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## **Gauls in Gloucestershire?**

by K. Branigan  
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# Gauls in Gloucestershire?

By KEITH BRANIGAN

IN recent years there has been a notable growth of interest in the history and fortunes of Britain in the late third century A.D. Two problems in particular have emerged, both of which have aroused controversy. Firstly there is the economic situation and its consequences; was there economic stagnation or economic decline in the late third century and, if so, what was the effect of it in both the public and private sectors? Secondly, there is the recovery at the end of the third century; what brought it about, and why did its effects vary so much from one region to another? On the first of these problems I have written elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and my concern here is with the second problem, with particular reference to Gloucestershire and the Bristol region.

There can be little doubt that the strong, if short-lived, government of Carausius, his coastal defences, and his reformed coinage must have contributed something to the successful recovery of the British economy at the close of the third century. So too some credit must go to Diocletian and Constantius Chlorus, and in general to the restoration of legal Roman rule. There are other factors too which have to be taken into consideration. Lowland Britain, the town and villa zone, had not been subjected to extensive and damaging attacks from beyond the frontiers in the same way that northern Gaul and the German provinces had. Urban fortifications, whether already built or now being erected, made more generous allowance for new developments than was made in the Gallic provinces. Perhaps most important of all, the very fact that Britain had passed relatively unscathed through the troubles of the late third century created the confidence which was necessary to stimulate large-scale investment of both public and private funds in developments for the future. But even so, these factors alone seem insufficient to account for the remarkable phenomenon of the great fourth-century villa estate. As Rivet has pointed out, we are not dealing merely with a *renaissance* of the British villas, but with remarkable and completely new developments in the villa system.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true of

<sup>1</sup> K. Branigan, *Latimer (Belgic, Roma, Dark Age and Early Modern Farm)* (1971), 179-80.

<sup>2</sup> A. L. F. Rivet, ed., *The Roman Villa in Britain* (1969), 202.

Gloucester and Somerset.<sup>3</sup> In recent years therefore there has been an inclination to look to other factors for an explanation of these developments, and several scholars have independently arrived at the same conclusion—that the end of the third century saw the arrival of Gallic immigrants in Britain, and that it was these men who invested their capital in the first of the great fourth-century villas. Appelbaum, Rivet and Smith have all recently arrived at this conclusion,<sup>4</sup> although the way to it was pointed out perhaps by Mrs Clifford in 1938.<sup>5</sup> But though Appelbaum compared Ditchley to the villa at Houdeng-Goegnies (Belgium) little attention has been paid to the architecture of the villas themselves as a source of evidence for a Gallic immigration. Indeed, little direct evidence for the immigration has been offered, and Frere, rejecting the whole hypothesis has pointed to this lack of evidence.<sup>6</sup> My first priority in this paper is therefore to present architectural evidence for a Gallic immigrant group in fourth-century Gloucestershire.

Ian Richmond drew attention to the unusual design of the King's Weston villa in his revision of Collingwood's *Archaeology of Roman Britain*<sup>7</sup> and hinted at a possible Gallic origin for it, but neither he nor others followed up this suggestion and examined the plans of other Gloucestershire villas. The feature of the King's Weston villa which attracted Richmond's attention was the large gravelled room or small yard which lay at the centre of the building, in this case behind an arcade on the north side of the front corridor (FIG. I, a). In the courtyard (as the excavator labelled it) was a substantial hearth. This arrangement attracted Richmond's attention because it is not a common one in Romano-British villas, although apart from other examples in Gloucestershire it does occur in one or two other parts of Britain, and also because it is exceedingly common in Gallia Belgica and the German provinces. This same feature, the oblong gravelled or cobbled yard with oven and/or water tank set behind a front corridor in the centre of a small villa, can be closely paralleled in five other villas in the Bristol region, four of them in Gloucestershire. At Frocester Court, the first-phase villa has a large yard of this sort with an oven in it, flanked initially by a room at either end, and subsequently by a front corridor with projecting

<sup>3</sup> Rivet, *op. cit.*, n. 2, FIG. 5-7.

<sup>4</sup> S. Appelbaum in C. Thomas, ed., *Rural Settlement in Roman Britain* (1967), 104; Rivet *op. cit.*, n. 2, 208; D. J. Smith in Rivet *op. cit.*, n. 2, 113-4.

<sup>5</sup> E. M. Clifford, *Trans. BGAS*, LX (1938), 301-2.

<sup>6</sup> S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (1967), 280.

<sup>7</sup> R. G. Collingwood and I. A. Richmond, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1969), 137.

wing rooms (FIG. 1, b).<sup>8</sup> Clearcupboard villa, Farmington, features an oblong yard with rammed stone floor, two hearths and a fire pit, flanked at first by a single room and then by a front corridor with projecting wing-rooms (FIG. 1, c).<sup>9</sup> At Barnsley Park, after two phases of occupation of an uncertain nature, the first large building erected has a pitched and paved oblong yard at its centre, with rooms attached to both flanks and rear, and a front corridor with projecting wing-rooms (FIG. 1, d).<sup>10</sup> To these examples we may add one from Chew Park in Somerset, and another partially excavated on the line of the M5 at Brookthorpe Court, Gloucestershire.<sup>11</sup>

These six villas find many parallels in Gallia Belgica and the German provinces, some of which are illustrated here for comparative purposes (FIG. 2, a-f). Other villas in these provinces however are variations on this design. They retain the central yard with oven and/or water tank, but the building takes on an overall oblong design, with no projecting wing-rooms and long front corridor. Instead, extra rooms are found on the flanks of the yard. Examples from Sauvenière, Beckingen and Graux are illustrated (FIG. 2, g-i). Two Gloucestershire villas which conform to this type are those at Rodmarton (FIG. 1, e) and Cherington (FIG. 1, f).<sup>12</sup> Little is known of either, although Lysons recorded a pitched stone floor in the yard G at Rodmarton and actually calls 'room' A at Cherington a court; it was paved with large rough stones. Into this same category we should probably place the strange little villa excavated at Somerdale, with its central yard with water tank, although here there are two small but prominent projecting wing-rooms (FIG. 1, g).<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the nine villas so far discussed, there are four others in the Bristol region which merit consideration, since although they do not fall into either of the two Gallic villa types mentioned above, they are abnormal in a Romano-British context in that they have small central yards, seemingly open to the sky and possibly used as a kitchen area. At Brislington and Littleton in Somerset the yards are almost square, and but for the nature of the floors might be assumed to be ordinary rooms. At Littleton the nature of the yard is not established; all we know is that in contrast to rooms on either side of it, this central room had a 'rude flagged floor', and apparently

<sup>8</sup> *JRS*, LIII (1963), 146, LIV (1964), 143.

<sup>9</sup> P. Gascoigne, *Trans. BGAS*, LXXXVIII (1969) 34-67.

<sup>10</sup> G. Webster, *Trans. BGAS*, LXXXVI (1967), 74-83.

<sup>11</sup> P. Rahtz, *Excavations at Chew Valley Lake*. (H.M.S.O.) forthcoming; P. J. Fowler and C. V. Walthew, *Trans. BGAS*, xc (1971), 50-53.

<sup>12</sup> S. Lysons, *Archaeologia*, XVIII (1817), 112 ff., pl. XVIII.

<sup>13</sup> A. Bulleid, *Archaeologia*, LXXV (1924-5), 136 ff.

had flues giving out into it.<sup>14</sup> Both points suggest that it was open to the sky. At Brislington there can be no reasonable doubt that this was the case, for there was no trace of an enclosing wall at the front of the yard, and a hearth area and pit were situated within it.<sup>15</sup> A third Somerset example is perhaps to be found in the east building at Paulton, where an oblong room is noted to contain a fireplace, but there is insufficient information about both this and the other rooms to make for a confident identification of an intra-mural yard.<sup>16</sup> Finally, in Gloucestershire, there is the unusual villa at Whittington, which has an enclosed oblong yard tacked to the back of the rear corridor. The yard was first floored with earth and later with mortar, and had an oven in one corner.<sup>17</sup> How these four villas relate to the other nine discussed above is not clear, and one might argue there is no relationship at all, but on the whole this is unlikely. The small open yard as an integral part of the villa building is so foreign to the Romano-British tradition that when it occurs several times in a single region it cannot be ignored. All the more so when it occurs in a region where eight villas of essentially Gallic type are also found. The four atypical villas described above seem more likely to be adaptations of Romano-British villa designs to include this essentially Gallic feature.

On the basis of the thirteen villas discussed above it would be entirely reasonable to postulate an immigration of moderately wealthy Gauls from the northern provinces into Gloucestershire and Somerset. There is of course additional evidence which can be used to support this hypothesis. Appelbaum followed the lead given by Clifford and stressed the importance of some of the altars from the south-west. The most significant is undoubtedly that to Mars Lenus from Chedworth,<sup>18</sup> for not only is Lenus a Gallic deity but dedications to him are almost confined to the Treveri,<sup>19</sup> and his cult centre was situated on the bank of the Moselle opposite Trier. The appearance of this dedication to him is therefore a possible pointer to the origins of at least some of the immigrants. Also worshipped at Trier, and in Lorraine, was Sucellus, to whom another dedication from Chedworth was made,<sup>20</sup> whilst the cult of Mars Lenus at Trier was associated with offerings to both the Genii Cucullati and the Xulsigiae (to be

<sup>14</sup> F. J. Haverfield, *VCH Somerset I*, 323-4, FIG. 81.

<sup>15</sup> W. R. Barker, *An Account of the Remains of a Roman Villa Discovered at Brislington* (1901).

<sup>16</sup> Haverfield, *op. cit.*, n. 14, 315-6, FIG. 75.

<sup>17</sup> H. E. O'Neil, *Trans. BGAS*, LXXI (1953), 13-87.

<sup>18</sup> *JRS*, XXXIX (1949), 114. A second from Caerwent is dated earlier, to A.D. 152.

<sup>19</sup> E. Wightman, *Roman Trier and the Treveri* (1970), 211.

<sup>20</sup> E. M. Clifford, *op. cit.*, n. 5, 302.

related to the Suleviae).<sup>21</sup> Dedications to the Genii Cucullati may include a relief with three figures from Cirencester,<sup>22</sup> whilst dedications to the Suleviae are known from Cirencester (two examples) and Bath.<sup>23</sup> Finally, there is the dedication from Bath to Mars Loucetius,<sup>24</sup> a dedication matched at Worms<sup>25</sup> and significantly made by a Treveran. With such a concentration of dedications to deities with known, and in some cases very strong, Gallic connections, one cannot but wonder how many of the other dozen or so uninscribed altars to Mars from Gloucestershire might have been intended for Mars Lenus or Mars Loucetius.

Rivet drew attention to the concentration of foreign visitors at Bath,<sup>26</sup> where epigraphic evidence reveals the presence of people of the Treveri, the Mediomatrici and the Carnutes,<sup>27</sup> and the similar concentration of large, well-appointed fourth-century villas of courtyard type in Somerset and Gloucestershire. Indeed, as his figure 5.7 makes clear, almost half of the largest and richest villas in Britain (his class A villas) are found in the south-west. Not surprisingly this pattern is repeated on Dr Smith's distribution map for Romano-British mosaics, and he suggests that the remarkable flowering of Romano-British mosaic schools in fourth century Britain may have been partially due to an immigration of Gallic landowners.<sup>28</sup> With the larger villas and the mosaics it must be confessed that in terms of design it is much more difficult to produce evidence of Gallic inspiration than in the case of the smaller villas with their intra-mural yards. Occasionally there may be particular architectural features which find distinctive parallels in Gaul, like the almost adjacent 'Turkish' and 'Swedish' baths at Chedworth and at Fliessem, but as Rivet has said, the most remarkable feature of these villas is that they are 'a completely new phenomenon' in Britain; in Gaul such villas are known from the second century onwards. When such a profusion of these villas occurs in the same region as the smaller Gallic-inspired villas like those in FIG. 1, and the dedications to Gallic deities mentioned above, the possibility that Gallic landowners erected them must at least be considered. These large villas, like the mosaics found within them, reveal the *Romanitas* of villa-life in the south-west in the fourth century; in

<sup>21</sup> Wightman, *op. cit.*, n. 19, 213.

<sup>22</sup> *JRS*, xxiv (1934), 198, fn. 6.

<sup>23</sup> E. M. Clifford, *op. cit.*, n. 5, 303, *RIB*, 151.

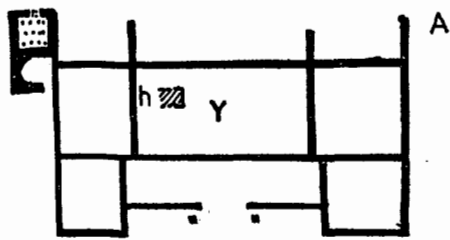
<sup>24</sup> *RIB*, 140.

<sup>25</sup> Wightman, *op. cit.*, n. 19, 214.

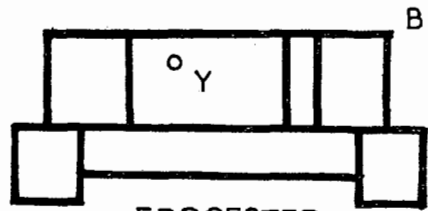
<sup>26</sup> Rivet, *op. cit.*, n. 2, 214.

<sup>27</sup> *RIB*, 140, 149, 163.

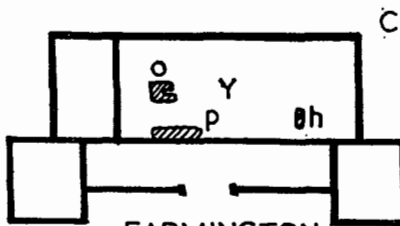
<sup>28</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 114.



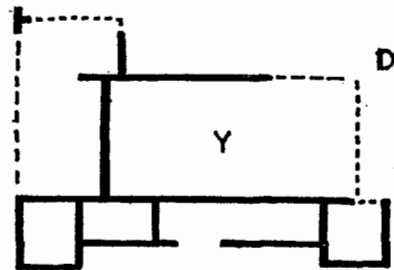
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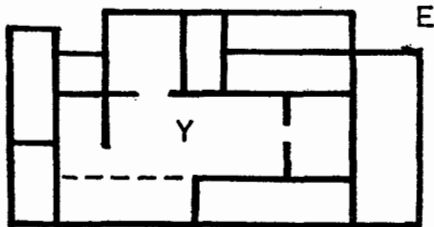
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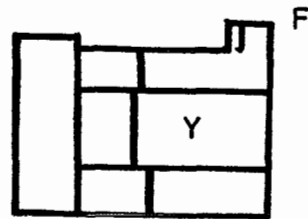
FARMINGTON



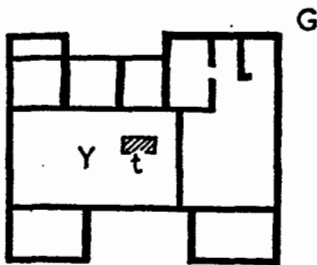
BARNSLEY PK



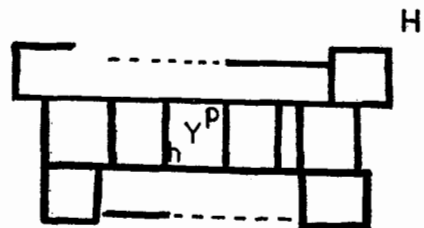
RODMARTON



CHERINGTON



SOMERDALE



BRISLINGTON

Fig. 1. Villas with Intra-mural Yards (Y) in Gloucestershire and North Somerset (not to scale)  
 O = oven, p = pit, h = hearth, t = tank.

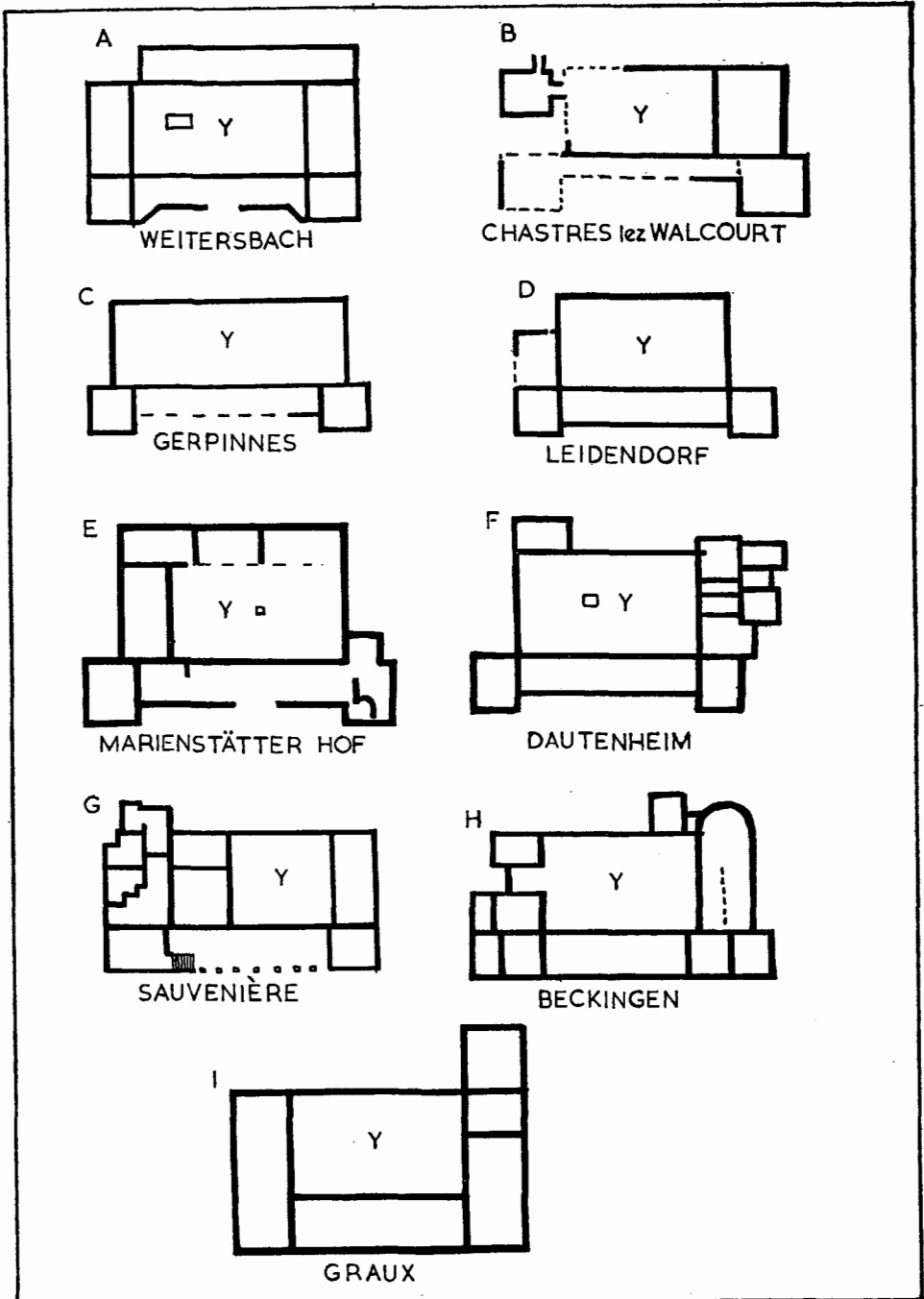


Fig. 2. Villas with Intra-mural yards (Y) in Northern Gaul (not to scale)

this they contrast greatly with the south-west in the first to third centuries as we shall see shortly. There is nothing outside of Bath and Cirencester during the first to third centuries which carries any suggestion that such a rich villa-based society might emerge in the fourth century. The mosaics of the south-west in particular reveal a level of Romanisation which is hardly matched anywhere in the province in the fourth century, and certainly nowhere in such profusion. A quick glance down Dr Smith's list of motifs on Romano-British mosaics will demonstrate the abundance of Graeco-Roman motifs on the mosaics of the south-west.<sup>29</sup> It is also relevant to mention that four of the eight inscribed mosaics from British villas are also from the south-west.<sup>30</sup> These points may not prove a Gallic immigration into the region, but they do call for an explanation beyond that of a recovery of confidence and the rebuilding of prosperity at the end of the third century. It should be emphasised that both the villas and the mosaics begin to appear by *c.* A.D. 300 at the latest, and they do so in considerable numbers; that both the wealth and the strong classical leanings were acquired in the space of five to ten years (*c.* 290-300) by a population previously noted for its low level of Romanisation and capital investment is difficult to imagine. Again, we shall see shortly that similar phenomena may perhaps be detected on a less extensive scale in certain other parts of the province with a similarly uninspiring history of Romanised rural settlement, prior to the fourth century.

We may now consider the historical, social and economic context in which our proposed migration took place, with a view to understanding why the Bristol region in particular might have been chosen as a suitable one in which to re-settle. Of necessity we must first attempt to establish as closely as possible, the point in time at which both the Gallic villa types begin to appear in the region, and general signs of a major economic recovery and perhaps re-orientation are discernible. Of the nine 'Gallic' villas discussed above only two or three can be dated closely. Frocester is built in the last quarter of the third century, and so too is King's Weston.<sup>31</sup> Chew Park was probably built at the same period, and Farmington is either late third or early fourth century.<sup>32</sup> Cherington produced several copper coins of the late third century, but we have no further information,<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 82-6.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 94-5.

<sup>31</sup> *JRS*, LIV (1964), 171, G. Boon, *Trans. BGAS*, LXIX (1950), 11-12.

<sup>32</sup> *JRS*, XLIV (1955), 139, Gascoigne, *op. cit.*, n. 9, 54, 59 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Lysons, *op. cit.*, n. 12, 117.

while for Somerdale we know only that the coin series covers the period A.D. 37-378.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the overall picture presented by these villas, the villa building with intra-mural courtyard at Barnsley Park was not built until the mid-fourth century.<sup>35</sup> Of the four villas with small intra-mural yards, Brislington and Littleton are probably of late third century foundation, Whittington possibly as late as the mid-fourth century, but Paulton possibly as early as the late second century.<sup>36</sup> Clearly a general picture emerges here, of these villas being built in the late third century, and possibly somewhat later in a few instances. Paulton *need* not be out of line; we are not certain that it *is* an adaptation of the intra-mural yard type, we do not know when the yard (if it existed) was created, nor is there any reason to suppose that the two late second-century burials from the Paulton site must be related to the villa building in which the 'yard' is situated. The key point to emerge from the dating of these villas, and more particularly from Frocester, Chew Park and King's Weston is that they were built in the late third century as opposed to the early fourth. This in fact seems true of the vast majority of villas in the Bristol region, although we still lack sufficient information to be certain in most cases.<sup>37</sup> Certainly most of the villas are built in the late third or early fourth century, and it is extremely difficult to find villas built earlier than this. Earlier material on villa sites in the south-west cannot be automatically assumed to belong to first to third century villas, and there is no reason to think that first century material at Locking, Star and Chew Park is indicative of a first century villa building yet to be discovered. As we shall see, there is an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that rural settlement in the Bristol region, prior to the late third century was of a very different nature.

The rapid development of villa estates, centred on dwelling houses notable not only for their size or their unusual intra-mural yards but also for the highly Romanised tastes reflected in the

<sup>34</sup> Bulleid, *op. cit.*, n. 13, 137. A similarly wide date-range is suggested by the pottery for the site at Brookthorpe Court.

<sup>35</sup> Webster, *op. cit.*, n. 10, 75-6.

<sup>36</sup> Brislington, coin series begins with Victorinus and Allectus, and the mosaic in room 2 is probably contemporary with one at Keynsham: see K. Branigan, *The Romans in the Bristol Area* (1969), 19; Littleton, Haverfield, *op. cit.*, n. 14, 324; Whittington, O'Neil, *op. cit.*, n. 17, 19, 50; Paulton, Haverfield, *op. cit.*, n. 14, 315-6, but the dating of the buildings need not be the same as that of the pit and burials.

<sup>37</sup> As late third to early fourth-century villas I would suggest the following, most of which have coin series beginning with, or notable for, issues of the Gallic Empire. Banwell, Charlton Mackrell, Chard, Ditcheat, Drayton, Farley Hungerford, Havyatt, High Ham, Ilchester Mead, Keynsham, Lansdown, Newton St. Loe, Nunney, Somerton, Wadeford, Wellow, West Coker, Yatton; plus the sites already mentioned above.

mosaics and the smaller furnishings, is only one of several important developments in the south-west that can be seen to begin in the late third century. Existing farms of native type may have undergone major architectural changes, if Butcombe proves to be typical of the type—as it seems to be.<sup>38</sup> Here, rectangular timber buildings were replaced by a much larger building with stone foundations, standing within an area enclosed by a drystone wall; this change took place in the period between *c.* 270-300, and possibly within the period *c.* 270-275.<sup>39</sup> It was about this time that two major industries also began to emerge in the Bristol region. Pottery production had been carried out before this of course, but it is from the last quarter of the third century that the potteries on the Somerset Levels begin to achieve more than a local importance.<sup>40</sup> The pewter industry on the other hand seems to be a new venture, for which centres at Bath, Camerton and Nettleton are now known.<sup>41</sup> In urban developments perhaps the most striking is the foundation of the walled town at Gatcombe, within the period *c.* 270-300 and possibly within the last decade of the third century,<sup>42</sup> although industrial developments may well have brought important changes at Camerton and Nettleton too. Finally, we should note that there is some reason to think that the Corinthian mosaic school may have been created before rather than after A.D. 300.<sup>43</sup>

As with the villas, so with these various other elements in the pattern of settlement, the changes seem to come in the period between *c.* 270-300, and some at least can be positively ascribed to the period *c.* 270-290. This is important; elsewhere in Britain it is the last two or three decades of the third century which provide some of the clearest evidence for economic hardship and scarcity of capital.<sup>44</sup> The situation in the south-west is therefore unusual not

<sup>38</sup> Philips, *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelæo. Soc.* iv, 2 (1933) for similar settlements on Failand, and P. J. Fowler *et al.*, *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelæo. Soc.* xii, 2 (1970), fig. 26 for Scars Farm settlement.

<sup>39</sup> P. J. Fowler, *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelæo. Soc.* xi, 3 (1968), 229-30.

<sup>40</sup> The pottery mounds on the Levels are well known, although little has been published on them, and some would regard them as salt works rather than pottery kilns. They seem to be mainly late third to fourth century in date (see B. Cunliffe in Thomas, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 70 for brief discussion and references) and clearly represent a major industry. Further work on similar or identical fabrics from many parts of Britain should help to establish the importance of these potteries.

<sup>41</sup> W. J. Wedlake, *Excavations at Camerton, Somersetshire* (1958), 82-7; T. J. Bush, *Proc. Bath & Dist. Branch, Somerset Archaeol. Soc.* (1906), 110 ff., (1907), 153 ff.; Nettleton, verbal report by W. J. Wedlake.

<sup>42</sup> K. Branigan, *Proc. Somerset Archaeol. Natur. Hist. Soc.* cxii (1968), 48-9, and *Current Archaeology*, xxv (1971), 41-4; see also duplicated interim reports for seasons 1968-70.

<sup>43</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 101.

<sup>44</sup> For discussion on a particular region see Branigan, *op. cit.*, n. 1, and K. Branigan in P. Ucko and G. Dimbleby, *Settlement Patterns and Urbanisation* (1971), 851-5.

only for the degree and the rapidity of change but also for the timing of it. In these three important respects the 'recovery' in the south-west cannot be considered as part of the general recovery of the province, and we are justified in looking for some extra factor at work in the south-west which would account for this difference. Appelbaum, Rivet and Smith have suggested that that factor might be an immigration of Gallic landowners, and I have attempted above to bring additional evidence in support of this hypothesis. If we now turn our attention to the situation in both the Bristol region and on the German frontier in the period *c.* 270–290, I think we shall be able to see why these landowners would have chosen the Bristol region rather than any other part of Britain in which to settle.

The situation in the German provinces and in northern Gaul need not be discussed at any length, since it is well known. Both in 253 and in 275 Gaul suffered invasion from across the frontier, during which villas in particular seem to have suffered greatly.<sup>45</sup> The results of these incursions are highly relevant to our discussion. On the one hand the towns saw contraction as defences were erected around the core of the occupied area, and on the other villa estates saw a decline in prosperity and capital investment and in some cases complete abandonment.<sup>46</sup> Wightman has recently pointed out that the demolition of funerary monuments of the Treveri in the late third and early fourth century implies either the impoverishment or the absence of the old families that had erected them.<sup>47</sup> In summary, the incursions of 253 and 275 had completely destroyed the confidence of the Gallic and German landowners and had encouraged them to abandon their estates permanently; some of them seem to have done so, but probably not for the towns where there was also little hope for a prosperous future. In these circumstances they might reasonably be expected to look abroad for somewhere where conditions were more stable and there was still opportunities for capital investment.

Britain was an obvious choice, but why the south-west in particular? Partly one imagines, because of familiarity with it. Bath, as its inscribed altars plainly illustrate, was well known to the Gauls and frequently visited by them. It was also, of course, one of the most Romanised towns of Roman Britain, and Cirencester was the second largest town in the province and (as we are slowly beginning to learn) could offer the quality and quantity of amenities which wealthy Gauls would expect and require of their urban centres.

<sup>45</sup> Wightman, *op. cit.*, n. 19, 55.

<sup>46</sup> Wightman, *op. cit.*, n. 19, 57.

<sup>47</sup> Wightman, *op. cit.*, n. 19, 59.

Secondly, Somerset and Gloucestershire together formed an area in which large estates, capable of supporting large well-appointed villas, could still be acquired. Whilst much of southern Britain was already being farmed on the villa system by native farmers, Somerset and Gloucestershire were not. As we noted earlier, villas erected before c. 270 are extremely scarce in this region; first to third century farms seem to have still been largely native in type. In Somerset this has been demonstrated at Chew Park and Butcombe and seems likely to be true of the farms on Failand, while recent excavations on the motorway route in Gloucestershire have revealed farming settlements which are also native in type.<sup>48</sup> This is an unusual situation, particularly in view of the highly Romanised urban populations at Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath. I would suggest that much of southern Gloucestershire and northern Somerset had been deliberately maintained as an area of native farms in much the same way as the farms and farming settlements on Salisbury Plain and Cranbourne. In other words, the territory of Corio's southern Dobunni had been largely turned into an imperial estate. In support of this hypothesis we have the inscription from Combe Down, which apparently indicates the presence of a *saltus* there in the late second to early third century, and an undated inscription from Bath which refers to the *centurio regionarius*, and also suggests therefore military control of the area.<sup>49</sup> Charterhouse and the lead mines might then be seen as part of a much larger imperial estate. The fragments of a cuirass from mid-first-century Butcombe might also be seen in this context.<sup>50</sup> If this situation was to be favourable to Gallic immigrant landowners at the close of the third century however, then the Imperial administration must have relinquished control of this vast estate either then or earlier. We cannot demonstrate that this is so, but it is relevant to note that similar developments may perhaps be traced on Cranbourne Chase, and that the small estate, thought to be a *saltus*, based on Hambleton villa may also have been sold to a private owner by the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>51</sup> There may have been a widespread sale of imperial estates to private landowners late in the third century, either under the Gallic usurpers or under Carausius. Both would no doubt have found money more useful than land at this particular point in time, and relinquishing control of

<sup>48</sup> *Second M5 Report (Gloucestershire)* in *Trans. BGAS* xcii (1973).

<sup>49</sup> Haverfield, *op. cit.*, 14, 311, and *RIB*, 152.

<sup>50</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, n. 39, *FIG.* 56, 5 and 6.

<sup>51</sup> A. L. F. Rivet, *Town and Country in Roman Britain* (1964), 118; the re-assessment of Hambleton with regard to late-third-century abandonment and subsequent private occupation is as yet unpublished, but I hope will appear in *Records of Bucks.* in the near future.

these estates would also have released a small number of additional troops for service.

A third attraction of the Bristol region *may* have been that in the late third century it had a large supply of labour for which there was not sufficient work; in other words large estates could be worked comparatively cheaply because there was more labour available than there were jobs. This situation would have arisen *if* the marine inundation of parts of Somerset took place in the late-second to late-third centuries.<sup>52</sup> An inundation of the scale envisaged by Cunliffe would certainly have deprived a substantial population of their homes and the land on which they worked; the large villa estates, the pewter industry, the Somerset potteries, and an industrial Gatcombe could all have been based on the supply of cheap labour brought about by such an inundation.

The case for an immigration of Gallic landowners into Somerset and Gloucestershire at the close of the late third century is now, I think, reasonably clear. The situation both in Gaul and in the Bristol region was such as to encourage a movement of this kind. Developments in both industry and rural settlement in Somerset and Gloucestershire in the period *c.* 270–300 are on a scale indicative of major capital investment such as few Britons could have undertaken at this time. The evidence that this investment was made by men of Gallic origin is to be found in the quality of the villas and their furnishings, in the peculiarly Gallic design of some of the smaller ones, and in the number of dedications to deities with particular Gallic connections.

It is true of course that sumptuous courtyard villas are not confined to Somerset and Gloucestershire, nor are villas with intra-mural yards; but it is interesting to note where other examples occur. Of Rivet's class A villas, 12 occur in the territory of the Durotriges, and the five from the territory of the Parisi and Brigantes are significant in that they outnumber class B examples in the same areas. These regions are those where earlier villa estates are either rare or unknown, and in the case of the Durotriges, where military control may have remained over native style farming settlements. Parts of the territory of the Coritani may have been similarly treated, and it is I think significant that another sizeable group of class A villas occur in Lincolnshire and Huntingdon, as well as occasional examples of the intra-mural yard design, like that at Great Staughton.

<sup>52</sup> As Cunliffe suggests (Cunliffe, *op. cit.*, n. 40); but cf. A. B. Hawkins in D. J. Blackman, ed., *Marine Archaeology* (Proc. 23rd Colston Symposium, forthcoming).

## GAULS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE ?

The distribution of fourth-century villa mosaics produces a similar sort of picture, and is not the situation of the four main mosaic schools in fourth-century Britain also significant in this respect? All four serve areas where pre-fourth-century villas are very rare. Furthermore some of the characteristics of these mosaic schools find close parallels on the continent—the wheel-like designs of the Petuarian school (with examples also from the counties of York, Somerset, Gloucester, and Lincoln) are paralleled in Germany and Austria, and the four anguipede titans of the Horkstow Orpheus mosaic are paralleled at Trier and in Switzerland.<sup>53</sup> There is no need to pursue the point any further here; all that need be said is that there seems to be sufficient evidence to suggest that other parts of Britain may also have welcomed Gallic immigrants in the late third century. But these areas are not those of the south-east where villa estates were already thickly distributed, but rather those where, possibly as a result of deliberate policy on the part of the administration, native style farms had persisted until the late third century. The Gallic 'invasion' of Gloucester and Somerset may have been the largest and earliest of several such migrations.

### APPENDIX

Further research since the paper went to press has produced two more examples of the intra-mural yard villa in our region. One is the Wraxall villa in north Somerset (*Proc. Somerset Archaeol. Natur. Hist. Soc.* 105, 1961, 37ff), where a yard approximately 19 mts x 7 mts is fronted by a corridor with one and probably two slightly projecting wing rooms. The rear of the yard gives on to a series of five rooms, and the south end of the yard is flanked by a small bath suite. The villa can be compared to the Gallic villas at Wollersheim and Dautenheim. Apart from a very worn coin of Aurelius the coin series starts with eleven issues of the later third century, and the pottery also points to a late third century foundation. Occupation probably ceased in the decade c. 350–360 after at least three phases of building work. The second of these incorporated a coin of Victorinus, and the third a coin of Allectus, so that a foundation date well before the *end* of the third century seems quite possible (cf. *supra* 91).

The second villa is that at Colerne, Wiltshire (*Archaeol. J.* 13 (1856) 328–31). Here there is a small flag-paved yard, c. 13 mts x 6 mts, fronted by a corridor with small projecting wing rooms, and flanked on the east by two living rooms. To the rear are three further rooms, and in the north-west corner a small bath-suite and a heated triclinium with mosaic floor. The villa compares closely to that at Beckingen. Little is known of the dating evidence, but recorded coins here are of the Constantinian period.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, n. 4, 103–5 for discussion and references.