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The End of Roman West

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The End of Roman West

By KEITH BRANIGAN

THE 'Roman West' was, by and large, a fourth century phenomenon. The west country had of course been conquered by Legio II Augusta early in the Claudian invasion, but since that time Romanisation had been represented very largely by the towns of Corinium, Glevum, Aquae Sulis, and Isca Dumnoniorum. In the countryside there were few villas, and those that there were, were small and poor in comparison to the villas of the south-east. The first building at Star (Shipham) for example, was a very poor rival to its contemporaries in Kent, Herts. and Bucks.¹ There were, on the other hand, many small native settlements, of which Butcombe is probably typical, and for the most part occupation of these seems to have been continuous and little changed throughout the period from the Roman invasion to the Roman withdrawal. If Butcombe is considered typical of these settlements, then the greatest change which occurred came in the late third century, when several enclosures were built and rectangular buildings with stone footings were erected.² Important as these changes may be however, they do not alter the essential character of these settlements, which remains native and un-Romanised.

Similarly, we should not allow the splendours of Bath and Cirencester to mislead us into thinking that urban life in the Roman west of the fourth century was highly civilised. Whilst the cantonal capitals, *colonia*, and *spa*, provided planned street systems and various public amenities, and sported several large, well-appointed private houses, smaller towns in the region reveal a level of Romanisation which was not so very much above that of the farming settlements at Butcombe, on Failand and in southern Gloucestershire. Sea Mills had never recovered from prolonged military occupation,³ Camerton was a shabby industrial estate,⁴ and Gatcombe seemingly occupied by endless workshops, labourers quarters and storehouses.⁵

¹ K. Barton, *Proc. Somerset Archaeol. Natur. Hist. Soc.*, 108(1964), 45-93.

² P. J. Fowler, *Univ. Bristol Spelaeo. Soc. Proc.*, 11,3(1968) 215-6, 12,2(1970) 183-5.

³ M. Hebditch, *Bull. Bristol Archaeol. Res. Grp.*, 2(1966) 64-6; M. Hebditch and L. V. Grinsell *Roman Sites in the Mendips, Cotswold, Wye Valley and Bristol Region* (1968) 15-6; G. C. Boon *Trans. BGAS* 66(1945) 258-95, 68(1949) 184-8.

⁴ W. J. Wedlake *Excavations at Camerton* (1958).

⁵ B. W. Cunliffe, *Univ. Bristol Spelaeo. Soc. Proc.* 11,2(1967) 126-60; K. Branigan, *Current Archaeology*, 25(1971) 41-44.

Here we find no hypocaust heated dining rooms with mosaic floors and elaborately decorated walls, nor a single, solitary graffito.

So too with the industrial settlements, of which Camerton and probably Gatcombe, are indeed examples. There is no trace of substantial Romanised buildings among the potteries of the Levels, the lead workings of Green Ore, or the stone quarries of Dundry,⁶ and one is led to suppose that the men who worked these industrial sites occupied houses which simply did not require or use roofing and hypocaust tiles, mortared masonry, tessellated or *opus* floors, and plastered walls—in other words, houses which were no more, and perhaps less, Romanised than the buildings at Butcombe. Charterhouse, now known to possess something approaching a street system, might present a slightly different picture if it is ever extensively excavated, but this will not change the overall impression given by the majority of industrial sites and small towns in the region.

These settlements contrast markedly with the villas which were built in the countryside around them, and indeed even the cantonal capitals and Bath itself can scarce stand comparisons with the best of the villas. Great courtyard villas are of course a feature of the fourth century over most of lowland Britain, but half of them are to be found in the territory of the Durotriges, the Dobunni, the Silures and the western Belgae, and similarly half of the villa mosaics are to be found within these territories.⁷ In other words, the courtyard villas with many mosaics are significantly concentrated in the south-west, and it is really on the basis of *this* concentration, rather than on the level of Romanisation in three or four principal towns, that we can legitimately speak of the 'Roman west'. It follows from this that although we must keep in mind the amenities offered to the inhabitants of Bath and Cirencester, it is really to the fourth century villas that we must look for an understanding of what the 'Roman west' amounted to.

It is not necessary to discuss here how and why the courtyard villas came to be concentrated in the south-west. It was probably the fortuitous combinations of economic circumstances and political events which led to this phenomenon. One factor however requires specific mention, and that is the influx of Gallic capital and land-owners as a result of the barbarian incursions across the Rhine between A.D. 260-275. To the evidence and arguments assembled by

⁶ A. Bulleid, *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, 26(1914), 137-44; H. S. L. Dewar, *Proc. Somerset Archaeol. Natur. Hist. Soc.*, 92(1948), 161-4; H. W. W. Ashworth *Report on the Romano-British Settlement and Metalworking Site at Vespasians Farm, Green Ore*, (1970); Hebditch and Grinsell, *op. cit.* n. 3, 26.

⁷ A. L. F. Rivet (ed.), *The Roman Villa in Britain* (1969), 210, fig. 5, 7; D. J. Smith, in Rivet, *op. cit.*, 70, 114.

Appelbaum, Smith and Rivet,⁸ I have recently made additions,⁹ and I think it is fair to say that the case for an immigration of Gallic landowners into the south-west in the late third century is now widely recognised as a strong one.

It is almost certainly the influx of these wealthy, Romanised Gauls which accounts for the appearance of the great courtyard villas of the south-west. These are characterised by large courtyards given over to ornamental gardens, surrounded on three or four sides by suites of rooms flanked by colonnaded corridors. Apart from extensive suites of heated living rooms and bathing accommodation, these villas are notable for the mythological creatures and episodes, and the classical deities which are abundantly depicted on their mosaic floors. As examples of the first group we may cite the several *Orpheus* mosaics and the Low Ham *Dido and Aeneas* floor,¹⁰ and as examples of the second, the *Neptune* mosaic from Frampton and the *Gods and Seasons* panel from Pitney.¹¹ Marble statues of these same deities were probably common in these villas, although only a few survive intact, like those of Luna and Bacchus from Woodchester and Spoonley Wood respectively.¹² Finally, mention must be made of one other aspect of Romanisation to which these mosaic floors attest—Christianity. There are eight or nine villas in the south-west where the motifs on the floors are suggestive of Christian ownership,¹³ and in two cases there is no room for doubt. The prominent *Khi-Ro* at Frampton, and the head of Christ with *Khi-Ro* at Hinton St Mary allow of no argument.¹⁴ To this evidence from the mosaics we may add that of several finds from the south-west, and of the pewter vessels and ingots which were being produced at Camerton, Lansdown, and Nettleton for the use of those who lived in the villas.¹⁵ In the historical and political context of the late fourth and early fifth century, this Christian element in the south-west is an important factor which must be kept in mind.

What then was the 'Roman west'? It was a combination (but hardly a fusion) of Roman and Celtic. Juxtaposed we find agricultural settlements, industrial sites, and small towns with a remarkably

⁸ S. Appelbaum in C. Thomas (ed.), *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (1967), 104; Rivet, *op. cit.*, n. 7, 208; Smith *op. cit.*, n. 7, 113-4.

⁹ For a new assessment of the evidence see K. Branigan, *Trans. BGAS.* (forthcoming.)

¹⁰ Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, pls. 3.10, 3.5.

¹¹ Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, pls. 3.27, 3.3.

¹² *British Museum Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain*, (1958), pl. 20, 10 and 11.

¹³ Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, 87-90, and cf. his list of motifs, 82-6.

¹⁴ Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, pl. 3.27; J. Toynbee, *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.*, 85(1964), 5-10. A third example almost certainly existed at Halstock, Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, 88.

¹⁵ Wedlake, *op. cit.* n. 4, 82-7; T. J. Bush, *Proc. Bath and Dist. Branch, Somerset Archaeol. Soc.* (1906) 110 ff, (1907), 153 ff; unpublished information on Nettleton from W. J. Wedlake.

low level of Romanisation, and a much smaller number of urban centres and large villas with a very high degree of the same. Very little of the Roman culture represented in the villas seems to have rubbed off on to the population of these other sites. To some extent this may be explained by the relatively late date at which the countryside was Romanised in the south-west, but it probably resulted also from the fact that Romanisation in the south-west was largely introduced not through the local tribal aristocracy but by a rich immigrant minority. In this sense, the 'Roman west' was not only a late, but also a foreign, phenomenon.

For many years it was customary to see the barbarian raid of A.D. 367 as a cataclysmic disaster, particularly for the villas,¹⁶ which as we have seen were such an important part of the Roman west. Certainly this is the impression which emerges from a reading of Ammianus Marcellinus.¹⁷ However, it has become increasingly clear from recent excavations and the re-examination of earlier reports that there are few villas and no towns in southern Britain that can confidently be recognised as victims of the raiders of 367. Dr Webster's distribution map of villas where occupation did not extend beyond 367 may appear to suggest the contrary,¹⁸ but this includes villas which were abandoned earlier than 367, those which were abandoned for reasons other than hostile attack, and probably a good many which were occupied long after 367 but where the coin lists stop at c. 360. Amongst the few villas where plunder and/or destruction in c. 367 can be plausibly argued are several from the south-west, and more particularly from the Bristol region. Haverfield, in VCH Somerset listed seven villas which he thought might belong in this category,¹⁹ and as recently as 1968 Frere tentatively followed him.²⁰ Of these seven villas, only that at Banwell has seen any recent investigation and here an abandonment in the mid fourth century does seem to be established, though the reasons for it, and the precise time at which it took place, remain unknown.²¹ Of the other six villas listed by Haverfield we simply do not know enough to express an informed opinion. Recent excavations however have shown that the villas at Nunney and Farmington had been abandoned sometime between A.D. 350-375.²² In addition the villa at Bawdrip was at least partially destroyed by fire sometime during the fourth

¹⁶ e.g. R. Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, (1952, ed.), 86.

¹⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, xxvii, 8.

¹⁸ G. Webster in Rivet, op. cit. n. 7, fig. 6.2.

¹⁹ F. J. Haverfield, *VCH Somerset I*, (1906), 300.

²⁰ S. S. Frere, *Britannia*, (1967), 357.

²¹ D. Wilson, *J. Roman Stud.*, 58(1968), 199.

²² D. Wilson, *J. Roman Stud.*, 49(1959), 130; *Archaeol. Rev.*, 3(1968), 16.

century.²³ Of the villas along the Bristol Avon however, we can perhaps be a little more certain. The west wing of the Kings Weston villa was burnt down during the third quarter of the century, and the deliberate destruction of the well-built portico suggests hostile action rather than accident as the cause.²⁴ At Brislington the coins go down to Constantius II (not later than A.D. 361) and a coin of this emperor was found on a ledge in the well from which came the most dramatic evidence for violent destruction.²⁵ The sequence of deposits here is interesting and worth a short digression. Above the small scraps of pottery, a lost brooch, and remains of a wooden bucket, representative of the well's period of use, was a deposit containing some animal bones, pottery and a quantity of building debris. Overlying this came the crucial deposit with animal bones, tesserae, seven pewter vessels, and four human skulls and other skeletal remains. These were in turn sealed by a thick deposit of animal bones, including teeth and skulls, and some pottery. Above this came 6ft. of pure building debris. The materials found with the skeletal remains are suggestive of their being removed from the dining room of the villa. Destruction of the building is indicated by the debris above and below them. We must return to the further significance of the stratification in the well shortly. Further along the Avon, Keynsham villa too may now have been attacked. The hexagonal room J seems to have had its roof burnt down and in the fallen wall debris over the burnt remains were the skeletal remains of an adult.²⁶ Whether or not other rich black deposits on the floors at Keynsham represent destruction by fire we cannot say,²⁷ but it is about 370 that Keynsham certainly goes into a very rapid decline and at least partial abandonment. These three villas collectively carry the suggestion of an Irish raiding party making its way along the Avon in 367, and we must imagine that unless Ammianus grossly exaggerated the situation, similar parties carried out raids elsewhere in Somerset and Gloucestershire, and perhaps in the south-west peninsula too. At Gatcombe, Sea Mills, Bath, Caerwent and Cirencester however, there is no sign of them and it seems clear that these towns (most, if not all of which, were by now fortified) were not entered by the raiders.

Just as our views about the scale of the disaster in 367 have been revised, so too have our opinions about its after-effects. Whereas it

²³ D. Wilson, *J. Roman Stud.*, 47(1957), 22.

²⁴ G. C. Boon, *Trans. BGAS*, 69 (1950), 16-7.

²⁵ W. R. Barker, *An Account of the Remains of a Roman Villa Discovered at Brislington, Bristol* (1901).

²⁶ A. Bulleid, *Archaeologia*, 75(1925), 118.

²⁷ Bulleid, *op. cit.* n. 26, pls. XIV, 2, XVI, and p. 124.

was previously thought that following the raids there was a large-scale flight of villa owners and occupiers to the towns, with the villas falling into immediate disrepair, now it is thought that the period from *c.* 370 to *c.* 400 was one of remarkable prosperity in which the villas continued to play an important role in the countryside. Much of the credit for this is usually given, perhaps erroneously, to Count Theodosius who restored the military situation in A.D. 369. Whether or not we are correct in ascribing to him the subsequent re-organisation and improvement of civilian defence does not matter vitally, the important point is that these improvements were made.

Towns in the south-west, as elsewhere in Britain, were given semi-circular or polygonal bastions on which heavy *ballistae* could be mounted to forcefully repel attackers. At the same time they received small garrisons of auxiliary troops who may have been specially raised for the task. In eastern England these troops seem to have been largely Germanic mercenaries, and to judge from the deposits in which their distinctive buckles begin to appear, they may well have been brought to Britain by Theodosius.²⁸ It is significant however, especially for the history of the south-west between A.D. 370-450, that in the west country few of these Germanic buckles appear. Instead, from *c.* 380 onwards, a variant form of buckle, distinctively British, begins to appear on town sites.²⁹ In other words, the defence of the towns in the west was now invested in locally raised military units organised, perhaps in a similar way to those on Hadrian's Wall, as a sort of Home Guard.

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this new force operated not only in the towns however, but also in the country. Altogether some ten villa sites have produced military buckles, and amongst them are five west country villas—Barnsley Park, Spoonley Wood, Chedworth, North Wraxall and Holbury. Spearheads found in the fourth century contexts at Keynsham and Kings Weston may also have belonged to members of this force.³¹ If so, then it must mean that these two villas were re-occupied, after 367, and this is in fact confirmed by the archaeological record. All three of the villas on the Bristol Avon for which we have postulated attack and destruction in 367 reveal evidence for some sort of re-occupation. The unburnt east wing at Kings Weston was occupied at least up until the reign of Valentinian (*c.* 375), and a new hearth platform was

²⁸ S. Hawkes and G. Dunning *Medieval Archaeol.*, 5(1961), 10-21, fig. 4.

²⁹ Hawkes and Dunning, *op. cit.* n. 28, 21-34, fig. 9.

³⁰ For Barnsley Park see *Archaeol. Rev.*, 4(1969), 38.

³¹ P. J. Fowler (ed.), *Bull. Bristol Archaeol. Res. Grp.*, 3(1968), 4; Boon, *op. cit.* n. 24, 53.

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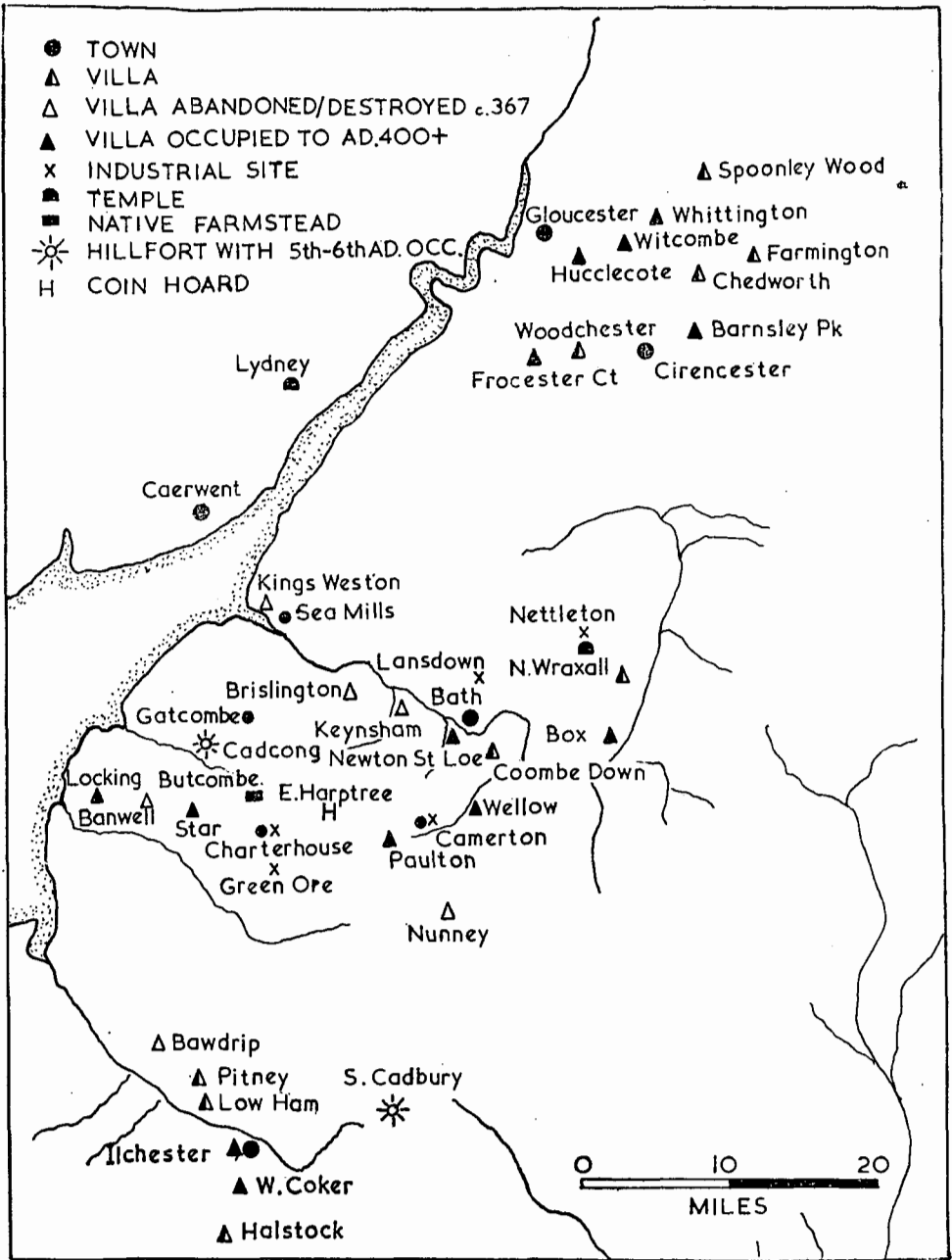


Fig. 1 Sites mentioned in the Text

built over the debris of the earlier destruction outside room II.³² There is no reason to suppose that the hypocaust heating in room II did not continue in use at this time. A similar hearth platform was built in the main corridor at Keynsham, again seated on top of destruction and/or abandonment debris,³³ and here too the coin list continues until Valentinian. Re-occupation at Brislington is indicated by the remains in the well. Not only is it nonsense to suppose that the invaders who attacked the villa would have heaved several tons of building debris as well as the bodies of their victims into the well, but it can be shown that they did not. The excavator made no claim to have found four complete skeletons in the well, and the fact that he did not is surely confirmed by a human jaw bone which was found on the ground close to the well.³⁴ It seems likely that the bodies were in fact skeletons by the time they were thrown into the well, and that this was done by people who were clearing out the villa for re-occupation. This is surely suggested too by the sequence of deposits which makes sense when seen in this context, viz. (1) building and occupation debris, (2) occupation debris, floor material, skeletal remains (from dining room?), (3) occupation debris from ? kitchen (bones of slaughtered animals), (4) mass of collapsed masonry from deliberate demolition of unsafe walls (hence no occupation material with it).

Other villas in the west were either re-occupied or continued in unbroken occupation, and there are clear signs of continued confidence on the part of the villa owners. Mosaic floors at Whittington and Low Ham are thought to have been laid after 367, and at Hucclecote as late as *c.* 390.³⁵ Similarly the building of the cult centre at Lydney, and the laying of its mosaics, must be placed after 367.³⁶ For how long this confidence lasted is difficult to ascertain. Although coin lists are notoriously dangerous to use, these and excavation reports together provide us with a hard nucleus of about a dozen west country villas where occupation up to *c.* 400 can be spoken of with confidence.³⁷ There were probably many other villas where occupation continued to the beginning of the fifth century. In most cases we simply cannot say what happened to the villas after this because we have neither the stratified deposits nor the dating material

³² Boon, *op. cit.* n. 24.

³³ Bulleid, *op. cit.* n. 26, 124.

³⁴ Barker, *op. cit.* n. 25.

³⁵ Smith, *op. cit.* n. 7, 80 (Low Ham and Whittington); E. M. Clifford, *Trans. BGAS*, 55 (1933), 328, 366.

³⁶ R. E. M. Wheeler, *Report of the Excavation of the Prehistoric, Roman and Post Roman Site in Lydney Park, Glos.*, (1932), 65-7.

³⁷ Barnsley, Box, Frocester Court, Hucclecote, Ilchester, Locking, Newton St. Loe, Paulton, Starr, West Coker, Wellow, Whittington, Witcombe.

required. However, with rapidly diminishing regular army units to defend the province, it seems likely that the villa *owners* at least would have moved into the fortified and safer towns and that the villas, as *Romanised farm-houses* were rapidly going into decline from c. 400. Continuing raids may be represented by the skeleton of a man, hacked down with a sword, lying in the partially collapsed floor debris of room II at Kings Weston, and the destruction by fire of the villa on Combe Down.³⁸ The decline in Romanised tastes can be recognised at Frocester Court and Barnsley Park where grass tempered pottery appears before the buildings are abandoned.³⁹ At Barnsley, the farm-yard takes on an ever more squalid look⁴⁰ and here we have, I suspect, the typical situation in the years between c. 400-450 in the west country villas. There is a gradual process taking place in which a villa is increasingly growing to look like a native farm. The influences of perhaps one hundred and fifty years of Romanised farming on the site have not been eradicated, but they are becoming increasingly subsidiary to the influences of a tradition going back to the Iron Age. Something similar may have happened at Ilchester, where the main villa was partially destroyed by fire and a much smaller building, though still with mortared stone foundations and an *opus* floor, was erected over it.⁴¹ There are, too, suggestions of a similar process taking place at West Coker.⁴² Other villas present essentially the same picture—a hearth built over a floor at Whittington,⁴³ and declining occupation in the villa at Llantwit.⁴⁴

Thus, a decline from a Romanised to a more barbarous existence seems to be a common feature of west country villas, and this is surely what we must expect. Unlike the Anglo-Saxons who were raiding eastern England, the Irish do not seem to have been intent on seizing and holding land, so that until the Saxons eventually penetrated to Somerset and Gloucestershire we should expect people to continue to farm the land and live, albeit in a reduced state, in the existing houses. The occasional raids by the Irish could be met either by the farmer and his labourers themselves—if so equipped—or simply by a temporary flight to the protection of the nearest town.

³⁸ Boon, *op. cit.* n. 24, 17-18. Hoards of the very late 4th century, like that from East Harptree, may also be relevant here.

³⁹ *Archaeol. Rev.*, 3(1968), 17.

⁴⁰ G. Webster, *Trans. BGAS*, 86(1967).

⁴¹ D. Wilson, *J. Roman Stud.*, 48(1958), 147.

⁴² Haverfield, *op. cit.* n. 19, 331.

⁴³ H. O'Neil, *Trans. BGAS*, 71(1953), 43.

⁴⁴ Webster, *op. cit.* n. 18, 242-3.

The towns in the west country seem to have survived as organised communities much longer than those in the south-east. Whilst this may be due very largely to the belated arrival of the Saxons in the west, other factors must have contributed to this situation. While the villa sites were now probably occupied by farmers who had never been committed to the Roman way of life, the larger towns were probably packed with the highly Romanised landowners who had previously occupied the villas. No doubt these men made every attempt to ensure that life in the towns continued on as civilised a level as was possible in the circumstances. Many of these men were apparently Christians (and the sub-Roman cemeteries of Somerset suggest that so too were large numbers of the native farmers) and this too would have been an important factor in the maintenance of civic order. It is clear from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* that the relationship between Church and civic authority in the fifth century was a particularly close one. Finally, the towns in the west had one other great advantage over those in the east—whilst the latter had garrisons comprised of Germanic troops, the towns in the west had their British "Home Guard". The excavations at both Dorchester and Canterbury have shown very clearly indeed that these towns gradually took on a Saxon look, with typical sunken-floor huts lining the still used Roman road surfaces.⁴⁵ There was no hostile attack from Saxon raiders, but a peaceful take-over by the Germanic element in the population, which had been introduced by the garrison troops. In the west this could not happen, and thus we might expect the larger towns here to continue in occupation as organised communities well beyond the mid fifth century.

Whether or not this happened we cannot say since dating evidence is entirely lacking after the first quarter of the fifth century, when the last coins seem to have gone out of circulation. At Cirencester the forum, significantly, was certainly maintained into the fifth century, as were at least some of the private houses,⁴⁶ whilst at Caerwent a fire which destroyed shops and the basilica early in the fifth century was followed by further occupation in the town.⁴⁷ At Silchester the evidence of glassware and metalwork points to occupation until the mid fifth century at least,⁴⁸ and in that case we

⁴⁵ S. S. Frere, *Archaeol. J.*, 119(1964), 121ff, and in J. Wachter (ed.) *The Civitas Capitals of Roman Britain*, (1966), 93ff.

⁴⁶ Frere in Wachter, op. cit. n. 45, 94, and P. Brown and A. McWhirr, *Antiq. J.*, 49(1969), 234-5.

⁴⁷ Frere in Wachter, op. cit. n. 45, 95.

⁴⁸ G. C. Boon, *Medieval Archaeol.*, 3(1959), 79-88.

should hardly expect the towns further west to have been abandoned earlier.

The situation in the smaller towns which had never seen a high level of Romanisation and which had been largely dependent for their livelihood on industry, or in the case of Sea Mills, on a military presence, was rather different. Here there would not have been the same hard core of wealthy, Romanised citizens to maintain civic authority and pride. Sea Mills seems to fall into ruin with some of its occupants living in buildings which were in a state of partial collapse.⁴⁹ Gatcombe had seen many of its buildings abandoned and falling into ruin *c.* 380, but saw a later re-occupation of several of them, one suspects by farmers working the Failand Ridge who sought some protection inside its massive defence wall. Indeed, one new building erected some time in the fifth century had a working yard and perhaps a farmyard as well as living rooms.⁵⁰ For the most part, however, it was a matter of clearing debris from existing buildings and re-occupying them with a minimum of new construction work, and fifth century Gatcombe can scarcely be described as an organised economic or civic unit. The length of this re-occupation is uncertain, but the depth of the re-occupation deposits and the not infrequent appearance of coins in them, suggest that it was no more than a few decades. It may be that whilst the Saxons and the Irish could not bring the occupation of the west country towns to a halt, pestilence could. In A.D. 443 there was a plague,⁵¹ and it is tempting to relate this event to the bodies found lying (unmutilated) in the streets of Cirencester, to skeletons found dug into the latest occupation levels at Sea Mills,⁵² and perhaps to some of the vast sub-Roman cemeteries in the west country.⁵³

Whatever the significance of these discoveries, and of the plague of A.D. 443, it is true that none of the villas can be traced, even in their most degenerate phases of occupation, beyond the mid-fifth century. Similarly, other than the reference to Bath, Cirencester and Gloucester in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for A.D. 577 it is difficult to document occupation of these towns after *c.* 450. The recent discovery of imported Mediterranean pottery at Gloucester has re-opened this particular controversy but to some extent this is irrelevant to our discussion here. The dearth of information beyond, and even before, the middle of the fifth century emphasises

⁴⁹ Hebditch, *op. cit.* n. 3, 65.

⁵⁰ Branigan, *op. cit.* n. 5, 44.

⁵¹ Frere *in* Wachter, *op. cit.* n. 45, 94.

⁵² Frere, *ibid.*, Boon, *op. cit.* n. 3(1945), 260, 274.

⁵³ P. A. Rahtz, *Bull. Bristol Archaeol. Res. Grp.*, 2(1967), 103-6.

that we have already come to the end of the 'Roman west', for it was the Roman, as opposed to Celtic, west that provides us with the means of dating our discoveries—with coinage, inscriptions, the occasional historical reference, organised pottery industries, and so on. By the mid-fifth century these have gone,⁵⁴ but the people of the 'Roman west' have not. Plague or no, the west cannot have been de-populated. The towns, and perhaps even isolated, undefended farms were eventually abandoned, but only to be replaced by new types of settlements and new settlement sites, of which South Cadbury and Cadcong seem to be representative.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Pottery may be an exception. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that some Romano-British pottery was still being manufactured in the mid fifth century (see particularly K. Branigan *Latimer*, (1971), 130-32).

⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that Cadcong seems to have been re-occupied and re-fortified about the middle of the fifth century (see P. J. Fowler and P. A. Rahtz, *Current Archaeology*, 23(1970), 340) when occupation at sites like Gatcombe was probably coming to an end. South Cadbury on the other hand seems to see a similar process some fifty years later, with late 5th and early 6th century sherds in the foundation trenches of buildings.