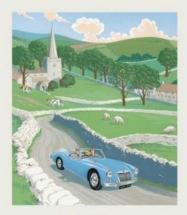
# Britannia Roman Britain from Caesar to Arthur 5

From Hadrian's Wall to Bath

#### GEOFFREY GRIGSON



## THE SHELL COUNTRY ALPHABET

'Grigson was a man full of curious knowledge, and a beautiful writer'
IAMES FENTON

CLASSIFIED INDEX

xxi

RIVERS, SPRINGS, LAKES, CANALS, ETC.

Aqueducts Holy wells River

Avon Inclined planes River names
Beck Kelds Springs
Boil-hole Lakes Swallows

Brindley, James Lasher Tarn

Canals Llyn Telford, Thomas

Catchment area Locks Turloughs
Eagres Lough Waterfalls

Gill Meres Winterbournes

Gipseys Resurgence

ROADS, LANES, PATHS

Agger Green lane Roman roads
Bohereens Hollow ways Salt ways
Causeways Horse steps Signposts and
Drove-roads Port ways milestones
Enclosure roads Ridgeway Squeeze-belly

Footpaths Roads Toll-houses

ROMAN REMAINS

Agger Forts of the Saxon shore Signal stations

Antonine Itinerary, The Hypocaust Strat-

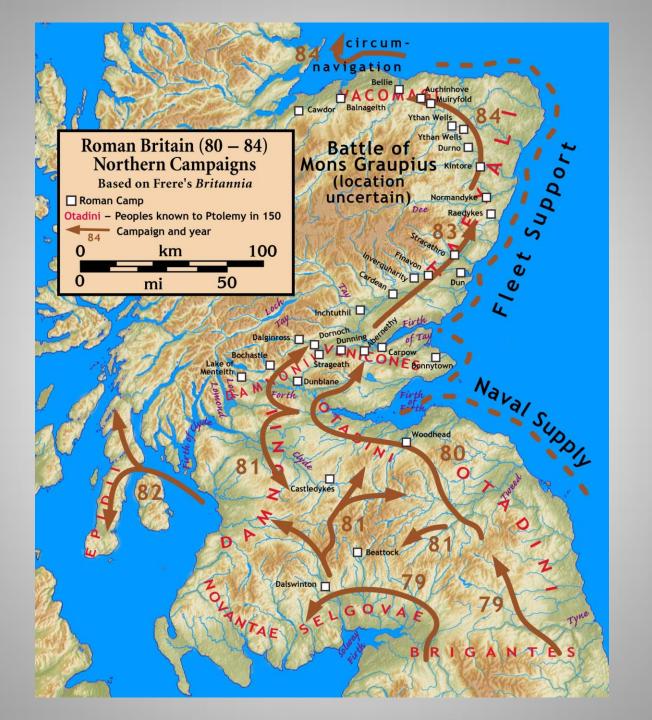
Aqueducts Roman forts and camps Tessellated pavements

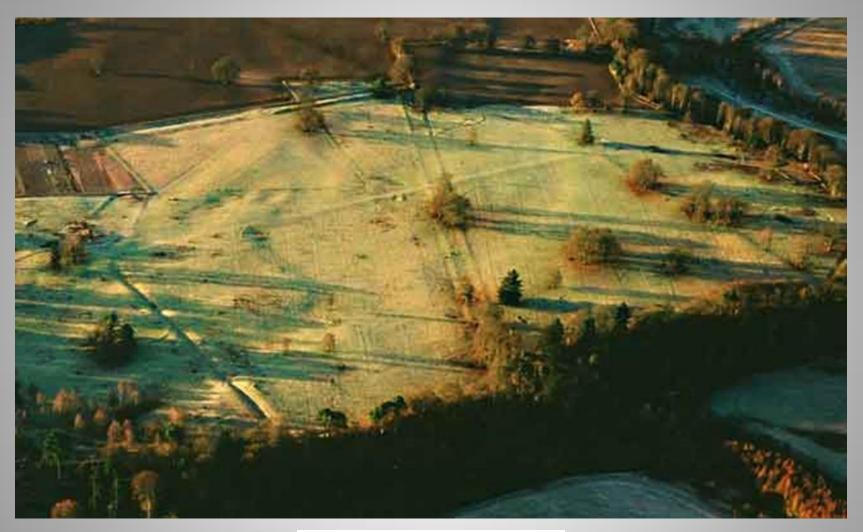
-chester, -caster Roman roads
Colonia Roman villas

SAINTS AND SAINTED OBJECTS

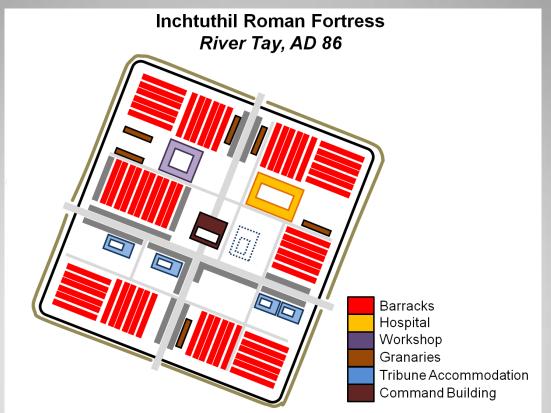
Brigid's Cross St Christopher St Swithun's Day
Celtic saints St Cuthbert's Beads St Valentine's Day

St Barbara St Martin of Tours
St Catherine St Michael's churches

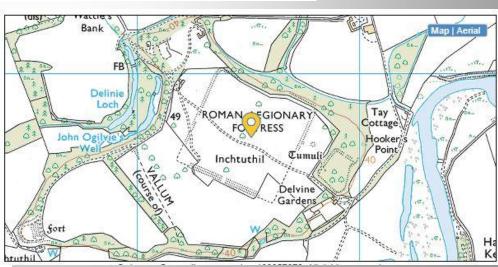


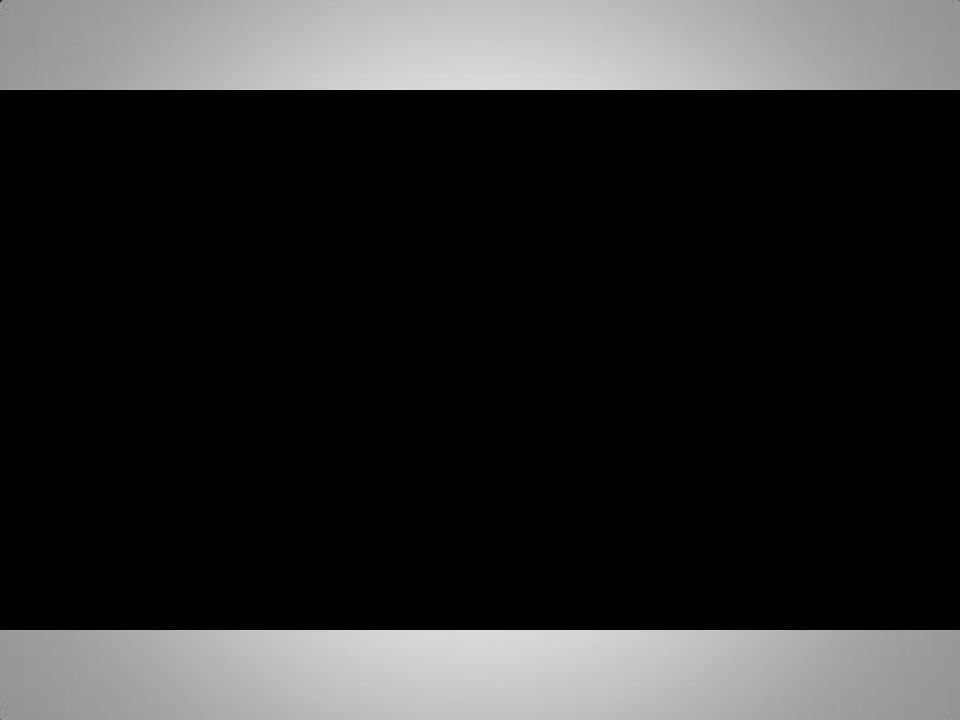


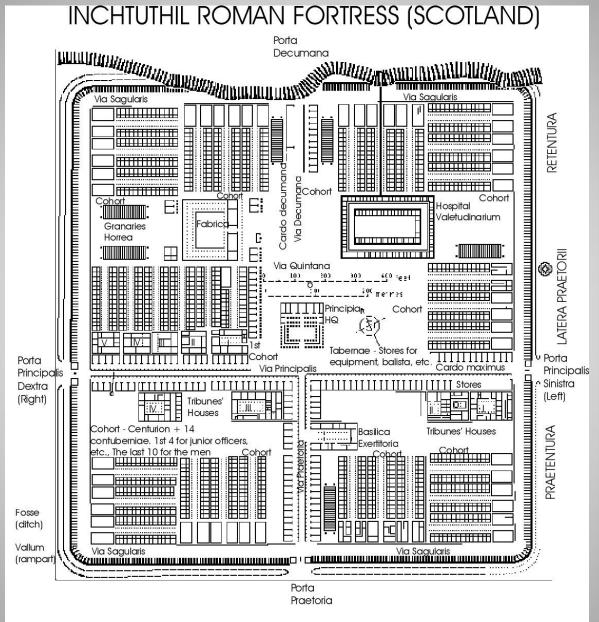
**Inchtuthil Roman Fortress** 



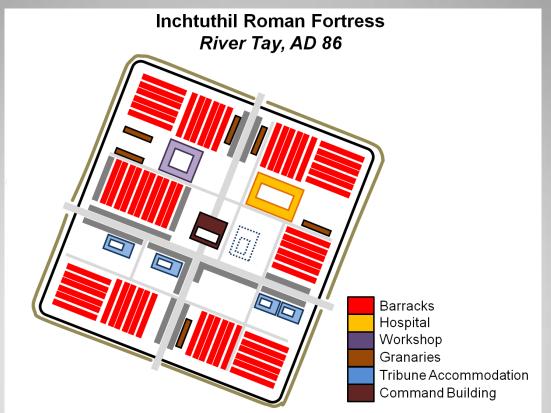




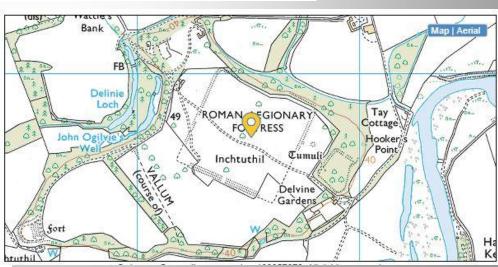




There should be houses for <u>six tribunes</u> (one tribunus laticlavius and five tribuni angusticlavii) but only four are shown.
The house of the <u>praefectus castrorum</u> is not visible.
The <u>praetorium</u> was not built, but it would typically be Mediterranean in style with ranges of rooms built around an inner courtyard.

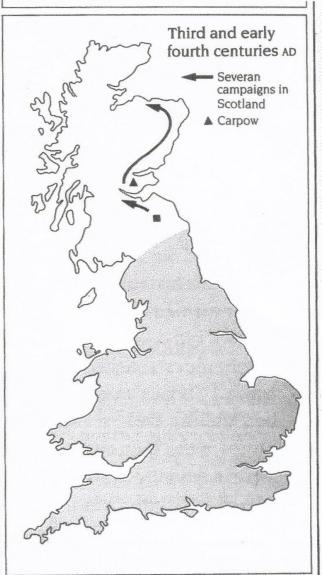




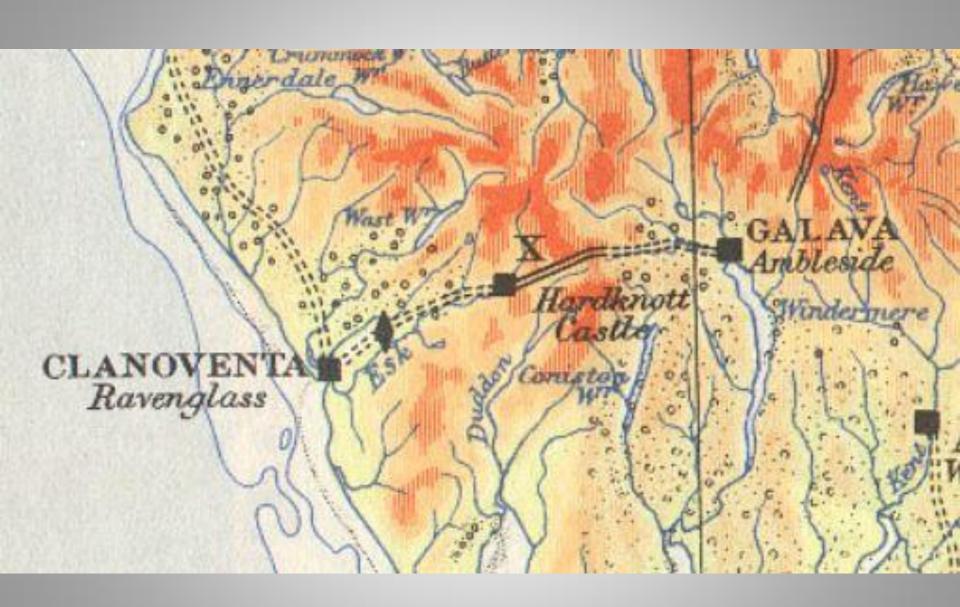








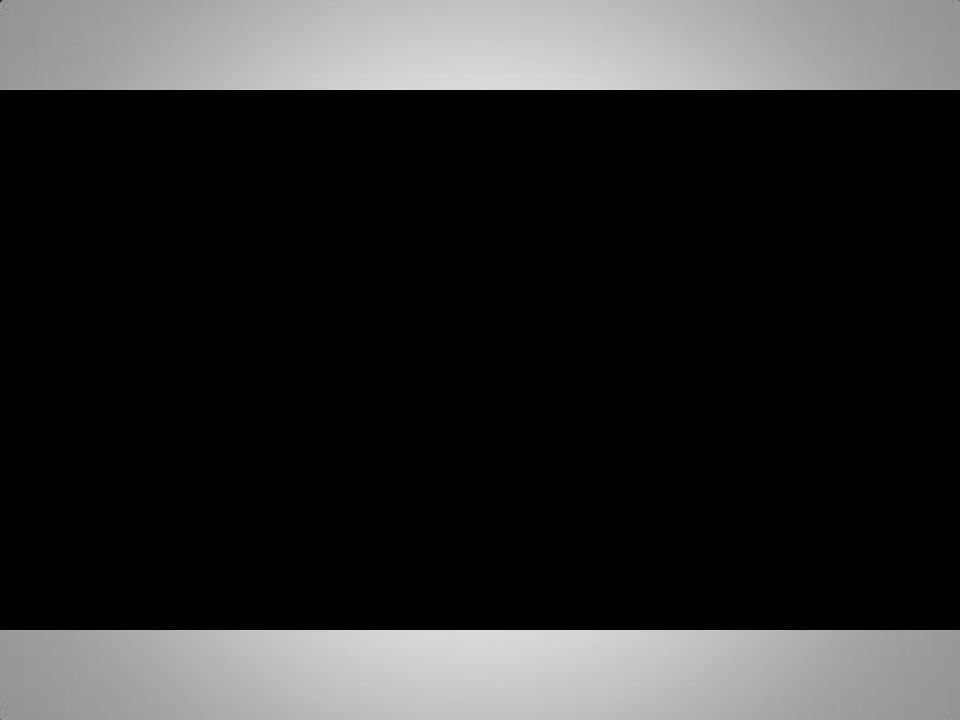


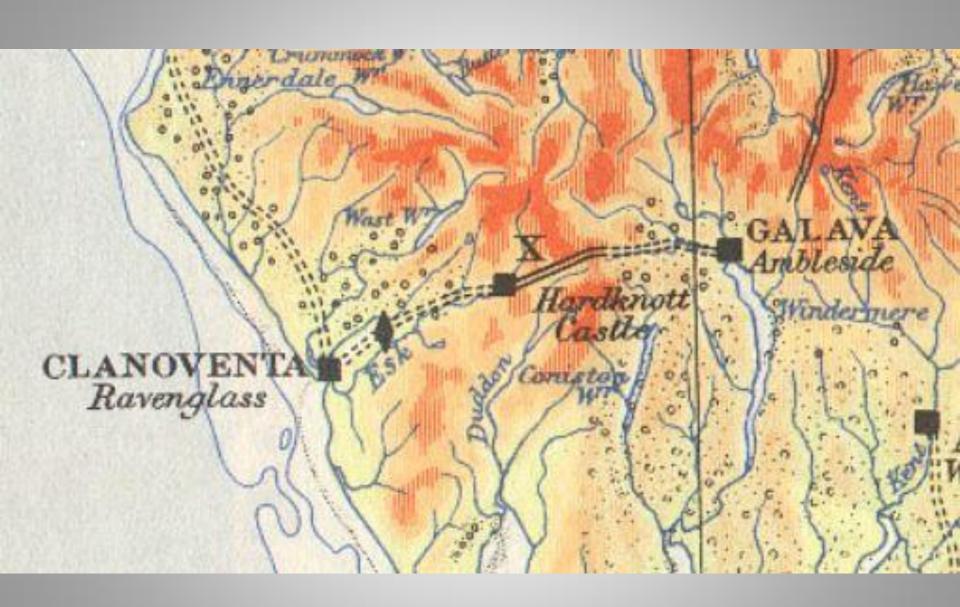


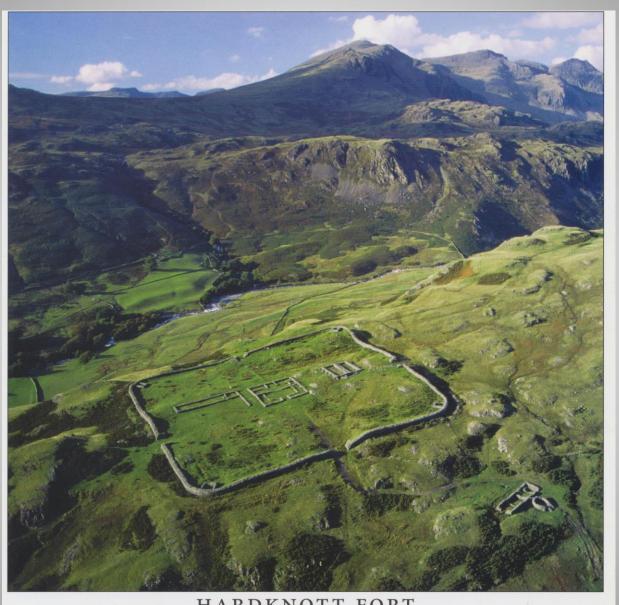




## Galava

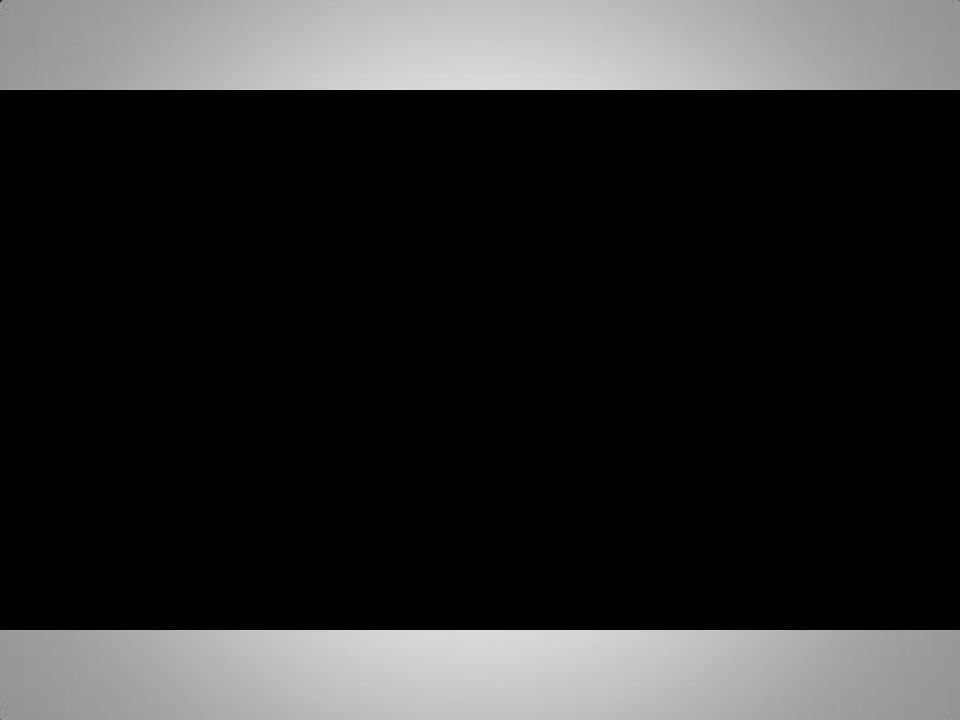


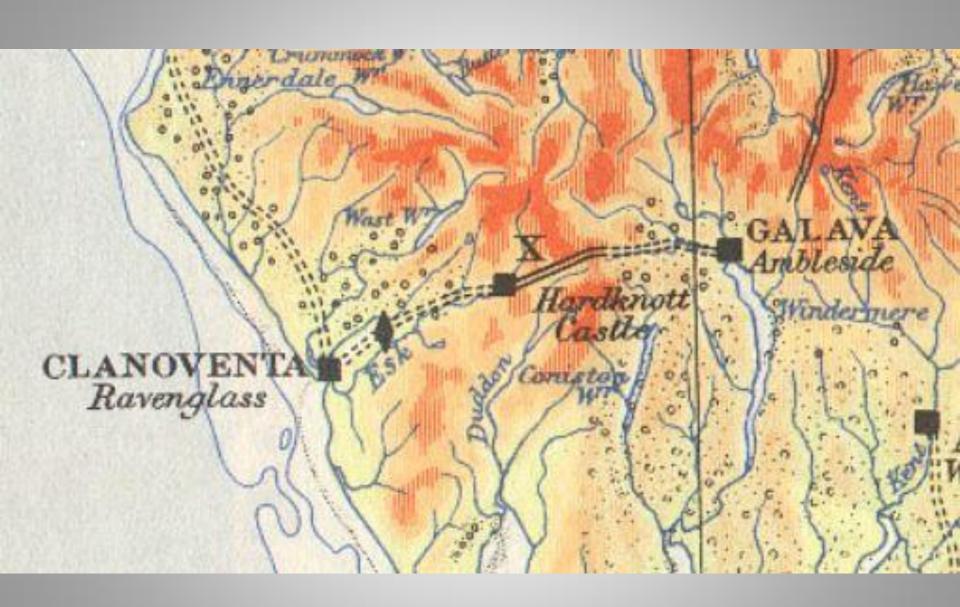




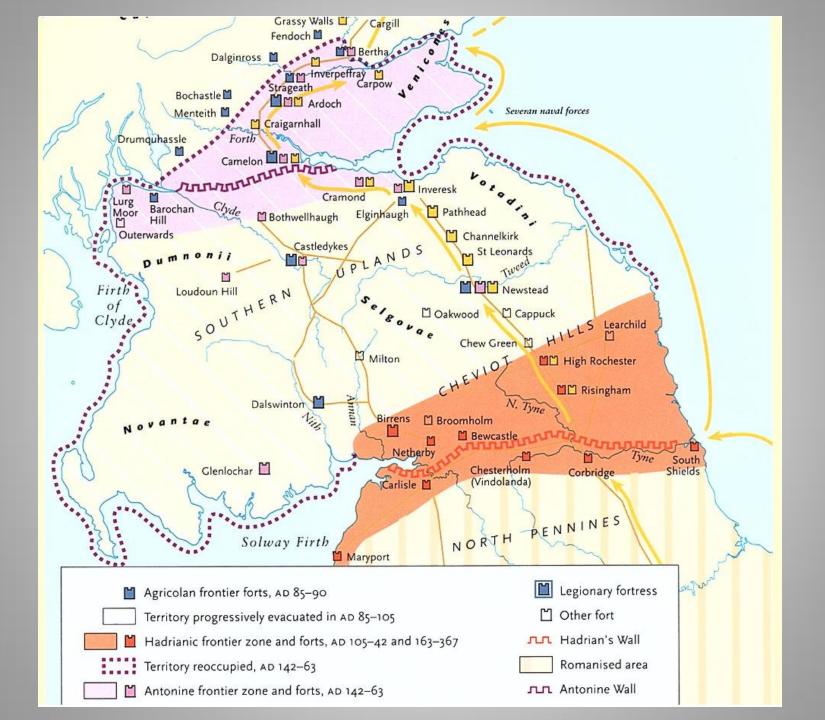
HARDKNOTT FORT

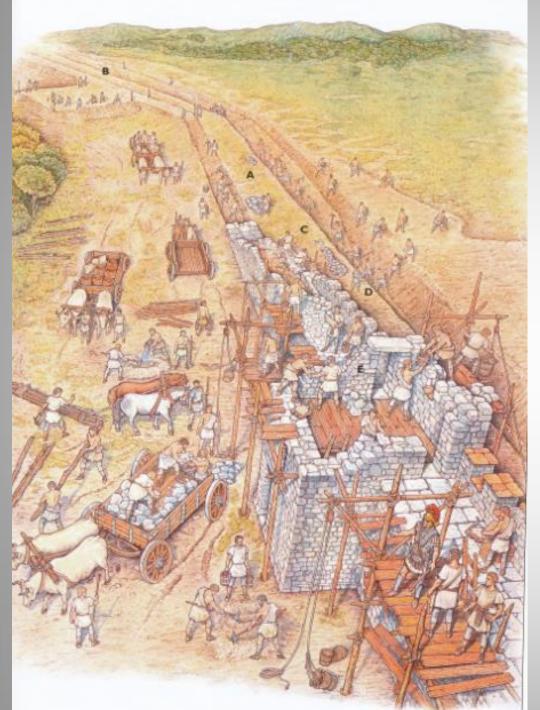
## Hardknott Roman Fort













<u>Hadrian</u> (117–138 ce)





Wall of Hadrian's Wall spanned the Tyne-Solway gap. Begun after HADRIAN's visit to Britain (AD 122), it was stone-built from Newcastle upon Tyne to the Irthing, and turf-built from there to Bowness-on-Solway. It was between 6 and 10 feet wide, and probably about 15 feet high. Just over 70 miles (76 Roman miles) long, there were milecastles throughout and two turrets between each. A ditch ran to the north, and a frontier zone to the south was delineated by the vallum, a ditch flanked by raised banks. A series of forts several miles behind the wall (e.g. Vindolanda) was soon moved up to the wall (e.g. Housesteads). Later modifications extended the wall east to Wallsend, and replaced the turf wall in stone. Hadrian's Wall, briefly replaced by the WALL OF ANTONINUS, was repaired in the 160s, and a military way added behind it. The wall, substantially rebuilt under Septimius SEVERUS (c.205-7) and restored by Count Theodosius (c.369/70), probably remained occupied up to (and beyond) 410.

See also LIMES. RJB

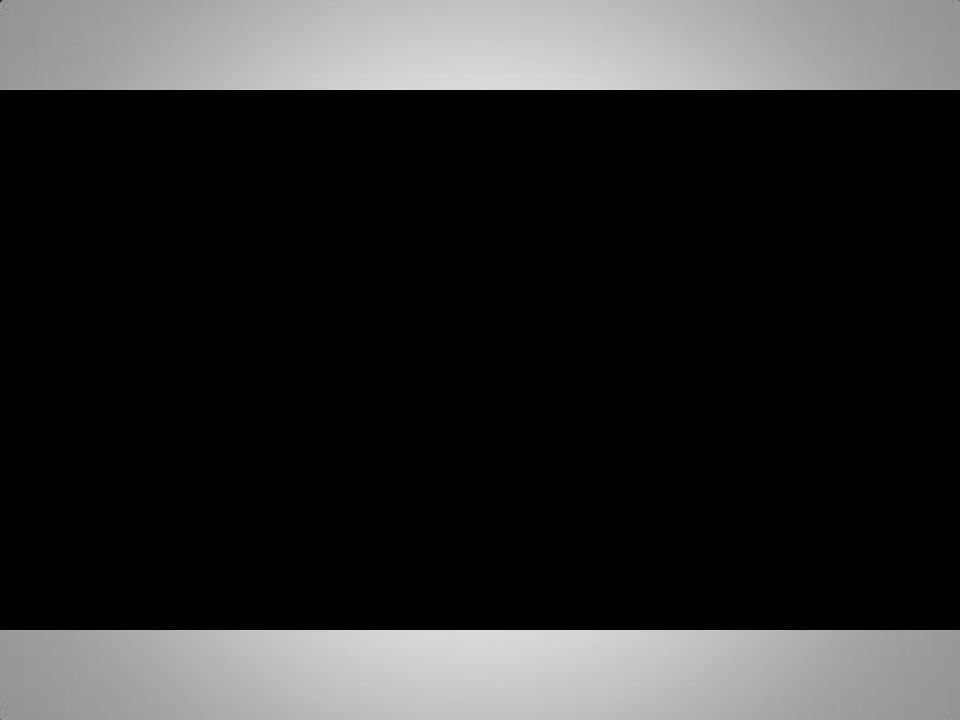
Breeze and Dobson (1987); Collingwood Bruce (1978); Graham (1979).

### What was Hadrian's Wall for?

It was not intended to be a clear dividing line between Empire and barbarians. Roman influence and presence often extended beyond the Wall. It was—

- —an elongated military garrison, a 70-mile-long structure with forts and small "milecastles" at regular intervals, a deep ditch on the north side, and a connecting road on the south side.
- —a way to regulate and control all passage of men and goods (taxation, interrogation).
- —a "horse filter" (and cattle/wagon filter), preventing raiders from returning north with their loot.
- a staging and supply area for any military operations northward.
- —a powerful psychological/emotional/cultural statement about the grandeur of Rome and Emperor.







## What random thoughts would drift through the mind of a bored Roman soldier on guard duty?



....perhaps these....



#### **Roman Wall Blues**

Over the heather the wet wind blows, I've lice in my tunic and a cold in my nose.

The rain comes pattering out of the sky, I'm a Wall soldier, I don't know why.

The mist creeps over the hard grey stone, My girl's in Tungria; I sleep alone.

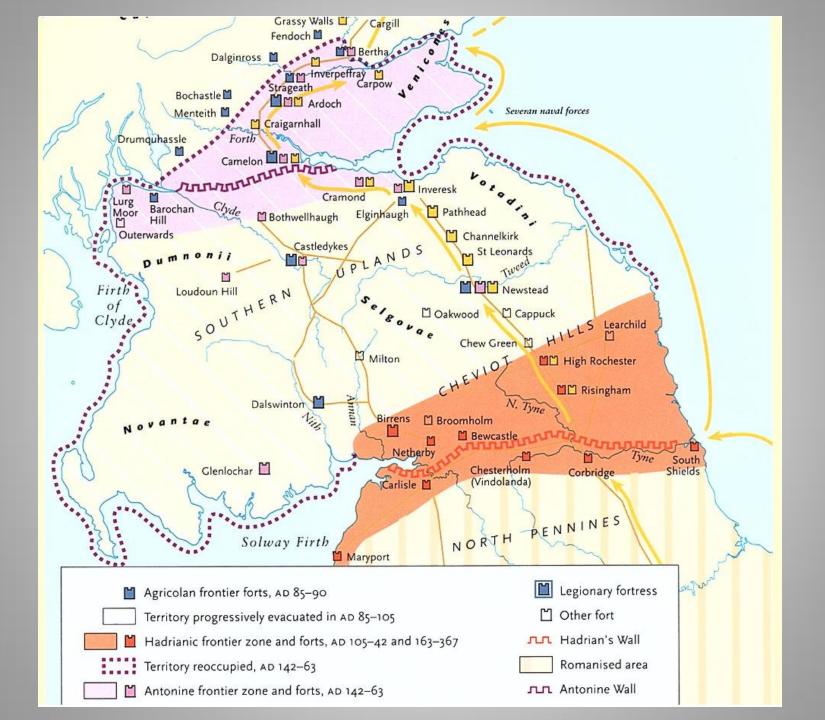
Aulus goes hanging around her place, I don't like his manners, I don't like his face.

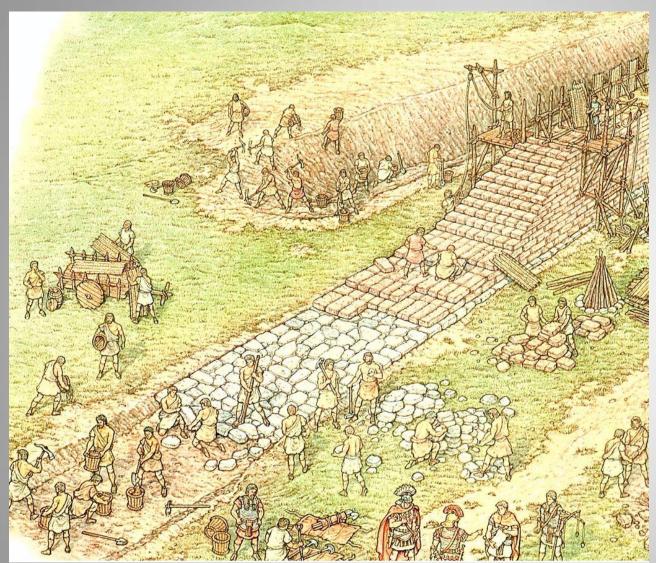
Piso's a Christian, he worships a fish; There'd be no kissing if he had his wish.

She gave me a ring but I diced it away; I want my girl and I want my pay.

When I'm a veteran with only one eye I shall do nothing but look at the sky.

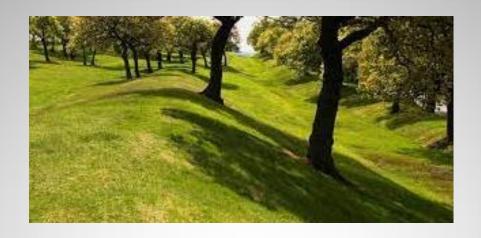
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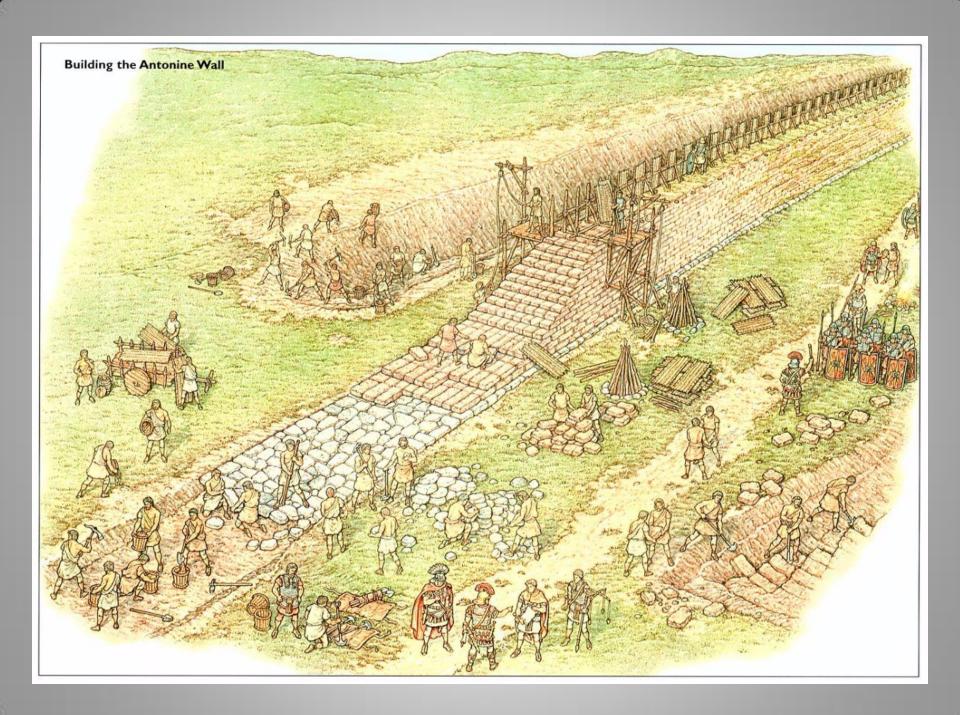
Antoninus Pius (138–161 ce)

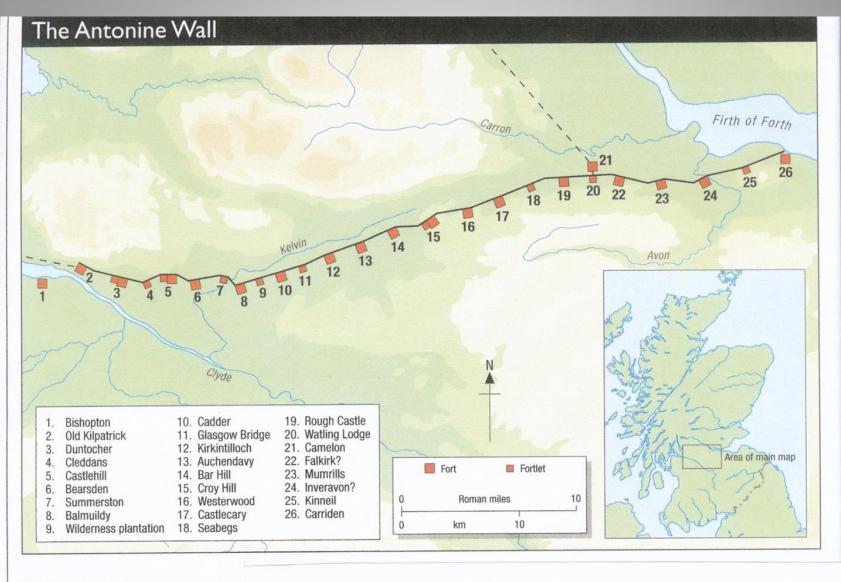


Wall of Antoninus The Antonine Wall, begun c.AD 142 under ANTONINUS PIUS, advanced the Roman frontier in Britain from the WALL OF HADRIAN to the Forth-Clyde line. It was 37 miles long, built of turf on a stone foundation about 14 feet wide, and 10 or perhaps 12 feet high. A ditch ran to the north, and a military way to the south; 16 forts are known, three more are assumed; a few fortlets are known, but no turrets (beacon platforms were probably used instead). Most plausibly, a withdrawal (c.158) was reversed by Pius, and the wall abandoned by the mid-160s (though a date up to c.180 remains possible).

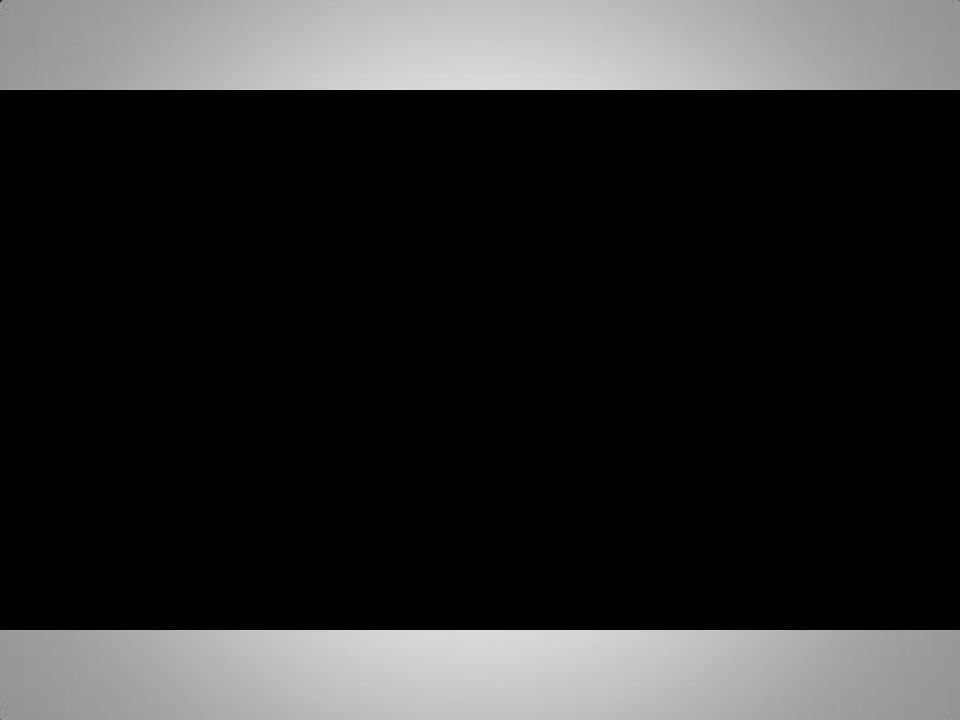
See also LIMES.

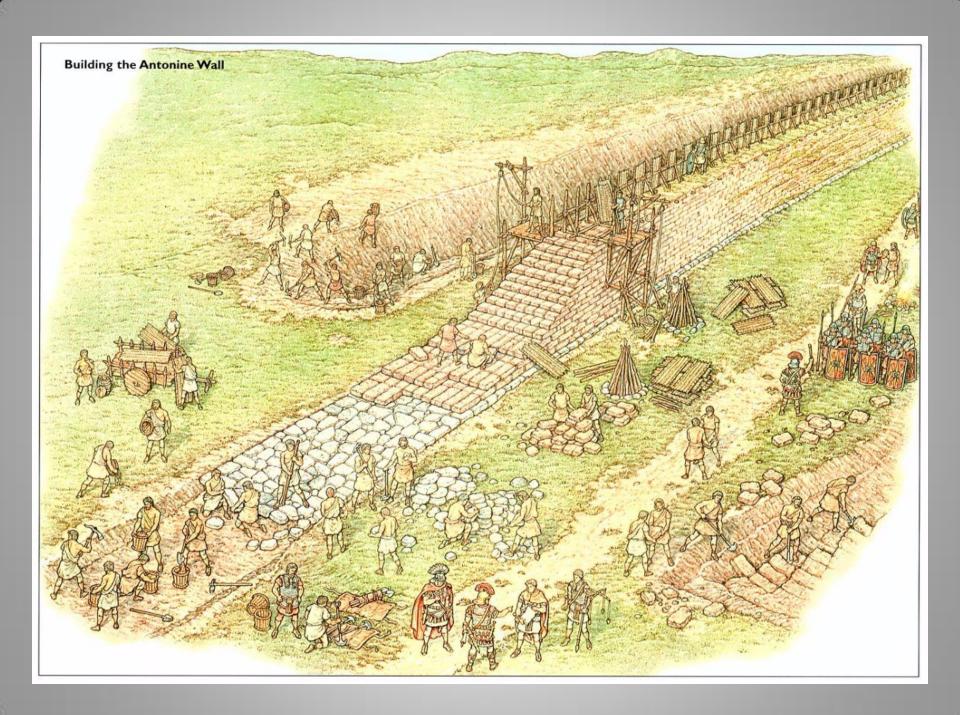
RJB

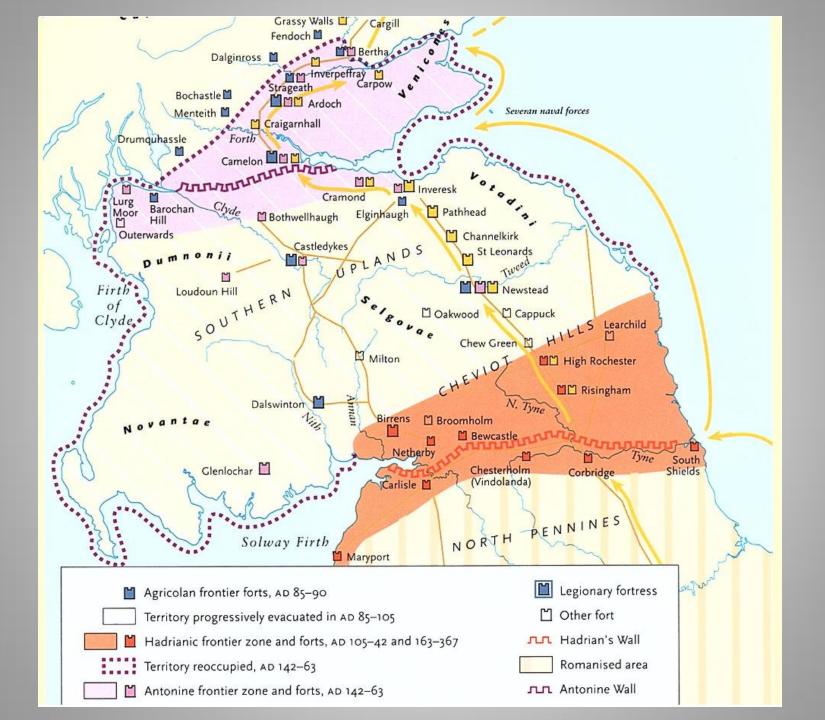


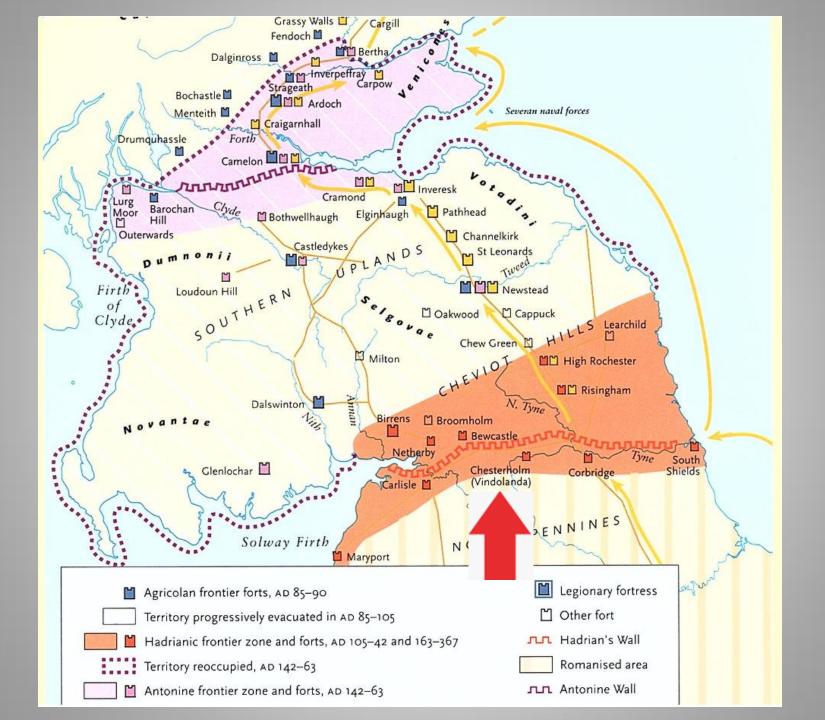


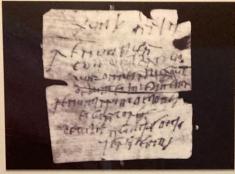
The Antonine Wall, as constructed. Note that only certain fortlets are shown: others presumably existed at one-mile intervals.











Tablet 2, military report. Infra-red photograph



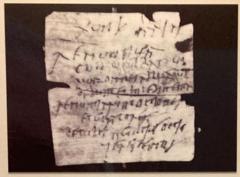
Tablet 3, intelligence report. Infra-red photograph



Tablet 5, inventory or memorandum. Infra-red photograph

# VINDOLANDA

These ink writing-tablets are the oldest surviving handwritten documents from Britain. They come from the Roman fort of *Vindolanda* (Chesterholm), one of the main military posts on the northern frontier of Britain before the building of Hadrian's Wall. The first tablets were discovered there in 1973 and hundreds more fragments have come to light in subsequent archaeological excavations.



Tablet 2, military report. Infra-red photograph

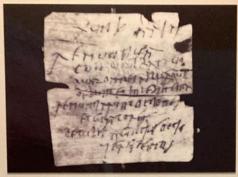


Tablet 3, intelligence report. Infra-red photograph



Tablet 5, inventory or memorandum. Infra-red photograph

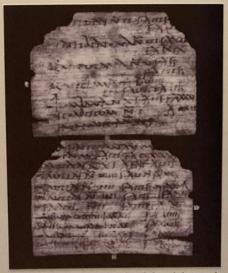
Waterlogged conditions preserved the tablets in rubbish deposits in and around the commanding officer's residence. They date mainly to the phase of activity between about AD 92-120, a period of great significance for the history of Britain's northern frontier.



Tablet 2, military report. Infra-red photograph



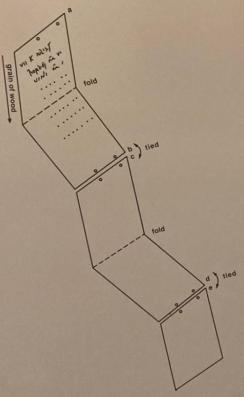
Tablet 3, intelligence report. Infra-red photograph



Tablet 5, inventory or memorandum. Infra-red photograph

During that time the fort was garrisoned variously by the First Tungrian Cohort and the Ninth Batavian Cohort, and most of the tablets are official military documents relating to those auxiliary units. However, numerous others are the private letters sent to, or occasionally written by, the serving soldiers and officers. Together, they give a remarkable insight into the working and private lives of the Roman garrison in this remote outpost fort on the edge of the Empire.

The letters were generally written with the broad dimension of the leaf running horizontally and the text set out in two columns, the first at the left, the second at the right. After completing the letter the writer scored it vertically down the centre, folded it, and wrote the address on the back of the right hand half. Some tablets had notches cut into the edge so that they could be tied together.



Military reports and accounts were often written with the text running across the grain and parallel to the short edge of the tablet. This format lent itself well to the compiling of lists, and in some cases several of the leaves were joined together in a concertina format to form a wooden notebook. From The Roman Writing Tablets from Vindolanda, Alan Bowman (1983)



This account, written on three leaves, lists quantities of wheat issued to various military personnel.

# Tungrians, of winch the co contuction is and it is about AD 92-9 If is he histor to a tour of duty at namely Con and

#### 1 Strength report Translation

'18 May, net number of the First Cohort of Tungrians, of which the commander is Iulius Verecundus the prefect, 752, including centurions 6 of whom there are absent: guards of the governor 46; at the office of Ferox?; at Coria 337, including centurions 2 (?); at London centurion 1 (?); ... 6, including centurion 1; ... 9, including centurion 1; ... 11; at (?) ... 1 (?); ... 45; total absentees 456, including centurions 5; remainder, present 296, including centurion 1; from these: sick 15; wounded 6; suffering from inflammation of the eyes 10; total of these 31; remainder, fit for active service 265, including centurion 1'

This is a strength report of the First Cohort of Tungrians, probably dating to about AD 92-7. It is the first of its kind from Britain, a most important military document which sheds light on the deployment and organisation of military units. The regiment was probably a milliary cohort, and the tablet shows it was close to its full complement of 800 men, though it was 4 centurions short of the normal total of 10.

Of the 752 soldiers on the roll only 296 were present at the base garrison, of whom just 265 were fit for active service. Most of the absentees were a detachment of 337 on a tour of duty at nearby Corbridge (Coria). A further 46 were detached for duty as guards with the governor of the province. They were assigned to a man named Ferox, who may have been the commander of the Ninth legion Hispana at York.

PRB P1989. 6-2.21. Tab. Vindol. II. 154

## 2 Military report (renuntium) Reconstructed text

xvii K Maias
renuntium
coh viiii Batauo
rum omnes ad loca qui
debunt et inpedimenta
renuntiarunt optiones
et curatores
detulit Arcuittius optio
(centuriae) Crescentis

#### Translation

'15 May, report of the 9th cohort of Batavians. All who ought to be at th stations are there, as is the baggage report was made by the *optiones* and curators. Arquittius, *optio* of the ce Crescens delivered it.'

A novelty among the Vindolanda ta which sheds new light on day-to-day military routine, is the finding of la numbers of reports with the renunt heading. They appear to be routine on personnel and equipment, made regular (perhaps daily) intervals, as submitted by optiones (deputy cents. The need for such 'all present and creports is understandable in view on unmerous detachments from the magarrison outposted or engaged in stasks away from base (see tablet 1).

PRB P1995.7-1.211

report (renuntium) ructed text

K Maias
ntium
Batauo
es ad loca qui
inpedimenta
runt optiones
ratores
Arcuittius optio
e) Crescentis

ion

report of the 9th cohort of
s. All who ought to be at their
are there, as is the baggage. The
as made by the optiones and the
Arquittius, optio of the century of
delivered it.'

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They appear to be routine checks nnel and equipment, made at perhaps daily) intervals, and d by optiones (deputy centurions). for such 'all present and correct' s understandable in view of the s detachments from the main outposted or engaged in special ay from base (see tablet 1).

#### 3 Intelligence report Reconstructed text

nenu...[.]n. Brittones
nimium multi • equites
gladis • non utuntur equites • nec residunt
Brittunculi • ut • iaculos
mittant

#### Translation

"...the Britons are unprotected by armour (?). There are very many cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords nor do the wretched Britons mount in order to throw javelins."

A tantalizing fragment of what was probably a memorandum, perhaps left by a commanding officer for his successor, describing the fighting habits of the Britons. Despite the disparaging reference to *Brittunculi*, 'Little Brits', it may be that the document was an assessment of their potential for recruitment into the local military units.

PRB P1986.10-1.34. Tab. Vindol. II, 164

#### 4 Leave request

Reconstructed text

....[.] ha[b]eas • cui • des • commeatum Córis Messicus t[.. rógo • domine [

#### Translation

'I, Messicus...,ask, my lord, that you consider me a worthy person to whom to grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicu for a period of leave to be spent at nearly Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda texthave shone new light on the system for requesting and granting leave. They are written in different hands and although they are almost formulaic they are not 'form letters'. None specifies the numbe days requested, but there may have been standard grant or, alternatively, the permay have been decided once the comman knew where the soldier wished to go.

PRB P1986.10-1.137. Tab. Vindol. II, 175

ce report

. Brittones
ulti • equites
non utuntur equinec residunt
i • ut • iaculos

n

ons are unprotected by armour are very many cavalry. The not use swords nor do the Britons mount in order to throw

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1.34. Tab. Vindol. II, 164

#### 4 Leave request Reconstructed text

...[.] ha[b]eas • cui • des • commeatum Córis Messicus t[.. rógo • domine [

#### Translation

'I, Messicus...,ask, my lord, that you consider me a worthy person to whom to grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicus for a period of leave to be spent at nearby Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda texts have shone new light on the system for requesting and granting leave. They are written in different hands and although they are almost formulaic they are not 'form letters'. None specifies the number of days requested, but there may have been a standard grant or, alternatively, the period may have been decided once the commander knew where the soldier wished to go.

PRB P1986.10-1.137. Tab. Vindol. II, 175

#### 5 Inventory or memorandum Translation

'Necklace-clasps (?), number 2, 31/2+ denar. each, total 7+ denarii. Cloaks, number 6, denarii each, total 69 denarii. Headbands number 5,34 denarius each, total 334 denar Hair, 9 pounds in weight, 5% denarii per pound, total 5134 denarii. Drawers, numbe 10, 21/2 denarii each, total 25 denarii. Sade (?), number 1, 12 denarii. Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15 (?), ... [Entry crossed Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15, measure(s) (?) ..., 3 denarii per measure (? total 235+ denarii. Bags, number 10, 5/8 denarius and 1 as each, total 67/s denarii. Skillets, number 4. 5 denarii and 1 as eac total 2014 denarii. Skillets, number 4, 37/8 denarii and 1 as each, total 15% denarii. Skillets, number 4. 27/8 denarii and 1 as es total 11% denarii. Reins, number 2. 31/2 denarii each, total 7 denarii. Scarlet curt (?). 1. measuring 11/2, total 541/2+ denarii. Green curtain (?).1. measuring 111/2, total + denarii. Purple curtains (?).2. measurii 111/2. total 883/4 (?) denarii. ... curtain (?), measuring 101/2, total 55+ denarii.'

A complete diptych, with writing on bo inner faces and one outer face. The tex not a normal account and is thought to part of an informal inventory of miscellaneous items and their valuatio the residence of the commanding office Flavius Cerealis. It was perhaps compi by a household slave or another individual responsible for the domestic administration. It is a fascinating list a commodities made still more interesting the inclusion of prices.

PRB P1995. 7-1.196



Portrait from Pompeii National Museum, Naples

'Claudia Severa to her Lepidina, greetings. On 11 September ... for the ... celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation ...'



ptych written script. The nders and use of etters). While er of this brief atter of some it commander, ing with the ritain. In Cerealis had ed eeting, so it cessful.

#### 11 Birthday invitation to Sulpicia Lepidina Reconstructed text

Column i:

Cl(audia) • Seuerá Lepidinae [suae [sall[u]tem

iii Idus Septembr[e]s soror ad diem sollemnem natalem meum rogó libenter faciás ut uenias ad nos iucundiorem mihi

Column ii:

[diem] interuentú tuo facturá si

Cerial[em t]uum salutá Aelius meus et filiolus salutant

sperabo te soror uale soror anima mea ita ualeam karissima et haue

Back: Sulpiciae Lepidinae Cerialis a S[e]uera

#### Translation

'Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings. On 11 September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if you are present (?). Give my greetings to your Cerialis. My Aelius and my little son send him (?) their greetings. (2nd hand) I shall expect you sister. Farewell, sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper, and hail.'

Back:

(1st hand)'To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa.'

Sulpicia Lepidina was the wife of Flavius Cerealis, prefect of the Ninth Cohort of Batavians. This birthday invitation is one of two letters she received from Claudia Severa, wife of Aelius Brocchus. The scribe who wrote the greater part of this letter is the same person who wrote the letter from Niger and Brocchus to Flavius Cerealis (10). The tall elegant script contrasts with the competent but less accomplished three-line closure written by Severa herself. That, and similar closures on 12 and one other letter from Severa, is the earliest known example of writing in Latin by a woman (about AD 97-103).

PRB P1986.10-1.64. Tab. Vindol. II,291

#### 12 Letter to Translation

"... greeti
sister, and
Brocchus
him and l
it was alv
together
way I can
things wl
which yo
I was ... a
Cerialis

(Back, 2ndearest a To Sulpi Severa, v

This rath survival more tha example on the re text run broad co the scril double o letter co part of greeting with the The int the wor (but the close fr literal: Briga i near to PRB P1986

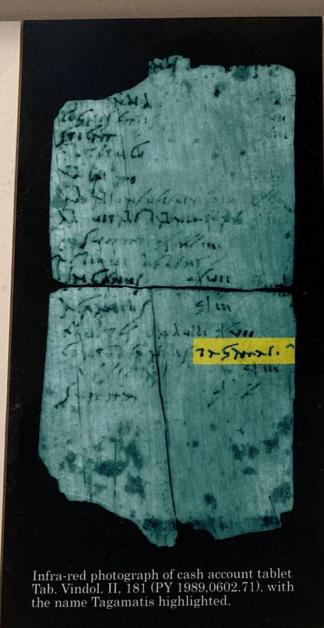


#### ived or owed

(diptych) was found account of cash inumber of men type of spear used account is written ough some of the eral soldiers' names prescens, Exomnius

second column (just n the left leaf) are r interest, l vexellarius – a lictor, who is huntsman. The military life is la by several nting hounds and the tablets on 22) as well as to

nas is especially been found , on another cash otograph on the the handle of an the same avalry unit, the Spanish dullorum



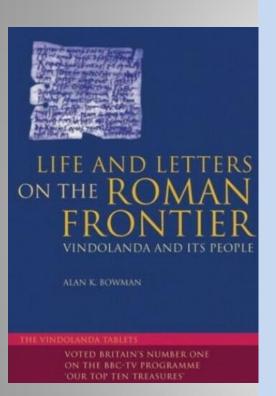
#### **Further information**

The translations and reconstructed texts used here are by Dr A. K. Bowman and Dr J.D. Thomas. For their full publication of the Vindolanda Tablets see A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets* Volumes II and III (British Museum Press 1994 and 2003). For a more popular account see A.K. Bowman *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (British Museum Press 2003). For young people see Barbara Bell *Minimus: starting out in Latin* (Cambridge University Press 2004).

Vindolanda Tablets Online
http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk
Vindolanda fort online information
http://www.vindolanda.com
Visitors may wish to go to Gallery 70
(Rome and the Roman Empire) to see more
Vindolanda Tablets on display in case 22.

The purchase of the Vindolanda Tablets was assisted by a generous grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

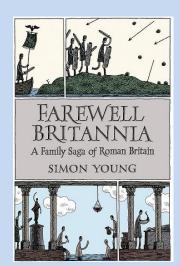




## The Vindolanda Tablets: some key points—

- 1. Britannia's northern frontier was a zone of influence and control, not a simple boundary line.
- The Roman troops on the frontier were mainly <u>auxiliaries</u>; the soldiers of the legions were concentrated at three fortresses farther south, with frequent detachments sent out on missions.
- 3. <u>Literacy and record-keeping (bureaucracy and paperwork)</u> were extremely important to everyone connected with the army. Handwriting samples and styles can be studied and analyzed.
- 4. Some (at least) of the Romans had rather <u>condescending (racist?)</u> attitudes toward the British natives.
- 5. "Networking"—the importance of personal connections—was a major theme in the careers of these people.
- Economic factors included the crucial role of <u>coined money</u>
   (soldier's pay, etc.) and the <u>exploitation of local resources</u> (Britannia had to feed and supply its garrison).

# What <u>really</u> happened at that birthday party?



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#### CHAPTER FIVE

Wife on the Frontier, c.100 AD



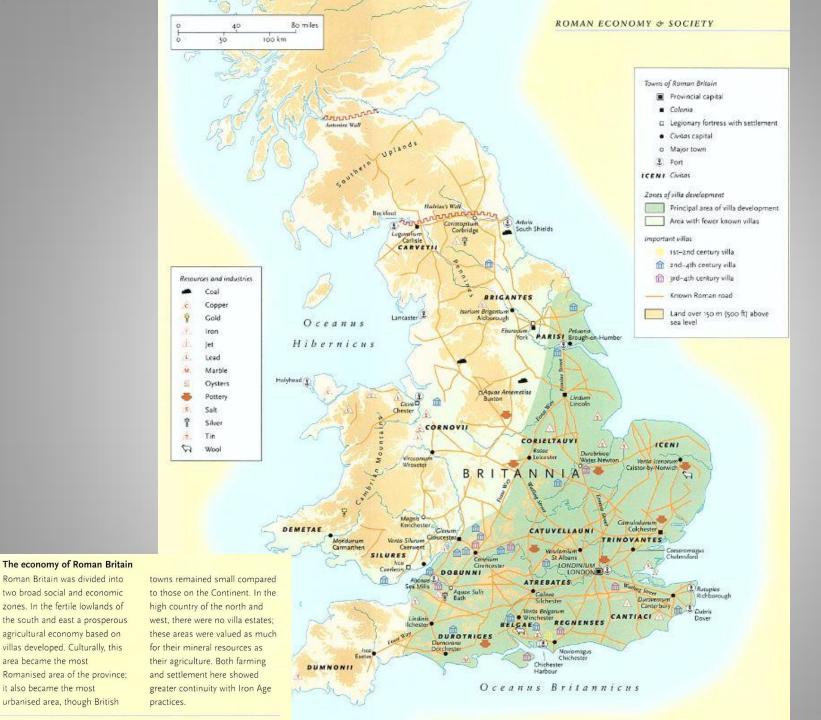
Claudia Severa, grandmother of Artorius, mother to the guardians of the frontier

Catuarus prospered in British after the failure of the rewoll; ageing in peace and prosperity. But I turn now, instead, to Claudia Severa — we will let the story itself reveal her connection to our hin — who drive in the fort at Briga on the northern frontier. Today that same frontier is overrun by Piets and other enemies of the drilliesd, but in those times, even before the Stone Wall was built, I two sheld by ten thousand polished Koman helmest and Swords. ...

The day that the perfect Ashius Broothus and his valie Claudia Severe arrived at Briga. Pherochologyl, the fort on the high Pennine inclines that was to be their home for the next years, an uncharacteristically ferevious storm broke over the valley. And it was only natural that there were as many explanations for a tempest of such violence as there were nationalities in the valley that Brigg gazarded. So the German auxiliaries, generoarise to the Romans, talked.

(This author has a wicked sense of humor.)

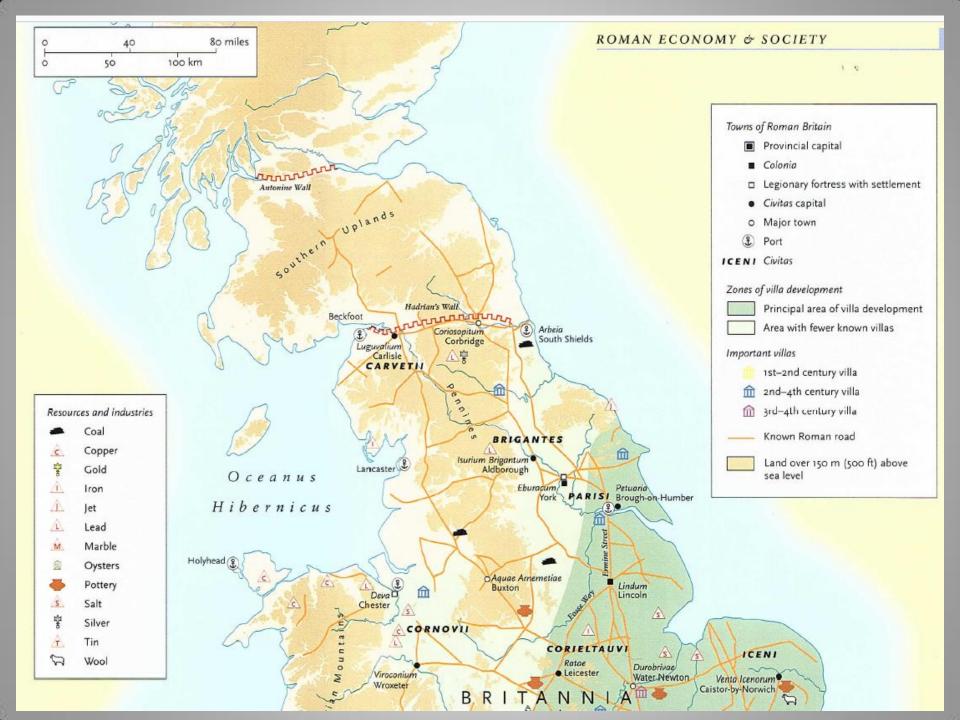




area became the most

it also became the most

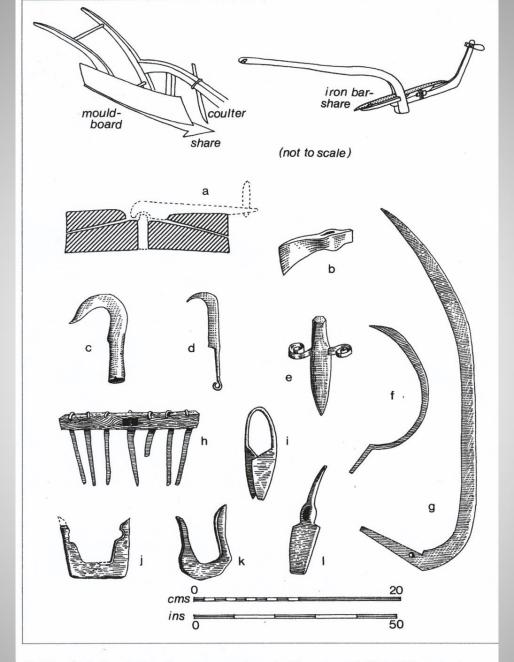








104 (above) An Iron Age plough team at work. The 'plough' is more strictly termed an ard which simply scored the ground and did not turn the sod. If the fields had been first 'rooted over' by pigs the 'ploughing' would have been much easier. There is some evidence to suggest that fields were 'ploughed' in two directions at right angles better to break up the soil.



**49.** (Above) A plough of the Roman type and a typical Iron Age ard. (Below) Farm implements from British sites: (a) oscillatory quern; (b) axe; (c) billhook; (d) pruning hook; (e) mower's anvil; (f) sickle; (g) scythe; (h) wooden hay-rake; (i) sheep shears; (j, k) iron bindings for wooden spades; (l) mattock or hoe.

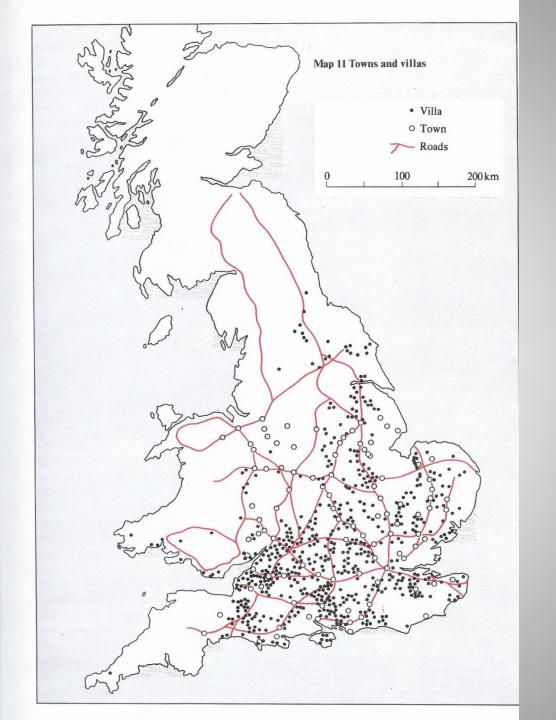
48. A replica *vallus*, or harvesting machine, that was used at the Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire. (Peter Reynolds)



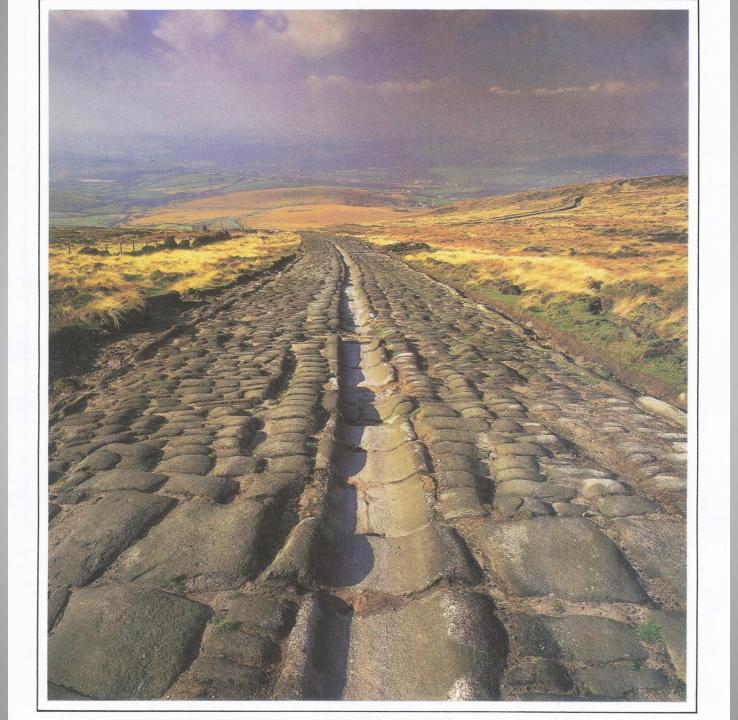
11. Upton Country Park (Dorset): a replica of the building excavated at Ower. This represents the most basic type of 'cottage-house' of the first century AD.



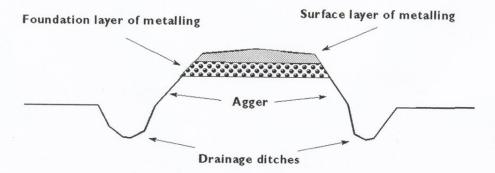






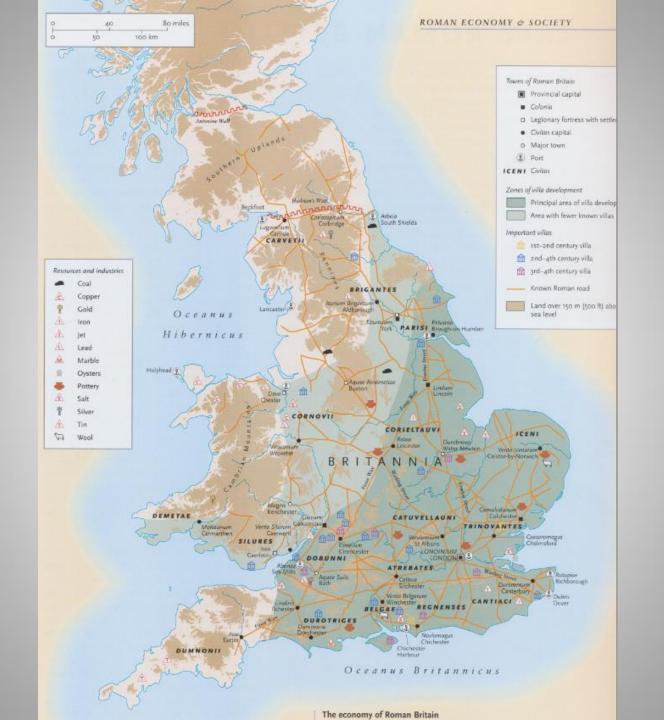


### **ROMAN ROAD CROSS-SECTION**



25. Diagram of a 'typical' cross-section of a Roman road, showing the agger, drainage ditches and stone metalling. All these elements help to protect the underlying ground from damage by wheeled vehicles.



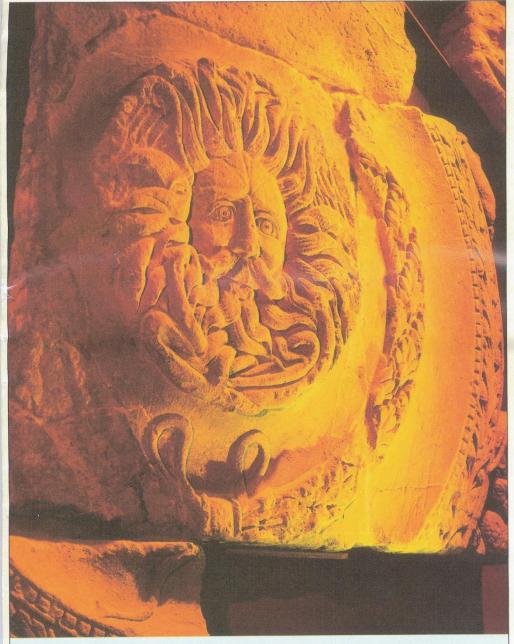






BATH (*Aquae Sulis*) is comparable with both medieval pilgrimage centres and modern spa towns, but also perhaps with *conciliabula*, places of assembly as provided in some of the more rural *civitates* of Gaul. Its heart was the sacred complex of Sulis Minerva. The calibre of the architecture indicates early patronage at an exalted level. High-quality development in the late Roman period, within the second-century walls, attests continued prosperity.





The Gorgon's head pediment from the temple of Sulis Minerva, Bath. ST 7564 © Crown copyright. NMR

DOCI NVS
BRYCERI
DENESANCIISINE
SVII
DEVIVOEVA
INVOIDTERTSI
VIR'SIFEMINAS!
SERVISSILIBER
TO INDEXSVIE
NAXIMOLETVIM
DICATNECEISO
ANVAPERNIT M

TXTUECNAIOSNEC

NECENTES DO

CNACALIAN

PLYANS VI NYANI

NIE PERMITER

90 (above) Defixio, or curse tablet, from the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath (74, 75). This example reads in translation: 'Docilianus son of Brucerus to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or free. May the goddess Sulis inflict death upon him and not allow him sleep or children now and in the future, until he has brought my hooded cloak to the temple of her divinity.'



