

ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL CARLISLE:
THE NORTHERN LANES, EXCAVATIONS 1978-82
VOLUME ONE: THE ROMAN PERIOD

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Front cover: Aerial photograph of the Lanes area in the 1970s, prior to development; lead figurine of the goddess Diana; amber finger ring with the head of the goddess Minerva
Rear Cover: Excavation of a second-century AD Roman building at the Lanes; the Lanes shopping centre today; Roman barrel-lined well containing a water wheel

LANCASTER
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Abbreviations

AE	Numismatic abbreviation for copper or bronze, from the Latin word <i>aes</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
MNI	Minimum Number of Individuals
MS	Mould Signature
NISP	Number of Individual Specimens

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Summary

In the mid-1970s, Carlisle City Council drew up proposals for the redevelopment of the Lanes, a densely built-up area of approximately 2.8 ha situated in the north-east corner of the city's historic core (NY 4015 5606). At the time, the area was crossed, east to west, by 19 narrow lanes or vennels, the origins of which were obscure. Previous archaeological work in the area, though extremely limited, had confirmed the presence of complex Roman and medieval deposits in this part of the city. Consequently, a programme of archaeological and historical investigation, funded in part by the then Department of the Environment (DoE), was undertaken by the Carlisle Archaeological Unit between 1978 and 1982.

To this day, the Lanes retains its position as one of the largest and most significant urban archaeological investigations ever undertaken in northern England. The project as a whole comprised a phased programme of excavation and standing-building recording, undertaken over a period of several years, together with a survey of the surviving documentary evidence. Although the fieldwork was undertaken as a single project, for post-excavation and publication purposes they were split into two parts, the northern and southern Lanes. The former principally comprised a large, open-area excavation, consisting of seven separately excavated but contiguous trenches, whilst the latter was characterised by a series of smaller trenches. Additionally, on the northern Lanes, large areas north and south of the main excavation were subjected to salvage excavation and/or watching brief, and several smaller trenches were also excavated in the vicinity. The results of the southern Lanes investigations have been published, and the present volume presents the evidence for pre-Roman and Roman occupation within the northern Lanes.

As elsewhere in the city centre, evidence for pre-Roman activity was largely restricted to cultivation marks and a buried soil, the remains of a field system of possible Iron Age date. However, a stratigraphically contemporary metalled trackway was also found, and a large assemblage of late neolithic/early Bronze Age lithics (and a few probable late mesolithic specimens) was recovered, though almost all of these were residual in later contexts. The arrival of the Roman army in the late first century AD saw the construction of a probable temporary camp in a strategic position on the south bank of the River Eden, overlooking the likely river crossing. This installation was probably constructed in the AD 70s-80s, and may have been a campaign camp for a relatively small (auxiliary unit-sized) military formation. However, the possibility that it was a construction camp, associated with the establishment (in the autumn/winter of AD 72-3) of the first auxiliary fort at Carlisle, which lay c 300 m west of the Lanes, cannot be ruled out.

Probably during the first quarter of the second century (possibly as late as the Hadrianic period), a massive timber building, probably a *mansio*, was erected on the western edge of the northern Lanes, parallel to the Roman road beneath modern Scotch Street, a major thoroughfare leading north to the crossing of the River Eden. Following the destruction of this building by fire, an extensive complex of large timber buildings, of two distinct structural phases, was erected over the site. Though poorly preserved, it is possible that these also served as *mansiones*. From around the middle of the second century AD, the area was largely absorbed into the expanding civilian settlement, and the second half of the century saw the development of distinct 'properties' on the site, though a large, elaborate timber building, perhaps another *mansio*, was also constructed, set well back from the main street frontage. The putative properties comprised relatively narrow plots extending back from the Roman precursor to Scotch Street, within which timber buildings, yards, pits, and other features were constructed. Parts of three such landholdings seemingly lay within the northern Lanes site, though their boundaries proved difficult to define in some phases, suggesting a considerable degree of fluidity in land use and (perhaps) land ownership. Most excavated structures of this period were small and timber-built; few yielded evidence for anything other than a residential function, though it is likely that many were multi-functional. Good preservation of waterlogged organic materials was a feature of the earlier Roman levels, though it was limited mainly to the fills of cut features, such as pits and wall-foundation trenches.

The building plots established in the second century continued to develop during the third century and, on some parts of the site at least, into the second half of the fourth century, although other areas seem to have decayed. To the north, a third-century stone-lined well contained the skeleton of a probable murder victim, together with an assemblage of animal bones and other artefacts suggestive of some form of 'ritual' or structured deposition. Further south, a stone, or stone-footed, house was constructed during the late second century. Initially a simple rectangular structure, this developed, during the first half of the third century, into a small, winged corridor house. Latterly, one room was provided with underfloor heating, but in all other respects the residence seems

to have been simply appointed. The house, together with the rest of the property in which it was located, and the area immediately to the south, appears to have been largely abandoned by the mid-third century, though slight evidence for continued activity well into the fourth century was recorded. By contrast, the property to the north saw intensive activity into the late fourth century, marked by the laying of an extensive cobbled surface; this was associated with a notable increase in coin deposition. Ultimately, the site was abandoned, and dark soils accumulated over most Roman levels, though some of the walls of the stone house were clearly visible as late as the twelfth or early thirteenth century, when they were robbed of their stone. Indeed, upstanding elements of this structure appear to have influenced the positioning, during the twelfth/thirteenth century, of some tenement boundaries on the east side of Scotch Street, which in turn determined the location and alignment of the lanes themselves. These were seemingly laid out during the early fourteenth century and remained in use into the 1970s, but most were obliterated by construction of the present Lanes shopping centre.

Résumé

Au milieu des années 1970, la municipalité de Carlisle élaborait des propositions pour le réaménagement de « The Lanes », un quartier densément construit d'environ 2,8 hectares située dans la partie nord-est du centre historique de la ville (NY 4015 5606). À l'époque, la zone était traversée d'est en ouest par dix-neuf ruelles étroites ou vernelles dont l'origine reste incertaine. Les travaux archéologiques menés antérieurement dans ladite zone, bien que extrêmement limités, avaient confirmé la présence d'occupations romaines et médiévales complexes dans cette partie de la ville. Conséquemment, un programme de fouilles archéologiques et de recherche historique, financé en partie par le « Department of the Environment (DoE) » de l'époque – c'est-à-dire le Département de l'Environnement –, a été entrepris par la « Carlisle Archaeological Unit » – c'est-à-dire l'Unité Archéologique de Carlisle – de 1978 à 1982.

À ce jour, « The Lanes » reste le site le plus important d'archéologie urbaine jamais entrepris dans le nord de l'Angleterre. Le projet dans son ensemble comprenait un programme échelonné de fouilles archéologiques et de relevé des bâtiments, entrepris sur une période de plusieurs années, ainsi qu'une étude des données récoltées. Bien que le travail sur le terrain ait été entrepris en tant que projet unique, il a été divisé en deux zones pour les besoins de la post-fouille et de la publication: la partie nord et la partie sud des Lanes. La première consistait principalement en une vaste fouille à ciel ouvert, constituée de sept tranchées creusées séparément mais contiguës, tandis que la dernière se caractérisait par une série de tranchées plus petites. En outre, au nord des Lanes, de larges zones situées au nord et au sud de l'aire de fouilles principale ont fait l'objet de fouilles de sauvetage et/ou d'observation sommaire, et plusieurs tranchées plus petites ont également été creusées et fouillées à proximité. Suite à la publication des résultats des recherches de la partie sud des Lanes, le présent volume présente donc ici les preuves de l'occupation pré-romaine et romaine dans la partie nord des Lanes.

Comme ailleurs dans le centre-ville, les preuves de l'activité pré-romaine se limitaient en grande partie à des traces de culture et à un sol enfoui, vestiges d'un système de champs appartenant probablement à l'âge du fer. Cependant, un chemin empierré stratigraphiquement contemporain a également été trouvé, et un vaste assemblage de mobilier lithique correspondant à une période comprise entre le néolithique tardif et l'âge du bronze ancien (et quelques spécimens appartenant probablement au mésolithique tardif) a été retrouvé, bien que leur quasi-totalité soit résiduelle dans des contextes plus tardifs. L'arrivée de l'armée romaine à la fin du premier siècle après J.-C. a entraîné la construction d'un probable campement temporaire dans un lieu stratégique situé sur la rive sud de la rivière Eden, donnant sur le passage permettant vraisemblablement de traverser la rivière. Cette installation a probablement été construite dans les années 70-80 après J.-C. et pourrait avoir été un camp de campagne pour une formation militaire relativement petite (de la taille d'une unité auxiliaire). Cependant, l'hypothèse qu'il s'agisse d'un camp de construction, liée à la création (durant l'automne et l'hiver 72-73 après J.-C.) du premier fort auxiliaire de Carlisle, situé à trois-cent mètres à l'ouest des Lanes, ne peut être exclue.

Probablement au cours du premier quart du deuxième siècle après J.-C. (peut-être aussi tard que la période hadrienne), un bâtiment en bois d'oeuvre massif, probablement une *mansio*, fut érigé à l'extrémité ouest au nord des Lanes, parallèlement à la voie romaine se trouvant sous l'actuelle Scotch Street, artère principale vers le nord après la traversée de la rivière Eden. Suite à la destruction de ce bâtiment par un incendie, un vaste complexe de grands bâtiments en bois d'oeuvre massifs, comportant deux phases structurelles distinctes, a été érigé sur le site. Bien que mal conservés, il est possible que ceux-ci aient également servi de *mansiones*. À partir du milieu du deuxième siècle après J.-C. environ, cette aire a été largement absorbée dans l'expansion de l'installation des populations civiles, et la seconde moitié du siècle a vu le développement de « propriétés » distinctes sur le site, et ce, bien qu'un grand

bâtiment en bois, élaboré – peut-être une autre *mansio* –, ait également été construit, à l'écart de la rue principale. Les propriétés putatives comprenaient des parcelles relativement étroites s'étendant du précurseur romain jusqu'à Scotch Street. Parcelles sur lesquelles des bâtiments en bois, des cours, des fosses et d'autres éléments fonctionnels ont été construits. Trois de ces propriétés se situent vraisemblablement partiellement dans la partie septentrionale du site des Lanes, bien que leurs limites se soient révélées difficiles à définir selon les phases, suggérant un degré important de fluidité dans l'utilisation des terres et – peut-être – la propriété des terres. La plupart des structures fouillées appartenant à cette période étaient petites et construites en bois. Peu de ces structures ont donné des preuves d'une autre fonction que celle résidentielle, même s'il est probable que beaucoup d'entre elles étaient multifonctionnelles. La bonne préservation des matériaux organiques détrempés était une caractéristique des niveaux romains antérieurs, bien qu'elle se limitât principalement aux remplissages de certaines composantes archéologiques telles les fosses et les tranchées de fondation des murs.

Les terrains bâtis établis au deuxième siècle ont continué à se développer au cours du troisième siècle après J.-C. et, pour certaines parties du site, jusque dans la deuxième moitié du quatrième siècle après J.-C., alors que d'autres zones semblent être tombées en ruines. Au nord, un puits de pierre du troisième siècle après J.-C. contenait le squelette d'une victime présumée de meurtre, ainsi qu'un assemblage d'ossements d'animaux et d'autres objets suggérant une forme quelconque de dépôt «rituel» ou structuré. Plus au sud, une maison en pierre ou à fondation en pierre a été construite à la fin du deuxième siècle après J.-C.. À l'origine il s'agit d'une structure rectangulaire simple, puis celle-ci s'est développée en une petite maison à galerie de façade au cours de la première moitié du troisième siècle après J.-C.. plus tard, une des pièces fut équipée d'un système de chauffage par le sol, mais à tous autres égards, la résidence semble avoir été simplement arrangée. La maison, ainsi que le reste de la propriété dans laquelle elle se trouvait, et la zone immédiatement au sud, ont été probablement abandonnées en grande partie au milieu du troisième siècle après J.-C.. Mais quelques signes montrant une activité continue jusqu'au quatrième siècle après J.-C. ont été enregistrés. En revanche, la propriété située au nord a connu une activité intense jusqu'à la fin du quatrième siècle après J.-C., marquée par la pose d'une vaste surface pavée. À cela était associée une augmentation notable des dépôts monétaires. Finalement, le site a été abandonné et des sols de couleur sombre se sont accumulés sur la plupart des niveaux romains. Cependant, certains des murs de la maison en pierre sont clairement visibles jusqu'au douzième ou au début du treizième siècle après J.-C., lorsqu'ils ont été dépouillés de leurs pierres. En effet, des éléments en saillie de cette structure semblent avoir influencé le positionnement, au cours des douzième-treizième siècles, de certaines limites de lotissements sur le côté est de Scotch Street, ce qui a déterminé l'emplacement et l'alignement des voies elles-mêmes. Celles-ci avaient apparemment été aménagées au début du quatorzième siècle et étaient restées en usage dans les années 1970, mais la plupart ont été détruites par la construction du centre commercial actuel de Lanes.

Zusammenfassung

Mitte der 1970er Jahre stellte Carlisle City Council einen Sanierungsantrag für die sogenannten ‚Lanes‘, ein dicht bebautes, ca. 2.8ha großes Gebiet welches im Nordosten des historischen Stadtzentrums Carlisles liegt (NGR NY 4015 5606). In den 70er Jahren verliefen durch dieses Gebiet noch neunzehn sehr schmale Sträßchen oder Gassen (die ‚Lanes‘), deren Ursprung jedoch bis dato leider im Dunkeln gelegen hatte. Vorangegangene archäologische Arbeiten in den ‚Lanes‘ waren sehr beschränkt gewesen, hatten aber das Vorhandensein von komplexen römischen und mittelalterlichen Befunden stark vermuten lassen. Aus diesem Grunde wurde ein Arbeitsprogramm für archäologische und kultur-historische Untersuchungen zusammengestellt, welches vom Umweltministerium teilfinanziert und dem damaligen Carlisle Archaeological Unit zwischen den Jahren 1978-1982 durchgeführt wurde.

Bis zum heutigen Tage sind die ‚Lanes‘ in Carlisle eine der größten und wichtigsten archäologischen Stadtkernuntersuchungen im Norden Englands. Das gesamte Projekt beinhaltete ein abgestuftes Programm bestehend aus Ausgrabungen und Gebäudebestandsaufnahmen. Diese Arbeiten wurden über mehrere Jahre hinweg durchgeführt, zeitgleich mit einer Untersuchung der noch erhaltenen Urkunden. Obwohl die Ausgrabungen der ‚Lanes‘ insgesamt als ein Großprojekt unternommen wurden, wurden sowohl der Befund- als auch der Fundbericht und die sich anschließende Publikation in zwei Teile gespalten: die ‚Northern Lanes‘ und die ‚Southern Lanes‘. Während sich der erste Band hauptsächlich mit einer großflächig angelegten Grabung von sieben separaten aber aneinandergrenzenden Schnitten befaßt, beschreibt der zweite Band eine Anzahl von mehreren kleineren Schnitten. Außerdem wurden in den ‚Northern Lanes‘ große Flächen nördlich und südlich der Hauptgrabungsfläche als Rettungsgrabungen und/oder mit kurzzeitiger Baubegleitung untersucht; es wurden aber auch mehrere schmale Schnitte in der direkten Umgebung angelegt. Die Ergebnisse der Untersuchungen in den ‚Southern Lanes‘ sind bereits publiziert und der hier vorliegende Band enthält nun die Ergebnisse für die vorrömische und römische Nutzung der ‚Northern Lanes‘.

Die Grabungen lassen vermuten, daß, wie auch in anderen Teilen des Stadtzentrums, die vorrömische Aktivität hier auf die landwirtschaftliche Nutzung des Gebietes beschränkt gewesen war; auf dem Gebiet der ‚Lanes‘ deuten eine wahrscheinlich eisenzeitliche Feldeinteilung und Ackerfurchen darauf hin. Es wurde allerdings auch ein zeitgleicher Kopfsteinpflasterweg und eine große Anzahl spätneolithischer und frühbronzezeitlicher Silexartefakte geborgen (darunter auch einige vermutlich mittelsteinzeitliche Funde). Es muß allerdings darauf hingewiesen werden, daß es sich bei all diesen prähistorischen Funden um Streufunde aus späteren Befunden handelte. Mit der Ankunft der römischen Armee im späten 1. Jh. n. Chr. wurde mit dem Bau eines wahrscheinlich nur kurzzeitig besetzten Lagers begonnen. Dieses wurde in strategischer Lage am südlichen Ufer des Edens errichtet; es hatte einen direkten Blick auf und Kontrolle über die zu jener Zeit wahrscheinlichste Furt/Flußübergang. Das Lager wurde zwischen 70-80 n. Chr. erbaut und war wahrscheinlich ein Feldlager für eine relativ kleine Militäreinheit. Es kann jedoch aber nicht ganz ausgeschlossen werden, daß es sich bei diesem Lager um ein Baulager handelte, in dem Truppen lebten, die am Bau von Carlisles größerem Auxiliarlagers (72-73 n. Chr.) beteiligt gewesen waren. Dieses größere Lager lag ca. 300m westlich der Lanes.

Die Grabungsergebnisse lassen darauf schließen, daß auf einem Teil der Fläche im ersten Viertel des 2. Jh. n. Chr. (wahrscheinlich in der hadrianischen Zeit) ein großes Holzgebäude errichtet wurde, vermutlich eine *mansio*. Diese befand sich am westlichen Rand der ‚Northern Lanes‘, parallel zur römischen Straße, die sich heute unter der modernen Scotch Street befindet. Entlang dieser Straße befand sich seit jeher eine wichtige Verbindungsstrecke in Richtung Norden, die direkt zum Flußübergang über den Eden führte. Untersuchungen ergaben, daß diese große *mansio* durch ein Feuer zerstört wurde. Daraufhin folgte der Bau eines großen Gebäudekomplexes aus mehreren Holzgebäuden, von dem wir ohne Zweifel zwei Bauphasen nachweisen können. Obwohl dieser Gebäudekomplex schlecht erhalten ist, kann doch vermutet werden, daß es sich auch hierbei ebenfalls um *mansiones* handelte. Ab Mitte des 2. Jh. n. Chr. wurde dieser Bereich vollständig in die immer größer werdende Randsiedlung miteinbezogen und in der zweiten Hälfte des 2. Jh. n. Chr. kristallisierten sich hier deutlich voneinander abgegrenzte Hausgrundstücke heraus. Ein weiteres großes, sehr aufwendig gebautes Holzgebäude, das vielleicht eine weitere *mansio* war, wurde auf einem Grundstück errichtet, welches deutlich von der Hauptstraßenfront zurückgesetzt lag. Diese vermeintlichen Grundstücke bestanden aus relativ engen Liegenschaften, die sich von der heutigen Scotch Street nach hinten heraus erstreckten, und in denen Holzgebäude, Höfe und Gruben nachgewiesen werden konnten. Drei dieser Liegenschaften schienen in den ‚Northern Lanes‘ zu sein, aber es war schwierig, die Grenzen der einzelnen Grundstücke in ihren verschiedenen Bauphasen festzulegen. Dies wiederum läßt eine gewisse Fluidität in der Nutzung der Ländereien vermuten und vielleicht damit auch auf einen steten Wechsel der Besitzverhältnisse schließen. Die meisten gegrabenen Strukturen dieses Zeitabschnitts waren kleine Holzgebäude und kaum eines ließ auf eine andere Nutzung als die eines Wohnhauses schließen – obwohl viele dieser Gebäude höchstwahrscheinlich vielseitiger genutzt wurden als nur als Wohnsitz. Durch den hohen Feuchtigkeitsgehalt des Bodens gab es an der Grabungsstelle eine sehr gute Erhaltung organischer Funde, besonders aus frühromischen Befunden, die sich allerdings auf Gruben und Mauerfundamente und ähnliche Befunde beschränkten.

Die Baugrundstücke, die sich im 2. Jh. n. Chr. hier etabliert hatten, bestanden auch im 3. Jh. n. Chr. fort und entwickelten sich in einigen Abschnitten des Gebietes weiter bis hin zur zweiten Hälfte des 4. Jh. n. Chr. Dafür wurden andere Grundstücke dem Verfall überlassen. Im Norden der Grabungsfläche wurde in einem mit Steinen eingefassten Brunnen ein menschliches Skelett geborgen. Bei dem Toten handelte es sich vermutlich um ein Mordopfer. Am Boden des Brunnens wurden außerdem Tierknochen und andere Gegenstände gefunden, die auf eine Art der rituellen Deponierung hindeuten. Im Süden der Grabungsfläche befand sich ein Steingebäude (oder ein Gebäude mit Steinfundamenten), das in das 2. Jh. n. Chr. datiert. Anfangs war es nur eine einfache rechteckige Struktur, die sich dann aber in der ersten Hälfte des 3. Jh. n. Chr. in ein kleines Haus mit Korridoren und Seitenflügeln weiterentwickelte. Eines seiner Räume war mit einer Fußbodenheizung ausgestattet, während die anderen überraschend einfach eingerichtet waren. Das Haus und der Rest seines Grundstückes waren zur Mitte des 3. Jh. n. Chr. im Großen und Ganzen jedoch verlassen, ebenso wie das Gebiet das sich direkt südlich an das Grundstück anschloß. An einigen anderen Stellen belegen Befunde aus dem 4. Jh. n. Chr. jedoch eine gewisse Kontinuität. Im Gegensatz dazu wurden die Grundstücke im Norden allerdings bis in das späte 4. Jh. n. Chr. genutzt. Dies läßt sich aus einer geflasterten Fläche schließen, welche auch mit einer auffallenden Zunahme von Münzniederlegungen verbunden ist. Am Ende jedoch wurde auch dieser Standort verlassen und eine dunkle Erdschicht deckte fast den gesamten römischen Horizont ab. Einige Mauern der römischen Steingebäude mußten aber noch bis in das 12. oder frühe 13. Jh. n. Chr. deutlich sichtbar gewesen sein, da sie zu jener Zeit von den mittelalterlichen Anwohnern Carlisles (die nach Rohmaterial für ihre eingetragenen Bauvorhaben suchten) geplündert worden waren. Es scheint sogar, daß einige der noch aufrecht stehenden spätrömischen Mauern den Standort und die Abgrenzungen von Mietshäusern des 12. und 13. Jh. auf der Ostseite der Scotch Street beinflussten. Diese wiederum bestimmten dann die Lage und Ausrichtung der ‚Lanes‘ selbst. Die ‚Lanes‘ wurden demnach während des frühen 14. Jahrhunderts angelegt und waren bis die 1970er Jahre im Gebrauch. Die meisten wurden jedoch für den Bau des ‚Lanes‘ Einkaufszentrums dem Erdboden gleichgemacht.

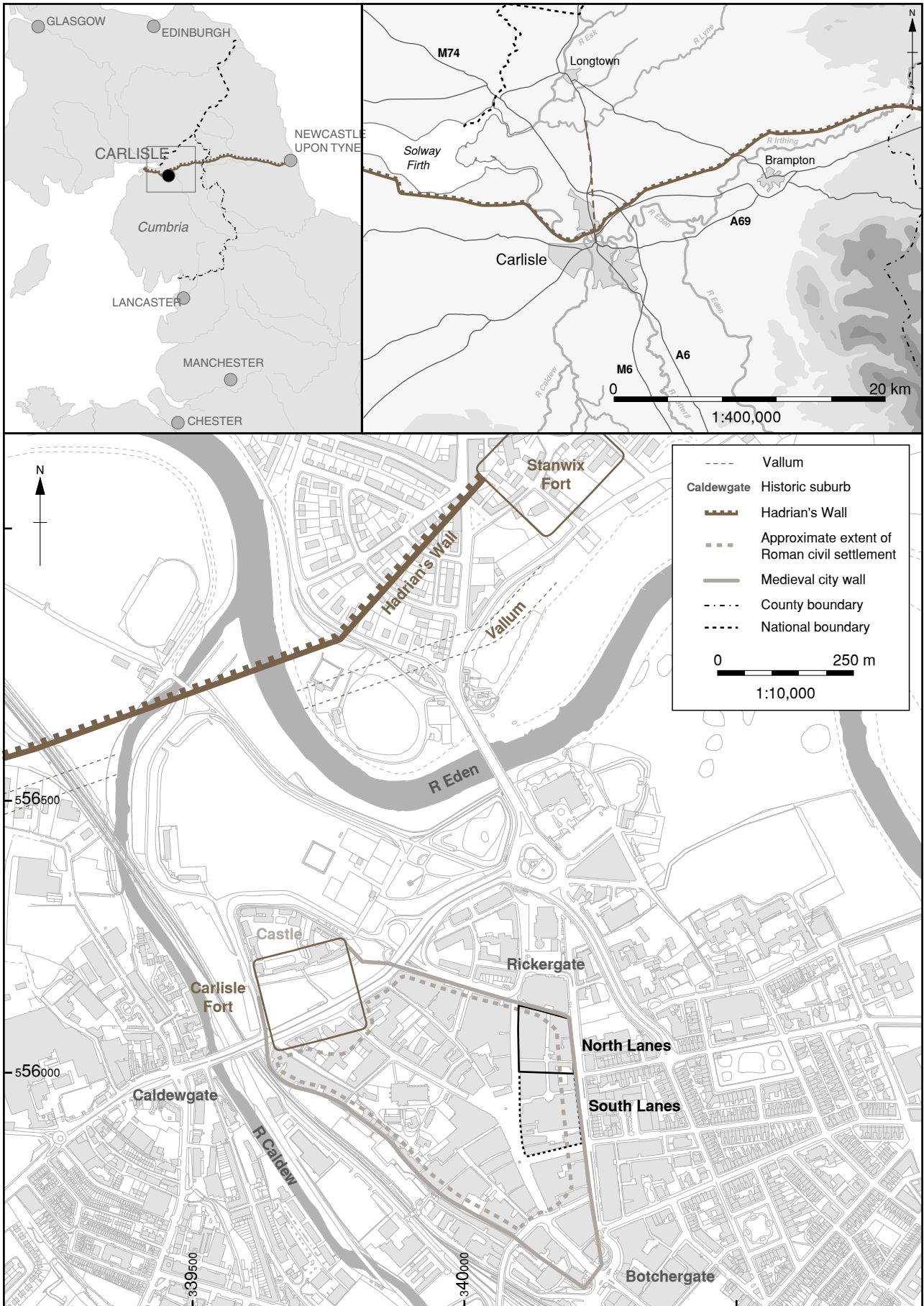


Figure 1: Site location