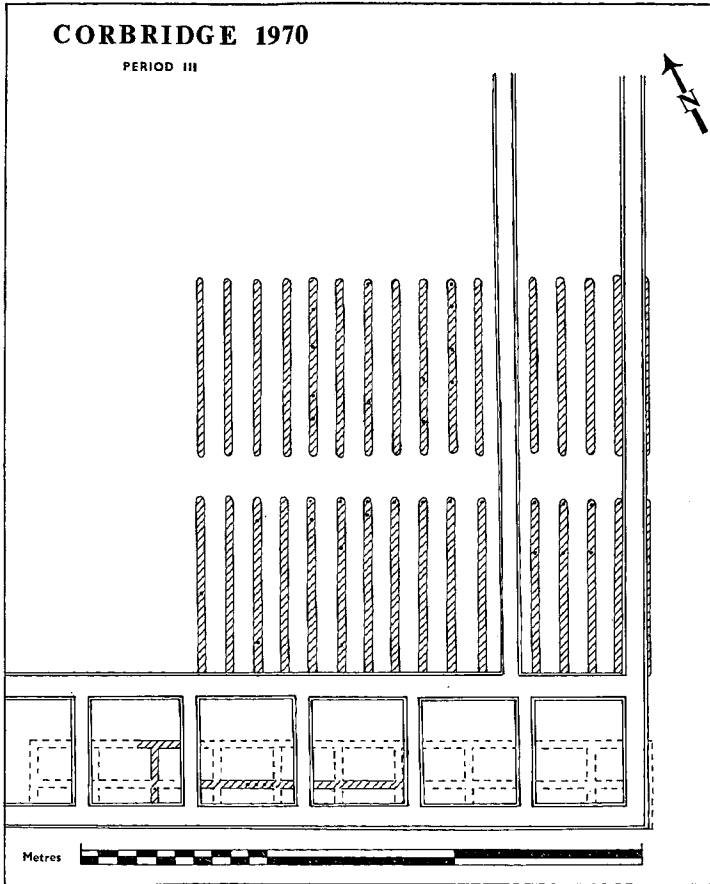


FIG. 6

trenches so similar in width and filling that several intersecting trenches appeared at first to be contemporary with each other. A similar intersecting pattern may be seen in the first- and second-period north granary at Richborough. At those points of intersection at Corbridge where the relationship was clear, the north to south trench was always the later. Traces of the south granary were also found in and

beyond the east range of site XI, but no traces of any structure intermediate in sequence between the earlier and later granaries.

The granaries each had seventeen support trenches. They were 0.4 m. wide, and posts had been at intervals of 1.48 m. The support posts of part of the north granary, and possibly over a wider area, had been sawn off, probably below the floor, for the tops of the surviving post-holes were in the same horizontal plane, while no horizontal holes survived (pl. II, 2). The posts had been packed round with gravel, up to precisely their sawn-off tops. From the surviving tops to the ground level of Period III, the holes were 0.43 m. deep, and from there to the bottom of the post-trench, where each post had stood on a flat stone to prevent its sinking through the trench bottom, they were again 0.43 m. deep, a total of 0.86 m. The presence of flat stones on the bottom of a post-trench had been remarked elsewhere on the site. These trenches clearly had never held sleepers.

Post-trenches of Period III were found in rooms 6, 7 and 8 of the south range of site XI, south of the south granary. The building will have been of the same general character as those which occupied the same general position in Periods II and IV, but as only one partition remained unobscured no restoration is possible.

Period IVA (fig. 7)

Traces of a timber building were found below and to east of the surviving portion of the consolidated stone building. It was evident that some of the stone walls, which had deep foundations, were on the line of post-trenches. The post-trenches tended to be dug into and filled with dumped gravel, and not to penetrate the subsoil. The discontinuous and incomplete record of these post-trenches implies that others had existed, but, a decade or more ago, they were not observed. Their place in the sequence, later than the

INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMANDER'S HOUSE AREA 19

north granary of Period III and earlier than the stone building, was never in doubt. Immediately to the east of the surviving stonework, where it had been removed by the builders of site XI, part of the immediately preceding post-trench system could be investigated without hindrance, and it was investigated in 1970. A post-trench ran out eastwards from below the stone building parallel with a granary support

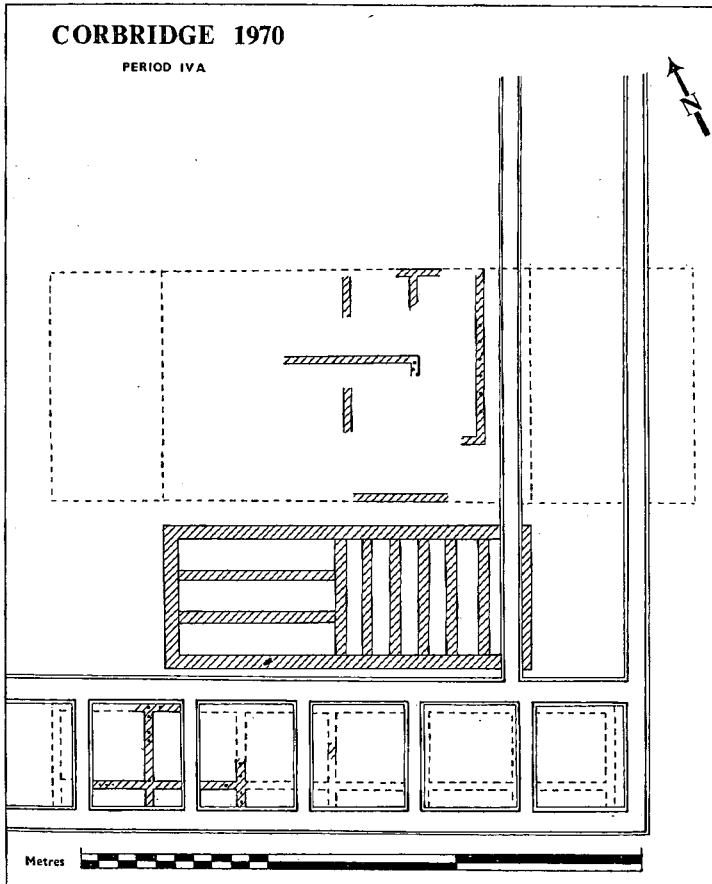


FIG. 7

trench of Period IA; it then turned through a right angle and ran northwards for 9.4 m., at which point it ceased to appear. The long north and south stretch almost coincided with a granary support trench of Period III, and had wiped out its post-holes and much of the trench. The new post-holes were at closer intervals, 0.3 m., and had survived empty to a depth of 0.9 m. The area inside the later timber building was covered by a clay floor, 80 mm. thick, which ran precisely up to the inner face of each post-hole; these survived above its surface for a few millimetres. On the other hand the floor ran uninterruptedly over the empty post-holes of the granary support trench of Period III, five Roman feet to the west. In spite of the incomplete plan there can be little doubt that the function of the building was commander's house. The space available for a commander's house was 430 sq. m., which would have been sufficient.

The north face of the north wall of a further stone building lay 0.5 m. to south of the south wall of the consolidated stone building. It was a granary, or granary-like structure, originally either wholly of stone, or partly of stone and partly of timber, the stone alone surviving. Like the contemporary granaries to the west, below the third-century consolidated granaries, and also like a granary at Whitley Castle, it had no buttresses. Its longer axis ran east and west, and its external measurements were 19.8 by 7.5 m., that is 4.2 m. shorter and 1.9 m. narrower than the timber granary it overlay. The outer walls were on a deep, broad and well made foundation of clay and cobble, on which medium-small light grey masonry stood, 0.74 m. broad, and nowhere more than two courses high, about 0.45 m. This type of masonry is characteristic of Period IVA on the site as a whole.

In the eastern half of the building there are seven sleeper walls, of which one is wholly inferred, which ran transversely from north to south, they were 1.48 m. apart, measured over one wall, while in the western half there were two sleeper walls which ran longitudinally from east

to west; they were 2.3 m. apart, measured over one wall. There are other examples of contemporary sleeper walls running at right angles to each other; these are in the Hadrianic west granary at Haltonchesters, and in the west granary of Period IVA at Corbridge, though here they were at first mistaken for the work of two distinct periods. Both sets of sleeper walls were more widely spaced than those in the contemporary west granary, which are 1.4 m. apart over one wall. The wide spacing of the sleeper walls implies a floor of wooden boards, as at Housesteads, rather than a flagged floor. The sleeper walls had been founded in shallow trenches, in the contemporary ground surface, on clay without cobble.

The transverse support trenches of the south granary of Period III exactly underlay the transverse sleeper walls of Period IVA. The sleeper walls were 0.2 m. wider than the post trenches, and hid them symmetrically and completely. Except where a sleeper wall happened to be ill preserved, it was necessary to dismantle sleeper walls to ascertain or confirm the presence of post-trenches. This precise correspondence between part of the plan of a timber-framed building of Period III, and a stone building of Period IVA, has been noted before, particularly in the headquarters building. There was continuity between Periods III and IV in the sense that buildings occupied in the earlier period were kept in commission until the later builders had opportunity either to perpetuate them or to sweep them away, and this shows that while the site lay unoccupied for some fifteen years between the end of Period III and the beginning of Period IVA on the evidence of the site as a whole, it was still maintained.

Post-trenches of a further timber building of Period IVA were found in rooms 6 and 7 of the south range of site XI, south and south-west of the stone granary. The post-trenches cut through or overlay the remains of all four earlier phases. Parts of the east-to-west north wall, and of a longitudinal dividing wall, survived, 4.35 m. apart, measured over one

post-trench. Three north to south partitions, two of which crossed the dividing wall, survived in part, 5.1 m. apart, measured over one post-trench. The probable position of the south wall lies outside the area. The length of the building, the number of rooms and even their size remain in doubt.

Period IVB (fig. 8)

The date of the consolidated and visible building in the south-eastern part of site XI was in some doubt from 1910 to 1970. For long it was referred to as a "later building", by which was meant later than site XI, which in its turn could mean any date from the early third century to the beginning of the fifth. The masonry has been described as typically Theodosian. It was then realised by Birley and Richmond, even before the headquarters building of Period IVA had been identified, that the structure was probably earlier than site XI; the eastern part of it had been cut away by the insertion of the east range of Site XI and the ruins had been left standing above the general level of the courtyard, which had not been completely levelled by the time that work on the unfinished building had ceased. On the identification of the headquarters building, immediately to the west, it was promptly concluded that the adjacent building was a contemporary "commandant's house". Eighteen years later this proved to have been close to the truth.

The stone building is not strictly rectangular; the north-west angle is 87° and the south-west 93° . The west wall is intact, 14.9 m. long, while the east wall has entirely vanished. Of the north wall 16.8 m. survives, and of the south 16.1 m. When they were first recorded the north and south walls approached more nearly to the east side of the courtyard of site XI than they do now. The walls are 0.6 m. thick; the masonry does not exactly match the medium-small light grey masonry best seen in the earliest stonework of

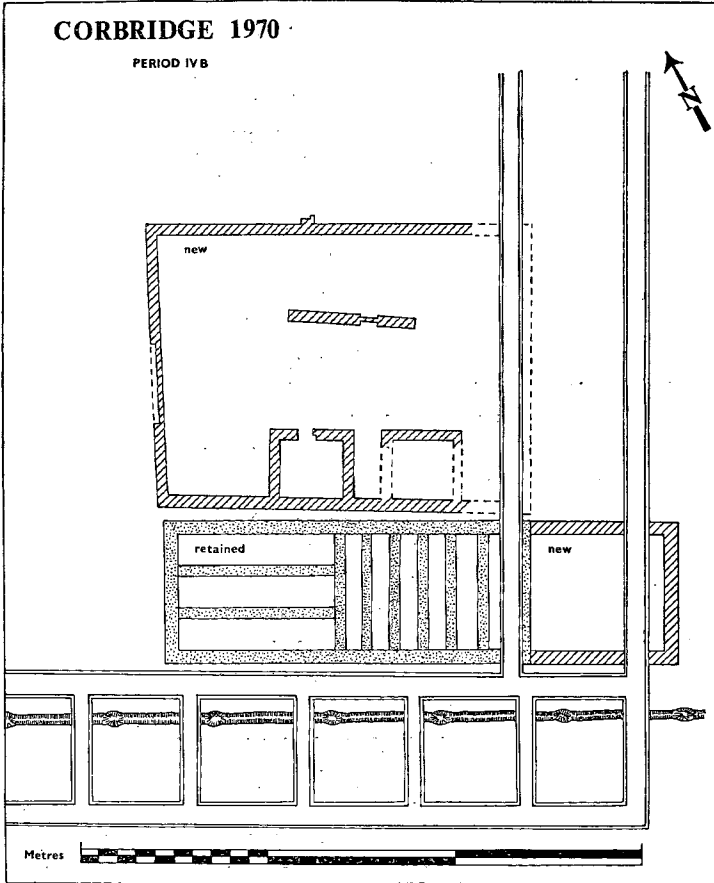


FIG. 8

the west granary, and in the earlier stonework of the west wall of the headquarters building, both of Period IVA. It tends to be slightly less regular, and more variegated, though still dominantly grey. It contrasts markedly with the large ochre-coloured stonework to be seen in the wall which surrounds the western pair of stone granaries, and in the narrowing of the front opening of the *aedes* of the headquarters

building, both of Period VA.

The building stands on a sloping plateau, well above the datum level of site XI. The west wall slopes gently up from south to north, while the north and south walls slope gently up from west to east. The outer south-west angle falls at a point only 0.3 m. west of the line of the west wall of the granary of Period IVA. The south wall is parallel with and 0.5 m. north of the north wall of the granary, but is stepped up to a level 0.7 m. higher. A deep excavator's trench had cut off all connection between the consolidated building and the granary, nevertheless it seemed likely that the higher building was later than the lower, but had been built in relation to it at a time when the lower was still standing and in use. The difference in level may have been because the subsequent treatment of the two sites levelled-down for the granaries of Period III, had been different. The site of the north granary had been filled up with gravel, to the tops of the support posts, while the site of the south granary, which had been less deeply dug in, was used for the stone granary, which was related to it in plan, and was at about the same level. The final result was a terraced site.

Overlapped by the south wall of the higher building, at a depth of 1.4 m. below its lowest course, was a post-trench of a partition of the hospital of Period IA, and further to the east, directly below, at the same depth, was a support trench of the granary of Period IA. Intermediate in depth, and immediately to north, were the north butt ends of the support trenches of the south granary of Period III, each with a post-hole, usually empty, and at least 0.97 m. deep, rising from the trench, through packed gravel.

Several lengths of internal walling survive, including one complete room. The disengagement, during the final season of the excavation of the area, of part of a timber building, clearly later than the north granary of Period III, and earlier than the stone building, enabled the stone building to be placed in sequence. Various possibilities were considered, and it emerged that the only interpretation to fit all the facts

was that the stone building was later than the beginning of Period IV, and earlier than Period V. Period IV had thus to be subdivided, as Period I already had been; the timber structure was assigned to Period IVA and the stone to Period IVB. The earlier guess at the function of the building, commander's house, had almost certainly been correct.

The stone granary of Period IVA to south of the stone commander's house of Period IVB, was extended at some time 7.3 m. eastward, maintaining the same width. There were no sleeper walls in the extension. So far east cover was thin and stratification non-existent. The extension was obviously earlier than site XI, structurally secondary to Period IVA, and, *a fortiori*, later than the post-trenches of Period III, but there was no evidence of its date or its place in the sequence. On the one hand it might have been built immediately on completion of the granary, and on the other at almost any subsequent date, so long as the primary building was still in use; it is known that it continued in use into Period VA though with a different function. Of the possible points in the sequence, Periods IVA, IVB and VA, the extension is provisionally assigned to Period IVB.

An open unlined drain, 31 m. long as so far recorded, had run from east to west through the northern part of rooms 6 to 10 of the south range of site XI, from a point 2.5 m. east of Site XI, beyond which it was not traced. The strip between its north lip and the south face of the courtyard wall of site XI was 0.8 m. wide, and the drain completely covered a post-trench of Period II without destroying it. It was segmental in section, 0.6 m. wide at the top, and 0.6 m. deep; it was filled with large loose stones. At intervals of *circa* 6 m. there were sumps, roughly circular in plan, *circa* 0.9 m. in diameter and 0.75 m. deep, also filled with large loose stones. There were six sumps in the length investigated, of which all but that in room 10 were cleared.

The stratification showed that the system belonged to some point in Period IV. In room 6 the drain and a post-trench of Period IVA intersected at right angles. The

absence of any trace of the post-trench crossing the drain removes any possibility that the drain was earlier. It could have been contemporary if the wall superstructure had crossed above the drain, and the post-trench had been interrupted. It seems more likely that the drain was later, and that it had removed a length of post-trench of a demolished building. Had the interval of the sumps been the same as that of the partitions of Period IVA, that would have suggested contemporaneity. As the interval is different it is better to assign the sump and drain system to Period IVB.

At the end of Period IVB Corbridge ceased to be the site of a fort.

Conclusions

It is striking that while the site of the headquarters building remained the same throughout four main periods of planning, the positions of the other structures in the central range were changed more than once from one side of the headquarters building to the other. In the four periods, the commander's house was successively west, east, west and east of the headquarters building; the hospital was east, ?west, ?west and west; the granary or granaries were east, west, east and west, with a possible extra on the east; the subdivided building was always on the east.

As a result of a random combination of factors hardly anything has been learned of the commanders' houses, while much has been learned about the granaries. The existence of seven granaries, earlier than Period VA, is known, and of each a complete plan, or a confidently restorable plan, is available, while the existence of a further one may confidently be inferred. The existence of four commandants' houses is known, from main or sub phases, and a further two may be inferred, but the full plans of none can yet be drawn.

The successive long, east to west, subdivided buildings,

represented by fragments in Periods IA, IB, II, III, and IVA, in the southern part of the area, along the north edge of the *via principalis*, clearly had a specific function. The least fragmentary was that of Period II, which is confidently restored. Except for its smaller scale, and the absence of centurion's or decurions' quarters, it closely resembles two of the blocks in the contemporary *retentura*. The number of rooms, ten, is the same, as is the way that the partitions stop short at the line of the longitudinal dividing wall. So far as can be ascertained from the even less complete remains of Period IVA, the transverse partitions crossed the full width of the block, resembling in this respect the most fully recorded block in the contemporary *retentura*. From this it follows that there was some relationship with unit type, and thus perhaps with specialised personnel. From its internal area the building of Period II will have held about thirty-five men. It can only be a conjecture that the building held the other-rank staff of the regimental headquarters, under its direct command.

A chronological table follows: it is based on the conclusions of the two writers, but it does not necessarily represent those of all colleagues at all points. The table covers a wider area of the site, and a longer period of time, than the current report. Earlier terms are given for cross-reference, and also the probable type of garrison in each period.

PERIOD TABLE, CORBRIDGE 1971

Period IA Large fort; turf and timber; deep post-trenches; legionaries and *ala q.* (? Petriana); Red House Baths. A.D. 79-c. 87.

(Level IV, Flavian, Flavian I, Flavian.)

Period IB Same fort modified; shallow sleeper-trenches; cavalry and legionaries; armour; wholly destroyed by fire; *t.p.q.* A.D. 98. A.D. c. 87-c. 105.

(Level IV, Flavian, Flavian I, Flavian.)

- Period II Medium-sized fort, c. 2.5 ha.; turf and timber; post-trenches; ? part-timbered stone *aedes*; *coh. m. eq.* A.D. c. 105-c. 122.
(Level IV, Flavian, Flavian II, Trajanic.)
- Period III Same width; turf and timber; post-trenches; new barracks; part-timbered stone *aedes*. *coh. m. p.* A.D. c. 122-125.
(Level IV, Flavian, Flavian III, Hadrianic.)
- Period IVA Same width; turf rampart; timber barrack and stables in *retentura*; and timber commander's house; part-timbered stone hospital and granaries; inscriptions of A.D. 139 and 140; stone or part-timbered HQ. and barracks in *praetentura*; *ala q.* A.D. 139-c. 158.
(Level III, Antonine I, Antonine I, Antonine I.)
- Period IVB Same fort; timber buildings replaced by stone; *coh. m. eq.* A.D. c. 158-162/3.
(—, —, Antonine II, Antonine II.)
- Period VA Fort area; wholly stone, with one exception; HQ. and granaries retained; barracks, hospital etc. abolished; legionary inscriptions; ? depot; seals coin of A.D. 161. A.D. 162/3-c. 180.
(Level II, Antonine II, Antonine II, late Antonine.)
- Period VB Same area; fresh building, similar stonework; some timber; destroyed by fire except where covered by site XI. A.D. c. 180-?.
(Level II, Antonine II, Antonine II, late Antonine.)
- Period VC Site XI, ? forum; wholly stone; begun; surroundings destroyed while XI incomplete; burnt material seals coin of A.D. 198; abandoned; ? abortive town. A.D. ?-c. 207.
(Level I, Severan, Severan, later second-century.)