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“Introduction to Old English”  
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# Roman remains in Britain

# The Roman era in Britain

- Lasted for almost four and half centuries
- **Beginning** - Claudian Conquest in AD 43
- **End** - The passing of northern Gaul into the hands of the Trans-Rhenish barbarians in AD 406-410

# Reliable sources about this period:

- **Museum collections**
- **Archaeology**
- **Ancient geographical writers** (Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography*, 2nd century A.D.; *Peutinger Tablet*, copy from 13th century; Antoninus Augustus, *The Itinerary of the provinces*, 2nd century; *The Notitia Dignitatum*, 5th century; *The Ravenna Chronography*, 7th century)
- **Earlier studies:** Horlsey, *Britannia Romana*, 1732; Scarth, *Roman Britain*, 1885
- **Topographical literature:** Warburton, *Vallum Romanum*, 1753; Bruce, *Roman Wall*, 1867

# Roman remains

divided according to their purpose

1. The objects of infrastructure
2. Military remains
3. Houses
4. Public buildings and baths
5. Religious buildings and altars
6. Sepulchral remains
7. Pottery
8. Glass, Metal, and Stone Utensils
9. Iron Implements and Appliances

# Objects of infrastructure

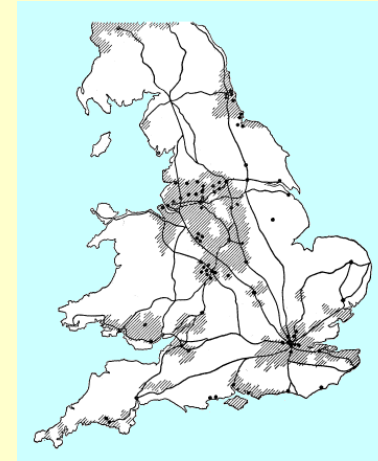
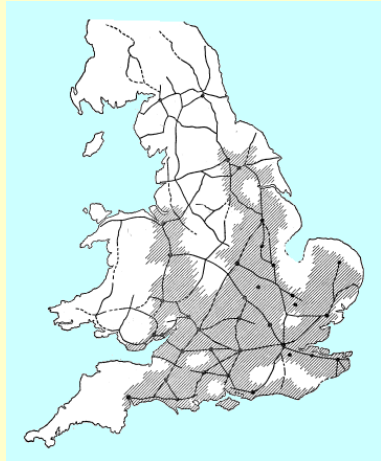
- Roads
- Bridges
- Fords
- Milestones

# Objects of infrastructure - Roads

- Looking at the Roman roads as a whole – as a network of communications – no remains impress us more with the thoroughness of the masters of the ancient world and their high sense of organization. These roads represent the most useful of the great works raised by the conquerors, and they are the most enduring in their effects.
- Many of Roman roads are still used, but these rarely show signs of the Roman origin beyond certain peculiarities of their courses. Many, on the other hand, fell out of use at an early period, probably owing to the changed conditions brought about by the English conquest.

# Roads

comparing the Roman era and present



- Map showing the chief Roman roads and towns, and regions of densest Romanized population
- Map showing the chief railways, towns, and regions of densest population at present

# Explanation

- That present highways should reflect the Roman system is not surprising, for many of them perpetuate Roman lines; but that the railways should in any appreciable degree reflect that system, may seem extraordinary. The explanation lies in the paramount importance of London the physical features of the country; and as both the ancient and modern engineers have in the main followed the lines of least resistance, the results, not unnaturally, are also, in the main, similar

# The Objects of infrastructure – Roads

The Roman engineers were careful to give their roads the necessary convexity to ensure the rapid removal of rain-water, and they often, perhaps always, provided side ditches.

The characteristics of Roman roads:

- decided preference for high rather than low ground, due to the swampy and wooded condition of the valleys at the time.
- the mode in which the deviations are laid out; in a modern road or railway, this is effected by curves; in a typical Roman road, by straight lengths forming angles with one another.

# Objects of infrastructure – Fords and Bridges

- In a well-watered country, fords and bridges must have been numerous, but remains of few have survived.
- The Roman fords were submerged portions of the roads, only more strongly constructed so as to resist the scour of the water.
- Although many small bridges are popularly regarded as Roman, very few of these appear to be so ancient. Of Roman bridges of greater magnitude and importance, there are undoubted remains of several. Those of one over the North Tyne at Chollerford are noteworthy.

# The bridge over the North Tyne at Chollerford



# Objects of infrastructure – Milestones

- The chief roads of Britain, as elsewhere, were equipped with milestones (miliaria).
- The typical Roman milestone was a cylindrical shaft of stone 1,5m high, but square shafts were not uncommon in this country, and not seldom rough moor-stones of suitable sizes and shapes were used for the purpose. They were usually inscribed. The normal inscription set forth the name and titles of the reigning emperor, the number of miles, and the name of the place from which they were reckoned

# Military remains

- Camps
- Forts
- Internal buildings
- External buildings
- Walls

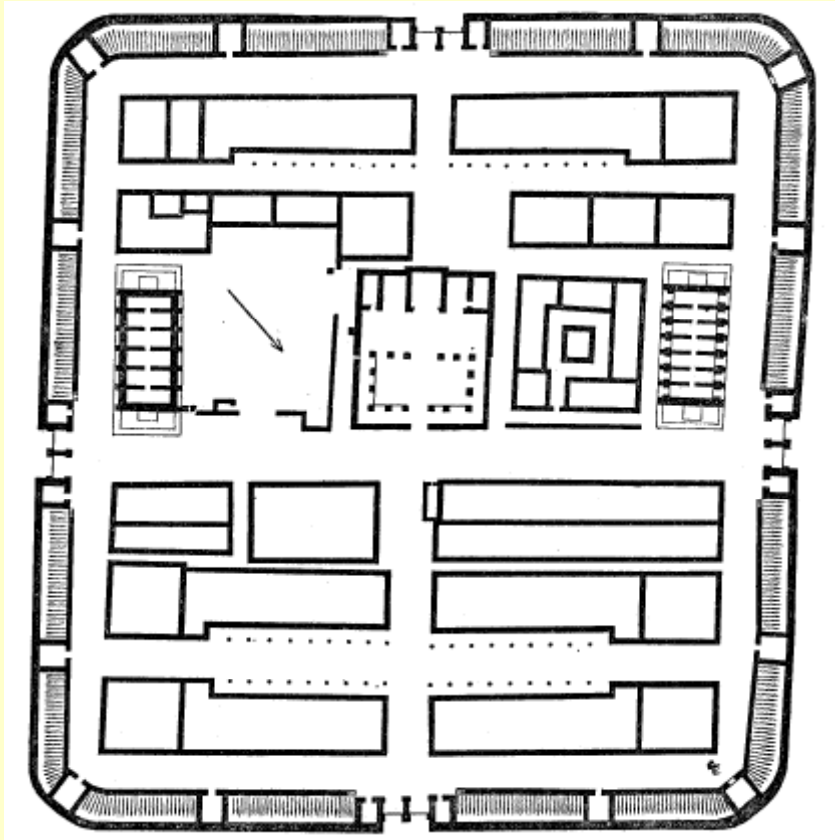
## Military remains – camps and forts

- **Camps** - The visible remains of Roman entrenched fieldworks are comparatively few and little is known of them
- **Forts** - The sites of the garrison stations are usually well-defined and easily recognized

# Military remains – internal buildings

- The chief building in a Roman fort was a central one, which is generally known as the praetorium, also as the forum from its forum-like planning.
- Near the headquarters was another important building, in some of the larger forts, two. These buildings varied considerably, but all of them had a house-like plan, and for this reason they have been identified as the residences of the commandants of their respective forts, and may have included rooms for the chief members of their staffs.
- There are also buildings in the camps or forts, whether L-shaped or oblong, and those were certainly barracks. They recall the arrangement of the tents.

# Military remains

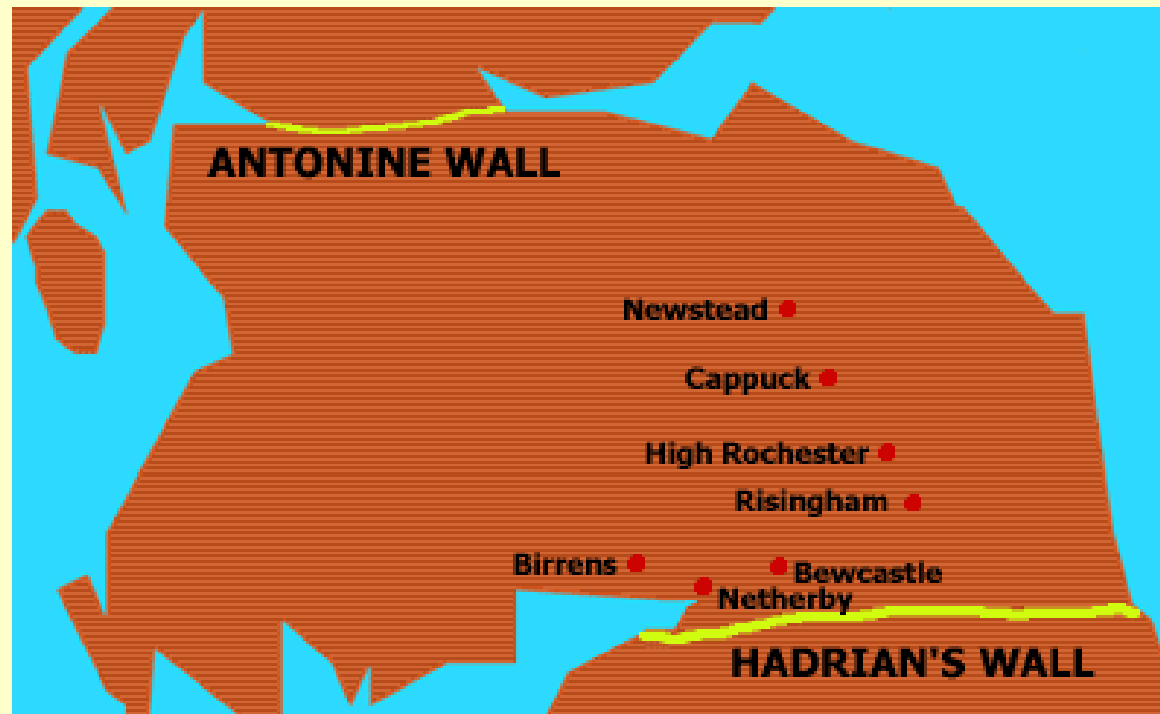


- Plan of Roman Fort, *Gellygaer*

# Military remains – The Northern Walls

- The Northern Walls - The Antonine Wall and The Wall of Hadrian
- Few Roman remains in Europe have attracted more attention than the two Walls. Although the term Wall does not convey an adequate idea of these great works.
- Each was a complex of forts, continuous rampart and ditch, military roads and outlying posts, planned with consummate skill and on an imperial scale; but in addition, the southern line has enigmatical features which have long been the subject of controversy.

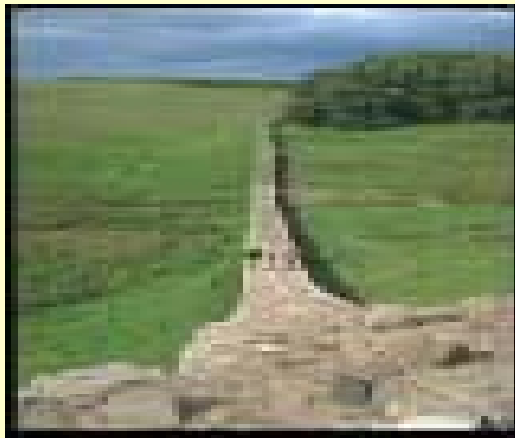
# The map of the walls



# The Wall of Hadrian

- The Roman Emperor Hadrian came to the throne at 117 AD, and in 122 AD gave the order to build a wall across the northern frontier
- The original construction took six years to complete, during which time plans were altered several times.
- The Wall was 80 miles long, following the northern valleys of Tyne, Irthing, and Eden between Newcastle and Carlisle.
- The wall was manned until sometime around 400 AD

# The Wall of Hadrian



# The Antonine Wall

- In 138 AD Antonius Pius (86-161 AD) succeeded Hadrian as Emperor of Rome. To mark the northernmost extent of Roman territory in Britain - and to gain prestige - Antonius decided to build a wall to rival that of his predecessor.
- As a defensive barrier the Antonine Wall did not fulfill its role for long. In 181 the northern tribes poured over the wall and pushed the Romans back to Hadrian's Wall. The Romans finally abandoned any hope of regaining the territory between the two walls in 196 AD.
- Antonine Wall facts:  
Length 37 miles (59km)  
Built 140-142 AD

# The Antonine Wall



# Houses

- 'Corridor' Houses
- 'Basilical' Houses

# Public buildings and baths

- Forums
- Amphitheatres
- Baths

# Religious buildings and altars

- Temples
- Shrines
- Churches
- Altars

# Sepulchral remains

- Funeral customs
- Cremations and Inhumation
- Tombstones and Incriptions