

I.

CASTELLUM VELUNIATE AND CIVILIANS ON A
ROMAN FRONTIER.

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The remarkable Roman altar which has prompted this paper was ploughed up in the spring of 1956 on the farm of Stacks, West Lothian, a short distance E. of the site of the Roman fort of Carriden.¹ The importance of the discovery was at once realised by the farmer's sister, Miss Elizabeth Paul, who reported it to the Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities, and the farmer himself, Mr James Paul, has generously presented the altar to the Museum, where it is now on exhibition.

According to the ploughman, the altar was found about 150 yds. due E. of the north-eastern corner of the fort and some 20 yds. from the edge of the steep bluff that overlooks the shore at this point (fig. 1). The field in question has long been under cultivation and its level surface exhibits no trace of any buried remains at the present time. Nor has aerial photography so far revealed any signs of a *vicus*, or extra-mural settlement, in the area. Nevertheless the inscription makes it clear that it is with the *vicus*, and not with the fort, that the altar is to be associated, and it is suggested below that it may have formed part of an official group of dedications on the parade-ground.

The new altar (Pl. I), which is not a large stone, measures 30 ins. high, 16 ins. wide and 9 ins. deep. While its front and sides are carefully dressed, the back is roughly trimmed only, by bold strokes of the adze, and the back of the capital has been broken off, apparently in modern times and very probably by the ploughing which in due course unearthed the stone. The base has also suffered mutilation. Nearly all the characteristics of an altar are present, including capital, inscribed die, base and bolsters: but the usual *focus* or basin for burning incense is omitted, as on the altar to Silvanus from Bar Hill.² The sinister side of the front is heavily worn in the middle, so as to obliterate up to three letters of the inscription in a gentle curve. The dexter side shows slighter traces of comparable wear, as if the stone had been used for sharpening iron implements. The inscription, despite the wear just described, is easy to read and the text is

¹ Cf. *P.S.A.S.*, LXXXIII, 167-70.

² G. Macdonald, *The Roman Wall in Scotland* (ed. 2, 1934), pl. liii, 3.

as follows: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)/vikani consis/fentes castel[lo]/
Veluniate cu[ram]/agente Ael(io) · Man/sueto · v(otum) · s(olverunt) · l(aeti) ·
l(ibentes) · m(erito).*

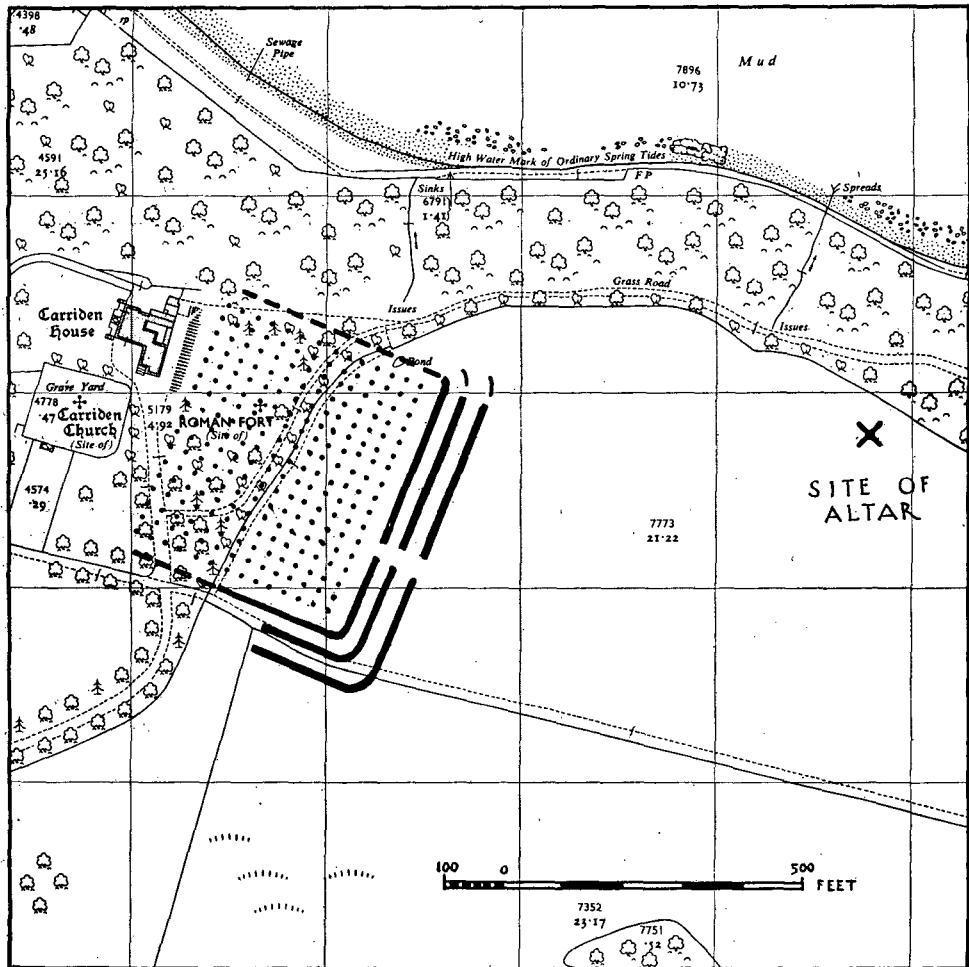


Fig. 1. Site of the fort at Carriden and discovery of altar. (Based on the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller, H.M. Stationery Office.)

The first line is in letters 2 ins. high, the others in letters $1\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high. The translation is "To Jupiter Best and Greatest, the villagers settled at Fort Veluniate (or Velunias) paid their vow joyful and willing, deservedly; Aelius Mansuetus taking care of the matter." Notable points in the letter-forms are the small vowels used to save space in lines 2, 3, 4 and 6 and the ligaturing, for the same purpose, of the combination TE (but not ET) wherever it occurs, as in lines 3, 4 and 5. The use of the double adjectives,

laeti libentes, qualifying the dedicators, is quite common in Antonine times in Scotland,¹ and then and onward in Northern England.² The use of *k* for *c* in *vikani* is a common form of spelling in this word³ and doubtless derives from archaic legalistic Latin, as used in official documents or by land-surveyors. It reflects, not explicitly but implicitly, the official status of the community. The standing of Aelius Mansuetus, who was acting for the *vikani*, is not revealed. His second name, or *cognomen*, is a respectable name, common in Italy and Pannonia among soldiers and traders, while the family name, Aelius, might suggest a citizenship conferred under Hadrian or Antoninus Pius. Mansuetus may well have been a *negotiator*, engaged in frontier trade. He does not state that he held any rank among the *vikani*: his "care" was the setting-up of the dedication.

As for the dedication itself, both the find-spot and the consecration to *Juppiter Optimus Maximus* would suggest the parade-ground,⁴ the usual site of such dedications outside a Roman fort. The *vikani* did not indeed form part of the regiment as such, but they could have taken their corporate official part in the New Year vows, the *vota sollemnia* of 3 January for the safety and welfare of Emperor and State; for in these, as Pliny shows,⁵ both soldiers and civilians shared, "*certante commilitonum et provincialium pietate.*" Moreover, the form of such a dedication would certainly be a vow to *Juppiter Optimus Maximus*, as guardian diety of the Roman State. This, however, is the first example in Britain of such a vow by *vicani*.

The *vicani* are further styled *vikani consistentes*. One of the oldest uses of this phraseology is represented by Julius Caesar's famous reference to the Roman citizens at Cenabum and Cabillonum, *qui negotiandi causa ibi constiterant*.⁶ The legal implication of the words is residence but not domicile. The phrase is frequent in itself and can be specifically attached to *castella*, as at Castell, the bridge-head across the Rhine from Mainz.⁷ The important and operative word is, however, *vikani*, which implies that at Carriden, as at many other forts, the settlers outside the fort were accorded official standing as a *vicus* or village-community. In Britain⁸ inscriptions refer to *vici* at Old Carlisle, Chesterholm and Housesteads: this is the first reference to the institution north of Hadrian's Wall.

Perhaps even more interest attaches to the full description of the *vicani*,

¹ For example, *CIL* vii, 1080, 1081 and *EE* ix, 1234, 1235, all from Newstead; or *CIL* vii, 1092 from Rough Castle; or *CIL* vii, 1093-5, from Castlecary.

² *CIL* vii, 440, late Antonine, from Lanchester, Co. Durham, and *CIL* vii, 541, 3rd century, from Rudchester *milhræum*.

³ Dessau, iii, *ILS*, 823, cites seven examples.

⁴ *CW*² xxxix, 21-2 for the Maryport examples: comparable burials are Newstead, *CIL* vii, 1080, and Birdoswald, *EE* vii, 1071.

⁵ *Epist.*, x, 100.

⁶ *Bell. Gall.*, vii, 3, 1 (Cenabum); vii, 42, 5 (Cabillonum).

⁷ *ILS* 7085.

⁸ *CIL* vii, 346 (Old Carlisle); Haverfield, *Roman Britain in 1914* (*Brit. Acad. Suppl. Papers* iii), 31-2, Chesterholm; *AA*⁴ ix, 232 = *JRS* xxii, 226 (Housesteads).

as *consistentes castello Veluniate*, for this is the first occurrence in epigraphy of the name of any fort on the Antonine Wall. Further, the name is recognisable as heading the list of those forts in the Ravenna Cosmography,¹ in the form *Velunia*; so that the list can now be recognised for the first time as beginning from the east, as do the forts of Hadrian's Wall enumerated in the same document. It is, however, well known that on Hadrian's Wall the list deserts strict sequence² in order to associate some of the names with roads leading to the Wall. Again, one large site, *Petriana*, is omitted, in favour of the adjacent town, *Luguvalium*, as are two small forts, apparently too insignificant to include in a road-list. The first and last points may bear upon a consideration of the Antonine Wall names as a whole. The Roman Wall in Scotland had in antiquity nineteen forts, of which the Ravenna Cosmography mentions ten or eleven, according as *Medio-nemeton* is taken as one name or two. On the analogy of Hadrian's Wall, such small sites³ as Duntocher, Rough Castle, Westerwood, or Croy Hill might have been omitted, not to mention potentials among the six sites⁴ of which the size is yet unknown. Again, other sites, such as Balmuildy,⁵ may have been detached and linked with roads. It is thus very possible that the list as it stands very closely approaches the picture of the Antonine Wall as it might have been represented in a road-map. But it would clearly be idle to think that the discovery of the ancient name for Carriden allows all the rest to be identified by a process of reading them off. The new certainty is no more than that the list starts from the east instead of from the west, as some, including the first-named writer, had suggested. It may further now be observed that if *Medionemeton* were indeed in the middle position it would be Croy Hill; if *Credigone* were the western terminal it would be Old Kilpatrick; while *Colanica*, having regard to the proved Flavian occupation necessary to a site named by Ptolemy,⁶ might well be Castlecary. But such conjectures cannot as yet pass the bounds of supposition.

A return may, therefore, be made to the words *castello Veluniate*. These are in the oblique case and the nominative form of the place-name remains unstated. The name is presumably Celtic, with Romanised suffix, in which event the nominative form would be *Velunias*, with genitive *Veluniatīs*, on the analogy of such names as *Brivas*, *Dunias*, *Sullias* and *Tolosas*. But no less possible is the nominative ending *-ate*, in which event *Veluniate* would stand either for the nominative or for the ablative which *consistere* often governs. On the other hand, the history of a famous name like *Arelate* is a reminder that both forms might be concurrent; for *Arelate* and

¹ *Archaeologia*, xciii, 19.

² *AA*⁴ xii, 340-1, for a detailed statement of the case.

³ Miss A. S. Robertson, *An Antonine Fort, Golden Hill, Duntocher* (1957), 104, fig. 19 gives a helpful comparison of sizes.

⁴ These are Kinnell, Inveravon, Falkirk, Seabegs, Kirkintilloch and New Kilpatrick.

⁵ S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmuildy* (1922), 3.

⁶ *Ptol. Geogr.*, II, 3, 9, *κολαυία*.

Arelas are almost equally well known and the shorter form, though not official outlasted the other to become the modern Arles. It is thus possible that both *Veluniate* and *Velunias* were used, and it may only be added that the form *Velunia* in the Ravenna Cosmography comes closer to the second, devoid of weight though the fact must be owing to the many corruptions in that source. The meaning of the name itself is unknown.

Apart from the name the appearance of *vicani* at *Velunias* raises the question of how common such communities were in Britain N. of Hadrian's Wall, and on the Antonine Wall in particular, where they have been commonly supposed¹ to be confined to the small fortified annexes attached to the Wall-forts, if they existed at all. This assumption, however, hardly agrees with the known facts. The clearest evidence to the contrary is presented by Bar Hill, notably one of the wildest and most exposed of fort sites on the Scottish Wall. Here the altar² to Silvanus, with its pedestal base, was ploughed up in 1895 some 240 yds. NE. of the east gate of the fort, between the Wall and the military road, that is, on the west shoulder of Castle Hill. Trial trenching³ on the ridge running from the fort to the highest peak, which lies S. of Castle Hill, revealed many hearths and produced much pottery. The map⁴ indicates that the area involved was at least twice that of the fort, and thus comprised some 6 acres. No less striking evidence, though of quite a different kind, comes from Auchendavy, the next fort westwards from Bar Hill. In 1728, folk who were digging stones for making a park-wall at Shirva, destroyed⁵ a structure which was then called a tumulus. It had a stone-built chamber with parallel walls, a curved end and flat roof-slabs, the whole largely built of Roman stones and recognisable as an earth-house or weem, comparable with the examples⁶ at Newstead and Crichton, similarly built of re-used Roman material. At Shirva, the re-used stones included a civilian inscribed tombstone, set up to fifteen-year old Salmanes⁷ by someone bearing the same name, no doubt his father: also two sculptured panels⁸ from funeral banquet tombstones and a second inscribed stone⁹ to a female named Verecunda, yet another certain civilian. Finally two figures¹⁰ from an erotic scene appear to belong to another elaborate funeral monument. The most interesting personage is plainly Salmanes, for his name is Eastern and implies the presence of an Eastern *negotiator*¹¹ and his family.

¹ For example, R. G. Collingwood, *The Archeology of Roman Britain* (1930), 89.

² *The Antonine Wall Report* (1899), 153.

³ G. Macdonald and A. Park, *The Roman Forts on the Bar Hill* (1906), 132.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pl. i.

⁵ R. Stuart, *Caledonia Romana* (ed. 2, 1852), 333 and pl. xii, 4, make the nature of the structure reasonably clear.

⁶ *P.S.A.S.*, I, 213 (Newstead): VIII, 105 (Crichton).

⁷ *CIL* vii, 1119: cf. G. Macdonald, *The Roman Wall in Scotland* (ed. 2, 1934), pl. lxxvi, 2.

⁸ G. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pl. IV, 1, 2.

⁹ *CIL* vii, 1120: cf. G. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pl. lxxvi, 3.

¹⁰ G. Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pl. lxxvi, 5.

¹¹ As Sir George Macdonald, *op. cit.*, 439, observed.

Elsewhere along the line of the Wall the evidence for external settlements is less striking, but in essentials no weaker. At Cadder¹ timber buildings were observed by Mr John Clarke to have covered an area extending for at least 150 yds. E. and SE. of the fort. At Balmuildy² an annexe of $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres was crowded with timber buildings and yielded "trench for trench, . . . more potsherds than the interior of the fort": there were also sculptures³ and part of an altar⁴ from a shrine of Mars and Victory. At Castlecary, which resembles Balmuildy in size and scale, a fortified annexe covering $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres is known.⁵ Its interior has remained unexplored, but, according to the earlier testimony of Stuart,⁶ "to such an extent have the foundations of ancient buildings been met with, not only within the area of the fort but likewise in its immediate vicinity, that the idea seems far from improbable which supposes the dwellings of a Roman colony to have stood under the aegis of its protection." If the term *vicus* is substituted for the too grandiose "colony" there can be little doubt that Stuart was right. It can be shown that extra-mural structures were not in fact confined to the annexe. Two altars come from W. of the fort, the annexe being on the E. The first⁷ is a dedication to Mercury by *cives Italici et Norici* in the Sixth Legion, of which the find-spot is not precisely established: the second⁸ is a dedication to Silvanus, found in a thicket "close to the Red Burn" which passes to W. of the fort and the modern Stirling road. Finally, at Old Kilpatrick, the western terminal fort corresponding to Carriden, it appeared⁹ that the area between fort and river-harbour "retained throughout the occupation a strictly official character." Here had certainly stood the bath-house¹⁰ long ago destroyed in making the Forth-Clyde canal. But a portion of the stone-channelled aqueduct¹¹ leading to it was discovered, though not recognised as such. On the other hand so many potsherds were discovered¹² in laying foundations for the tenement houses of Gavinburn Place, due E. of the fort, as to suggest that extra-mural buildings lined the eastward road along Clydebank.

¹ J. Clarke, *The Roman Fort at Cadder* (1933), 60-1, also folding plan.

² S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmuildy* (1922), pl. lviii; also p. 56 for statement quoted.

³ S. N. Miller, *op. cit.*, 60-1, pls. xxviii and xxix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵ *P.S.A.S.*, xxxvii, 282.

⁶ R. Stuart, *op. cit.*, 344.

⁷ *CIL* vii, 1095.

⁸ *CIL* vii, 1096.

⁹ S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Old Kilpatrick* (1928), 32.

¹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33, cf. pl. x.

¹² *Ibid.*, 32.



[Photo: K. A. Steer.

1. Altar of the *vikani*, Carriden.



2. View of the site from W. before excavation.