

Nothing later than A.D. 55 was found in the ditch, while BB I 31 contained nothing later than A.D. 60. The silt (BB I 29) overlying the upper surface, contained coarse pottery dating as late as A.D. 80.

Other early, extra-mural features were also recorded from the Mycalex site in Ashcroft Road (Reece, 1977, 92) and from Site AX beside the Health Centre in Watermoor Road. A large and deep pit (AX II 58) at the latter site produced pottery of the Claudio-Neronian period, but there is nothing to show that the pit was not originally dug by the army. At least three other levels, however, (AX II 45, 47 and AX V 33) produced pottery of the same general date range in addition to some native, Iron Age fabrics.

## CIRENCESTER IN THE EARLY MILITARY PERIOD (JSW)

The fort established at Cirencester was one of a number designed to hold the earliest frontier of Roman Britain. It lay in the territory of the Dobunni at the meeting of three major roads, Akeman Street, the Fosse Way and Ermin Street, where the two former joined and crossed the river Churn. It lay only 4.8 km. (3 miles) from Bagendon (*Corinion*) (Wacher, 1975, 293), the contemporary native capital of the Dobunni, whose attitude towards the Roman advance has frequently been discussed (Hawkes, 1961, 43-67, and Wacher, 1975, 289-93).

Unfortunately, on present evidence, it is not possible to be certain precisely when the Roman army arrived at Cirencester. Undated structural features, from the period before the principal fort was founded *c.* A.D. 49, were uncovered in the course of the excavations, and suggest that an establishment existed before that date. Among them were two small, parallel ditches, earlier than, and behind, the rampart of the Leaholme fort.

If these belong to a fort founded within a year or two of the invasion, it was but one of a number in the area. Others may be envisaged at Bath (*RIB* 159) and Wanborough (Anderson, 1977, 155); while a third has been suggested on Rodborough Common, near Stroud (Rennie, 1959, 24-43). To the east and north-east further forts are known, or may be expected, e.g. at Alcester, Alchester and Dorchester (Oxon.), and perhaps at Dorn or Chesterton. Uncertainty still surrounds the date of the placing of a fort at Kingsholm, near Gloucester, (Garrod and Hurst, 1975). It has often been assumed that a fort for a part-mounted cohort (*Coh. VI Thracum RIB* 121) preceded the legionary base, thought to have been built *c.* A.D. 49. It is also usually assumed that Legio XX was transferred in its entirety from Colchester to Gloucester in that year, but it is still possible that a vexillation fortress may have been the first establishment at Gloucester, garrisoned jointly by a legionary detachment and *Coh. VI Thracum*. If so, an earlier fort at Cirencester would have been in an important pivotal position, commanding the main approach from the south-east to the Severn crossing and south Wales, where Caractacus was still entrenched.

At one stage during the investigations at Cirencester, it was, indeed, suggested (Wacher, 1975, 30 and 294) that a vexillation fortress might have existed there before A.D. 49 and before the establishment of the fort (see also p. 55). However, this interpretation has not stood up to a rigorous examination of the evidence, and the theory must be discarded.

As things stand at present, we can recognise a probable military presence at Cirencester soon after the invasion, followed by the foundation of a cavalry fort (referred to hereafter as the Leaholme fort) *c.* A.D. 49. The fort lay on a terrace of oolitic gravels masked by a thin cover of brown clay, on the south-western bank of the river Churn, (see p. 72). The north-west and north-east defences have been positively identified, but the other two are less certainly located. Evidence cited on p. 59 suggests a perimeter measuring approximately 165 m. by 110 m. (540 ft. by 360 ft.), giving an area of some 1.8 ha. (4½ acres).

Tombstones attest the presumably successive presence at Cirencester of two quingenary *alae* (*RIB* 108 and 109 and page 67 below), but three phases of military buildings have been shown to exist within the fort. Consequently it is not impossible that an unidentified unit also served there. Nothing is known of later possible expansions or reductions in the fort's size. But it must

be remembered that many early military installations in Britain do not conform readily to later, more standardised patterns, and the complexity of the better known sites is only now beginning to be realised. That being so, it is possible to postulate the existence of joint garrisons of legionaries and cavalry, as at Hod Hill (Richmond, 1968, 122), or Great Casterton (Todd, 1968, 36), although a major objection is the lack of any finds of a specifically legionary nature from Cirencester.

The army movements which took place *c.* A.D. 49, in which both Cirencester and Gloucester were seemingly involved, were undoubtedly to tighten the net more securely around Caractacus and his allies, the Silures. Two years earlier they had raided the province (Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 31), possibly attacking territory of the Dobunni. Consequently, it was sound tactics to station an *ala* at Cirencester, where the radiating roads offered a mobile force the ability to strike in any direction.

Further extensive troop movements followed in the decade after the Boudiccan rebellion. It is likely that a change in garrison occurred at Cirencester, although present evidence allows various interpretations.

(1) The ramparts discovered at both the Sands and Watermoor Hospital post-date the Leaholme fort rampart. It is not impossible, therefore, that a wholly new site, south of the existing fort, was selected for the third phase of military occupation. This suggestion, however, imposes problems if the third-phase buildings at Leaholme have to be included within this fort, since it would give it an unusually large area of some 12 ha. or more, so equating more with the size of a vexillation fortress.

(2) The large mass of pottery found in the filling of the inner ditch at Leaholme seems at first sight to support (1). The samian, in particular, from this layer may be closely dated to A.D. 60-65, and the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the ditch, together with the rest of the north-west fortifications, went out of commission by that date. From this it might be deemed that a fort on a different site replaced, or was partly built over, the Leaholme fort. But there are additional complications. The accumulated evidence of all sites implies that the Leaholme fort was not finally closed down until the early to mid 70s, although it is not impossible that the north-west side was earlier re-positioned. However, the samian vessels from the ditch had clearly never been used and some were of types not likely to have been in great demand by soldiers. The evidence suggests, therefore, that it was probably discarded direct from a store for disposal in the ditch, and had never been issued. How long it had gathered dust on a remote shelf in the quartermaster's store cannot be assessed, but it may well have remained there until the fort was abandoned in the early or mid 70s. We might also suggest that the vessels were the sole survivors of a consignment of new stock taken into the stores during the early 60s, and such restocking could well equate with a change of unit. By 65, it may be added, Period II B buildings might have been showing signs of decrepitude after a life of some 15 years, so requiring replacements or repair, and giving rise to the Period II C internal reconstructions.

(3) If the proposals in (2) are accepted as the most likely explanation, the two outlying sections of fortification at the Sands and Watermoor Hospital have still to be explained. It seems most probable, in view of their later date, that they formed part of a large fortified annexe to the Leaholme fort. Several Claudio-Neronian forts are now known with annexes attached, often of a size larger than the parent fort, as at Thorpe-by-Newark, Notts. (Wilson D.R., 1966, 203). The likely purpose of these annexes at this period was for the stock-piling of strategic materials, such as timber possibly already cut for building use. Such stocks may well have existed by the early Flavian period to allow for the massive programme of fort construction then carried out so rapidly. Idle soldiers are discontented soldiers and a major programme of tree-felling in the non-campaigning, winter seasons would have provided work for many hands, at the most appropriate time, when the sap was down in the trees. (But see Hanson, 1978).

It is suggested, therefore, that the Leaholme fort was the principal fort at Cirencester, lasting from *c.* A.D. 49 to the early or mid 70s. The course of the main roads seems to add substance to this conclusion, although a good deal of uncertainty still obtains over the early alignments of Ermin Street, south-east of the site, and the Fosse Way to the south-west. The known direction of that part of Ermin Street seems to aim at a point to the west of the fort so as, perhaps, to

bypass it. But the last main course of the Fosse Way, before it changes direction to the south some 3 km. (1¾ miles) north of the town, clearly points towards a gate in the north-eastern side of the fort and not far from the excavations in Chester Street, where peculiarities in the ditch spacings might indicate its presence, and where it would meet the street emerging from the fort, whose traces were found in Admiral's Walk. Equally clearly the north-western line of Ermin Street from Gloucester is extended by the street which strikes a gate of the fort lying in the area unavailable for excavation between the two main excavated arms of the Leaholme site. The slight difference in alignments of the lengths of ditches which can be observed in these two areas, strongly suggests an interruption at that point.

We may, therefore, tentatively postulate the following sequence:

- (1) Ermin Street reaches Cirencester from the south-east, probably representing the line of the initial military advance.
- (2) A fort was established in the general area of the Leaholme fort, but probably not coinciding precisely with it. The fort did not embrace the already positioned line of Ermin Street (south-east).
- (3) The Fosse Way from the north was sited on the north-east gate of the fort. It is still difficult to work out the relationship of the Fosse Way (south-west) with the fort, and much more information is required, as indeed also for the line of Akeman Street.
- (4) Ermin Street (north-west) was extended from Cirencester to Gloucester, starting as a projection of one of the principal streets in the fort.

It is suggested, therefore, that construction of a fort must have preceded the laying-out of the Fosse Way and the extension of Ermin Street to Gloucester, (Margary, 1973). But it is not yet possible to explain what would then have to be subsequent radical changes in these road alignments.

As already indicated, the final abandonment of the fort probably fell within the decade A.D. 70-80; together with others in the area the garrison was removed, presumably by either Julius Frontinus or Cn. Julius Agricola in preparation for their campaigns in Wales or the north. Evacuation involved much clearing up and demolition. The ramparts of the Leaholme fort and of the annexe appear to have been mostly levelled, the material being thrown into the inner ditch, together with much rubbish. The lines of the ditches must, nevertheless, have been still visible a few years later, for they were in places used as gravel quarries to provide aggregate for the new streets of the civil town. Indeed, much of the filling of post-pits and ditches was carried out in a superficial way, so that considerable subsidence occurred over them in later years.

There is a growing mass of evidence that some Iron Age farms, or a minor settlement (Period I), were already in existence in the Churn valley at the time of arrival of the Roman army, in addition to the major centre at Bagendon. But in the post-Boudiccan period a military *vicus* developed on the land immediately north-west of the Leaholme fort. At least one street of this settlement, running parallel to the defences on that side of the fort, was found beneath the later forum piazza, and was flanked by a timber-framed building on the edge away from the fort. The nature and position of the street suggest that a degree of official recognition was accorded. The connection between the growing *vicus* and the abandonment of the native capital at Bagendon has been discussed by this writer elsewhere (Wacher, 1975, 30). Here it is worth noting that a process of migration, which may have been proceeding gradually for some years, was apparently hastened by the events of the early 60s. Whether this was the result of coercion on the part of the military, of official persuasion, or of economic forces, we cannot say. Certainly the economic, to say nothing of the protective, advantages of settling nearer to the fort than at Bagendon would have been apparent to most members of the community.

It will be seen from the foregoing account that most of the evidence for this period at Cirencester is of a fragmentary and often-uncoordinated nature; the historical implications, however, are not without importance.

## EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FOR THE AUXILIARY GARRISON AT CIRENCESTER

by  
Mark Hassall

Two well-known tombstones found at Cirencester in the nineteenth century record the presence of men of two different cavalry regiments and are discussed in detail below (nos. 1 and 2). In addition there is a carved fragment which may come from a third auxiliary cavalryman's tombstone (no. 3). A fourth tombstone and part of a military diploma have also been found. The first probably, and the second conceivably indicate veterans settled at Cirencester but neither should be connected with the first century garrison and are accordingly not dealt with here.<sup>3</sup>

1. = *RIB* 108, pl. 21. Inscribed tombstone, 0.78 x 1.98 x 0.26 m., with a carving of the deceased, shown as a mounted trooper, riding down a fallen enemy whom he is about to strike with his lance. The tombstone was found in July 1835 in digging house foundations for a Mr Paine at Watermoor, 'about 50 yards outside the old Roman wall' and about 2 feet below the surface<sup>4</sup> and close to the line of Ermin Street: now on display in the Corinium Museum.

*Dannicus eq(u)es alae / Indian(ae) tur(ma) Albani / stip(endiorum) XVI cives Raur(icus) / cur(averunt) Fulvius Natalis it / Fl[avi]us Bitucus ex testame(nte) / h(ic) s(itus) e(st)*

"Dannicus, trooper of the Cavalry Regiment Indiana, from the troop of Albanus, of 16 years' service, a tribesman of the Raurici, lies buried here. Fulvius Natalis and Flavius Bitucus had this erected under his will"

### Discussion

Dannicus, according to the inscription, was tribesman (*civis*) of the Raurici (or Rauraci), who lived in the Roman military district and later province of Germania Superior. The chief town in the territory of this tribe was the Roman colony of Augusta Raurica, the modern Augst, near Basel in Switzerland. The unit in which Dannicus served was a cavalry regiment (*ala*) whose strength was nominally 500 men. In common with many other cavalry regiments the *Ala Indiana* "Indus' Horse", derived its name from that of the commander under whom it had been first raised, but unlike most of these officers, Indus can be identified. According to Tacitus<sup>5</sup> Julius Indus, a tribesman of the Treveri of the Moselle area of east Gaul was put in charge of a band of loyal native cavalry in A.D. 21, to help crush a revolt that had broken out in that year. After the rebels had been defeated, the unit was incorporated into the Roman army. It was subsequently stationed in Upper Germany and it will have been here that Dannicus enlisted in the unit.

According to the older view<sup>6</sup> the *ala* probably came to Britain at the time of the Claudian invasion of A.D. 43. Since Dannicus had served for 16 years at the time of his death, and had been enlisted before the transfer of the regiment to Britain, the tombstone could have been set up at any time between A.D. 43 and A.D. 59. It has recently been argued however<sup>7</sup> that the tombstone is a dozen or more years later in date and was not set up until after A.D. 70

3. For the tombstone see McWhirr, 1973, 191-218, Appendix 1 inscriptions 1969-1973, no. 6, where it is suggested that it may be possible to restore the word *fulminata*, an epithet borne by legion XII. This restoration has not been adopted in the publication of the inscription in Wright and Hassall, 1974, 461, no. 1. For the diploma see the discussion by Margaret Roxan, p. 117.
4. Information from David Viner quoting from a letter once in the Corinium Museum, now missing. For full bibliography and critical apparatus see *RIB* 108. Note the irregular spelling of *civis* (1.3) and *et* (1.4).
5. *Annals* III 42. A daughter of Indus, Julia Pacata subsequently married Julius Classicianus the man sent to replace the unpopular Catus Decianus, the procurator of Britain at the time of the Boudiccan revolt in A.D. 60 or 61 (cf. *RIB* 12). On the history of the unit see Stein, 1932, 141-2; Alföldy, 1968, 19-21.
6. e.g. cf. Stein, 1932, (n.3).
7. Alföldy, 1968, (n.3).



21. Tombstone of the trooper Dannicus, of the *ala Indiana*.

while the unit itself did not come to Britain until after the mid 50s. The reasoning is as follows.

One of Dannicus' heirs was called Flavius Bitucus, if the reading and restoration adopted by R.P. Wright in *RIB* is correct. Now the name Flavius should derive from a grant of Roman citizenship made by the emperor Flavius Vespasianus (or by one of his sons Titus or Domitian). This would mean that the inscription was set up at *earliest* in the year 70 when Vespasian became emperor, so that Dannicus, who had served for 16 years at the time of his death will have enlisted at *earliest* in A.D. 54 and the unit should still have been in Germania Superior at that date. Two conclusions would then follow: there would be epigraphic evidence for the occupation of the fort at Cirencester in the 70s and the *ala Indiana* would seem not to be the original unit in garrison at Cirencester. Unfortunately the stone is damaged at the vital point, and we shall therefore never know whether Bitucus in fact had the *nomen* Flavius, or another similar one such as Florius. The unit may have left Britain for Lower Germany in 83 and was certainly there by 89.<sup>8</sup>

2. = *RIB* 109, pl. 22. Inscribed tombstone, 0.81 x 2.05 x 0.20 m., with a carving of the deceased shown as a mounted trooper riding down a fallen enemy. In his right hand he brandishes his lance and on his left arm he carries a hexagonal shield and a standard. The tombstone was discovered on 22 January 1836 near to the find spot of no. 1 and purchased by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, of Goodrich Court, Ross, and later restored to Cirencester and the Museum by the generosity of Mr G. Moffat, also of Goodrich Court. Now on display in the Corinium Museum.<sup>9</sup>

*Sextus Vale/rius Genialis / eq(u)es alae Trhaec(um) / civis Frisiaus tur(ma) / Genialis an(norum) XXXX st(ipendiorum) XX / h(ic) s(itus) e(st) (h)e(res) f(aciendum) c(uravit)*

"Sextus Valerius Genialis, trooper of the Cavalry Regiment of Thracians, a tribesman of the Frisii, from the troop of Genialis, aged 40, of 20 years' service, lies buried here. His heir had this set up"

#### Discussion

Sextus Valerius Genialis possessed the three names (*tria nomina*) of a Roman citizen, but was also a tribesman (*civis*) of the Frisii, who lived in the Low Countries. He probably enlisted in the *ala Thracum*, a cavalry regiment of 500 men, while it was stationed in the lower Rhineland,<sup>10</sup> although apart from the present inscription, there is as yet no evidence that it was stationed in Germania Inferior in the first century A.D. If this is correct and if, as seems likely, the unit accompanied legion XX from Neuss in Lower Germany to Britain in A.D. 43, then the tombstone would be dated to between A.D. 43 and 63, for Genialis had served for 20 years. The *ala Thracum* in which he served is probably identical to the *ala prima Thracum* known to have been stationed at Colchester at some time between 43 and the Boudiccan revolt in A.D. 60/61.<sup>11</sup> This might suggest that it was the second of the two cavalry *alae* known to have been stationed at Cirencester. However, as shown above, there may be reasons for thinking the other unit, the *ala Indiana*, was still in Upper Germany in the mid 50s (see above), in which case the *ala Thracum* will have been the earlier of the two at Cirencester. Its stay at Colchester may have been very brief for Claudius' first Governor, Aulus Plautius (A.D. 43-47), was probably responsible for building the Fosse Way and its forts at Cirencester and elsewhere both on the line of the road itself and in a screen to the west of it. Alternatively it may have come to Cirencester in A.D. 50 for in that year the

8. Alföldy, 1968, (n.3), p. 20. The unit bears the title *pia fidelis* in an inscription (CIL XI 6123) as do other regiments in Lower Germany which had remained loyal to Domitian during a revolt in Upper Germany in 89.

9. Information on the discovery and later history of the stone from David Viner. For full bibliography and critical apparatus, see *RIB* 109. Note the irregular spelling of *eques*, *Thracum*, *Frisiavus* (an alternative of *Frisius*) and *heres*.

10. For the history of this unit see Stein, 1932, (n. 3 above), 153-4; Alföldy, 1968, n.3 above, 36-7; Jarrett, 1969, 215-224, esp. 218; Bogács, 1974, 198-220, with English summary 217-219.

11. *RIB* 201. It is not unusual for the first *ala* or *cohors* of a series to lack a numeral on inscriptions.



22. Tombstone of the trooper Sextus Valerius Genialis, of the *ala Thracum*.



23. Stone hand from cavalry tombstone. (Scale 1:1)

*colonia* at Colchester was founded, and its garrison, legion XX, was moved westward against the Silures. In this case, it may have replaced a third, unknown unit which will have been in garrison at Cirencester for a very brief period (c. A.D. 47-50).

3. Sculptured hand of oolitic limestone (pl. 23), found in 1950 in the garden of no. 157 Watermoor Road. The trench also produced evidence for six burials and it is possible that the fragment comes from a funerary monument although the unweathered state of the stone suggests that it may never have been set up. Around the wrist is a bracelet shown as a broad flat band, the ends of which have been turned back on themselves. The hand itself grasps a rod which could be the shaft of a lance and if so, probably comes from the grave monument of a cavalry trooper<sup>12</sup> similar to nos. 1 and 2. The sculptured hand is the subject of a separate note by N. A. Griffiths, (1978, 396-7).

12. For parallels from the Rhineland see Gerster, 1938, Type B, "Reitersteine" where an attempt is made to attribute the 36 Rhenish rider monuments to four specific workshops.