ROMA

Roman Military Deployment in North England*

By DAVID J. BREEZE and BRIAN DOBSON

IN 1963 Michael Jarrett published a short paper on 'The Military Occupation of Roman Wales.'[1] It discussed the documentary evidence relating to the Roman conquest of the Welsh tribes and the differing attitudes of these tribes to Rome, but its main importance lay in the six distribution maps illustrating the forts occupied in A.D. 80, 100, 130, 150, 220 and 330. Subsequently Dr J. L. Davies has published a series of nine maps covering the first and second centuries.[2] Two papers have recently extended the same treatment to Scotland.[3] The north of England has never been afforded the same discussion. The most detailed distribution maps published to date are the five which appear in Professor Frere's *Britannia*.[4] However, there have been maps and discussions of certain areas such as north-west England,[5] or particular periods.[6] It seems appropriate that a portrayal of the changing face of military deployment in north England over nearly 350 years should appear in a volume dedicated to John Gillam, who has done so much to illuminate the history of the area, not least through his work on that basic dating material, coarse pottery.

The placing of symbols on a map, by its very nature, begs some questions, and in particular the nature of the evidence for the occupation of each site. An inscription will indicate activity at a particular point in time but not how long occupation lasted. Only datable artefacts from the fort can do that. While there are few forts which have not been at least trenched, at many the body of dating evidence is too small for statistical analysis. Moreover, many sites were investigated 50 or more years ago and their finds have not, as a body, been re-evaluated since through examination of the objects themselves rather than perusal of the excavation reports. It is a matter of regret that such an examination has not been possible for this paper. However,

Conventions. On all maps the following conventions are used. A black square indicates occupation at that time. A half-filled square suggests that there is some evidence for occupation at that time, but not sufficient to warrant certainty. Uncertainty is demonstrated by an open square. Forts abandoned since the date of the previous map are scored through and their names given in smaller letters. However, this procedure has not been adopted for uncertain forts as it might be felt that this would give a spurious authority to the available information. Uncertain forts are simply dropped from the maps when it is thought they were abandoned. All maps are reproduced to the scale of 1:2,000,000. Land over 250 m is shaded.

[1] M. G. Jarrett, *Bull. Board. Celtic Stud.* xx Pt. 2 (May 1963), 206–20.

[2] J. L. Davies in W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie (eds.), *Roman Frontier Studies 1979, Papers presented to the 12th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, BAR Int. Ser. 71 (Oxford, 1980), 255–77.

[3] D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, *Glasgow Archaeol. Journ.* iv (1976), 124–43; W. S. Hanson in W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie (eds), op. cit (note 2), 15–43.

[4] S. S. Frere, *Britannia, A History of Roman Britain,* (2nd edn. London, 1974), figs. 3, 5, 6, 7 and 11.

[5] e.g., B. J. N. Edwards in M. G. Jarrett and B. Dobson (eds.), *Britain and Rome, Essays presented to Eric Birley on his sixtieth birthday* (Kendal, 1966), 95–105; G. D. B. Jones, *Northern Hist.* iii (1968), 1–26; T. W. Potter, *Romans in North-west England* (Kendal, 1979), 356–66.

[6] e.g., B. R. Hartley, *Northern Hist.* i (1966), 7–20; B. R. Hartley in R. M. Butler (ed.), *Soldier and civilian in Roman Yorkshire* (Leicester, 1971), 55–69; R. F. J. Jones in A. King and M. Henig (eds.), *The Roman West in the Third Century, Contributions from Archaeology and History*, BAR Int. Ser. 109 (Oxford, 1981), 393–414.

we hope that it will serve as an inspiration for such a project. Only then, and through further excavation, will it perhaps be possible to clarify the details left vague on these maps.

The maps follow the usual conventions. We have tried to be consistent in choosing each symbol – occupied, some evidence, uncertain, abandoned – though naturally an element of subjectivity will have entered into the choice. Sometimes the best evidence for the occupation of a site comes from the external civil settlement. This evidence has been used circumspectly as the occupation of the civil settlement might have continued after the fort had been abandoned. Not all will agree with each symbol on each distribution map, but perhaps this will engender useful discussion of the details and, through these, the changing pattern of the occupation of northern England. Roads have been included on the maps as seems appropriate; fortlets, towers and frontier works are not discussed.

The whole of northern England was occupied by two tribes, the Brigantes and the Parisi, the latter being apparently restricted to east Yorkshire. Later, a separate *civitas*, that of the Carvetii, is recorded in the Eden valley: the earlier history of the Carvetii is unknown. There are hints at divisions within the Brigantes: the Setantii, Gabrantovices and possibly also the Textoverdi. Nevertheless these do not affect the general picture painted by Tacitus and Ptolemy of the Brigantes as the most populous tribe in Britain, stretching from sea to sea.[7]

The Brigantes and their queen Cartimandua first enter history in Tacitus' account of the governorship of Ostorius Scapula. Scapula intervened in Brigantia sometime between 47 and 51, and in 51 Cartimandua handed over Caratacus to him. Tacitus a little later describes how her consort Venutius had long been loyal to Rome and under its military protection, and notes that he had already referred to Venutius earlier, presumably in the lost passage of the Annals dealing with the period 43–47, as being a Brigantian. The implication is clear: the Brigantes had become a client state of Rome in or very soon after 43. Cartimandua in the years following 51 quarrelled with Venutius, and eventually lost her throne to him in 69, during the Civil War which followed the death of Nero in 68. Rome, compelled already to intervene in Brigantia, moved, following Vespasian's successful bid for the empire, to deal with the now anti-Roman tribe.[8] Petillius Cerialis, the new governor of Britain (71–73/4), attacked the Brigantes and during a series of battles he operated, if not actually triumphed, over most of the territory of the tribe.[9] His successor, Julius Frontinus (73/4–77/8), conquered the Silures of south Wales, and the next governor, Julius Agricola (77/8–83/4/5), also firstly operated in Wales, putting down a revolt of the Ordovices in north Wales.[10] In his third season Agricola marched through the territory of new tribes, campaigning as far north as the Tay.[11] Tacitus, in describing the intervening (second) season, offers no geographical location.[12] It is often assumed that this year was spent in mopping-up operations in Brigantia. Tacitus' reference to many tribes which had till then maintained independence, and the adding of a *nova pars* (new part) to the province, implies, however, activities beyond Brigantia. The most likely setting is southern Scotland.[13] The resistance of the Brigantes had been broken by Cerialis, and Frontinus had felt free to turn his attention to the Silures.

[7] Parisi, see Ptolemy, *Geography*, II, 3, 10, conveniently accessible with discussion in A. L. F. Rivet and Colin Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (London, 1979), 142; Carvetii, *JRS* lv (1965), 224 (Brougham, milestone dated 260–268), *RIB* 933 (Old Penrith); Brigantes, Ptolemy, loc. cit., Rivet and Smith, op. cit., 141–2 and Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17; Setantii, Ptolemy, op. cit., II, 3, 2, Rivet and Smith, op. cit., 134; Gabrantovices, Ptolemy, op. cit., II, 3, 4, Rivet and Smith, op. cit., 137–8; Textoverdi, *RIB* 1695.

[8] Tacitus, *Annals* XII, 32; 39; *Histories*, 3, 45; *Agricola*, 17.

[9] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17.

[10] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17; 18.

[11] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 22.

[12] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 20.

[13] A. R. Birley in B. Levick (ed.), *The Ancient Historian and his Materials* (Farnborough, 1975), 143; B. Dobson, *Scot. Arch. Forum* xii (1981), 6.

It is worth emphasizing that although the date of the conquest of the Brigantes is known, the details relating to the absorption of this tribe into the empire are not recorded in the literary sources: for such details we have to rely on the imperfect tool of archaeology. The literary sources are exceedingly sparse too on the later history of the area. The enigmatic reference by Juvenal to the storming of Brigantian hill-forts and to a British king Arviragus, news of whose capture would have pleased Domitian (81–96), and to the Brigantes in Pausanias' *Description of Greece* are the sole historical comments subsequent to the conquest of the tribe and are of no help.[14]

In the pre-Flavian period (43–68) Roman forts were established as far north as Templeborough in south Yorkshire. It is presumed that this fort did not lie on Brigantian territory, but may have lain close to the kingdom's southern border. Statius addressed a poem to Crispinus son of Vettius Bolanus, governor of Britain from 69 to 71, referring to the construction of forts and the wresting of a breastplate from a British king by his father.[15] Bolanus had in all probability the responsibility of rescuing Cartimandua,[16] and the possibility that the forts referred to were in Brigantia cannot be excluded. It may be noted that the Romans regarded client kingdoms as subject to Rome and did on occasion station troops in their territory.[17]

The only sites in northern England at present normally assigned to the governorship of Cerialis are those in south-east Yorkshire. Such attribution is not possible on archaeological evidence and most arguments concerning occupation of these forts tend to the circular. A military presence was established at York, legion IX Hispana being moved here either now or soon after,[18] while recent excavations at Hayton have suggested contemporary occupation there, and by extension of other forts in the area.[19] Other forts have been suggested as Cerialian foundations, including bases as far north as Carlisle and Corbridge,[20] but there can be no certainty: FIG. 1 is, therefore, a minimum, not a maximum, for 75 and as it stands is hardly credible. It could equally well reflect an early stationing of troops in Parisian territory, perhaps protection of a friendly tribe.[21]

FIG. 2 has been the most difficult map to prepare. Several sites have provided a small quantity of Flavian pottery, but it is difficult to be sure whether this reflects contemporary occupation or the last products of kilns surviving in use in a later, say Trajanic, fort; the pottery assemblage from most sites will contain material whose main circulation was in earlier years. Furthermore, as these forts were little more than winter quarters, the range of available dating evidence was probably always small. In addition, in many excavation reports vessels are frequently given a wide date range, 70 to 125, thus rendering close definition of the establishment of the occupation of the fort impossible. On the map, therefore, much use has been made of a half-empty square to indicate sites which have produced pre-Hadrianic pottery, but which were not necessarily occupied as early as Agricola.

[14] Juvenal, *Satires* XIV, 196; Pausanius, VIII, 43.

[15] Statius, *Silvae*, 5, 2, 142–9.

[16] Tacitus, *Histories*, 3, 45.

[17] *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 27. Tacitus, *Annals*, 12, 45 records a Roman garrison in the client state of Armenia.

[18] L. P. Wenham in R. M. Butler (ed.), *Soldier and Civilian in Roman Yorkshire* (Leicester, 1971), 45–53. For the possibility of earlier occupation see A. R. Birley, *Britannia* iv (1973), 188 and n. 45.

[19] S. Johnson, *Britannia* ix (1978), 77–80.

[20] For the possibility and references see A. R. Birley, op. cit. (note 18), 189. The notion of a storming of Stanwick by Cerialis has recently been challenged: to the doubts expressed by B. Dobson, *Trans. Architect. Archaeol. Soc. Durham Northumberland* ii (1970), 39–40, add now P. Turnbull, *Durham Archaeol. Journ.* i (1984), 41–9; C. C. Haselgrove and P. Turnbull, *Stanwick, excavation and fieldwork, interim report 1981–83*, Occasional Paper 4 of the Department of Archaeology, Durham University (Durham, 1983); A. Chadburn, *Northern Archaeology* iv pt. 1 (1983), 2–20.

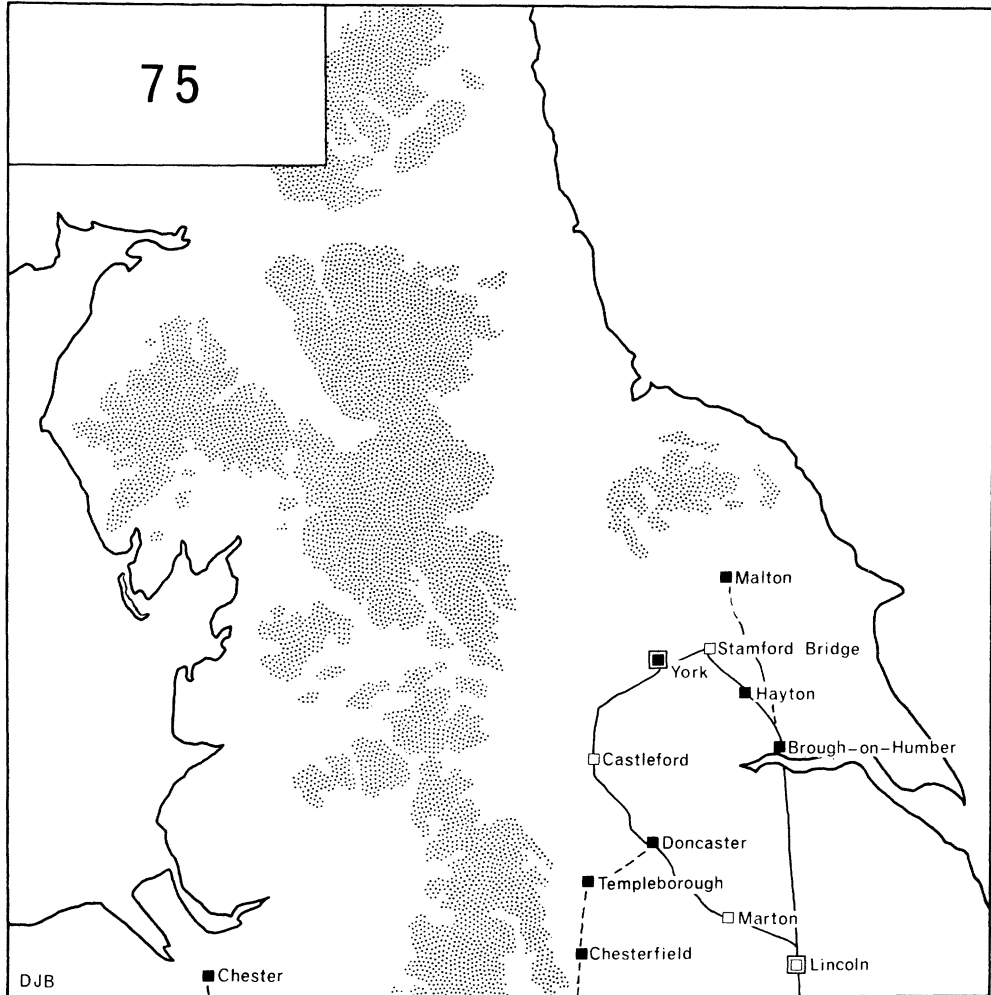[21] S. Johnson, op. cit. (note 19), 80.

FIG. 1. Military dispositions in northern England in 75.

Tacitus records Agricola building forts in his second season.[22] This area is usually assumed to be northern England, but on inadequate grounds. Very many forts in the territory of the Brigantes are assigned by modern commentators to Agricola, but this reflects a long established convention of claiming for Agricola even more than Tacitus does. Precise distinction between the work of Cerialis, Frontinus and Agricola remains unattainable. FIG. 2, therefore, shows the situation reached by 85. The date is a convenience; it cannot be certain when the massive process of shifting the winter quarters of the army of Britain into Wales and the north from the south was completed.

The network of forts was based on the two main roads north, with cross-routes between the legionary fortresses at Chester and York and between York and Ribchester, Catterick and Old Penrith, Corbridge and Carlisle.

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[22] Tacitus, *Agricola* 20.

Little can be said about the size of these forts as they are the earliest structures below a complex of later forts and are usually imperfectly understood. It is, however, noticeable that, when and where it is possible to judge the size of forts, those on the cross-routes through the Pennines are generally smaller than those on the main routes north.[23] Bowes and Greta Bridge (see also FIG. 3) both are a little larger than normal (4·2 and 4·5 acres respectively); they lay on the main route from York to Carlisle.
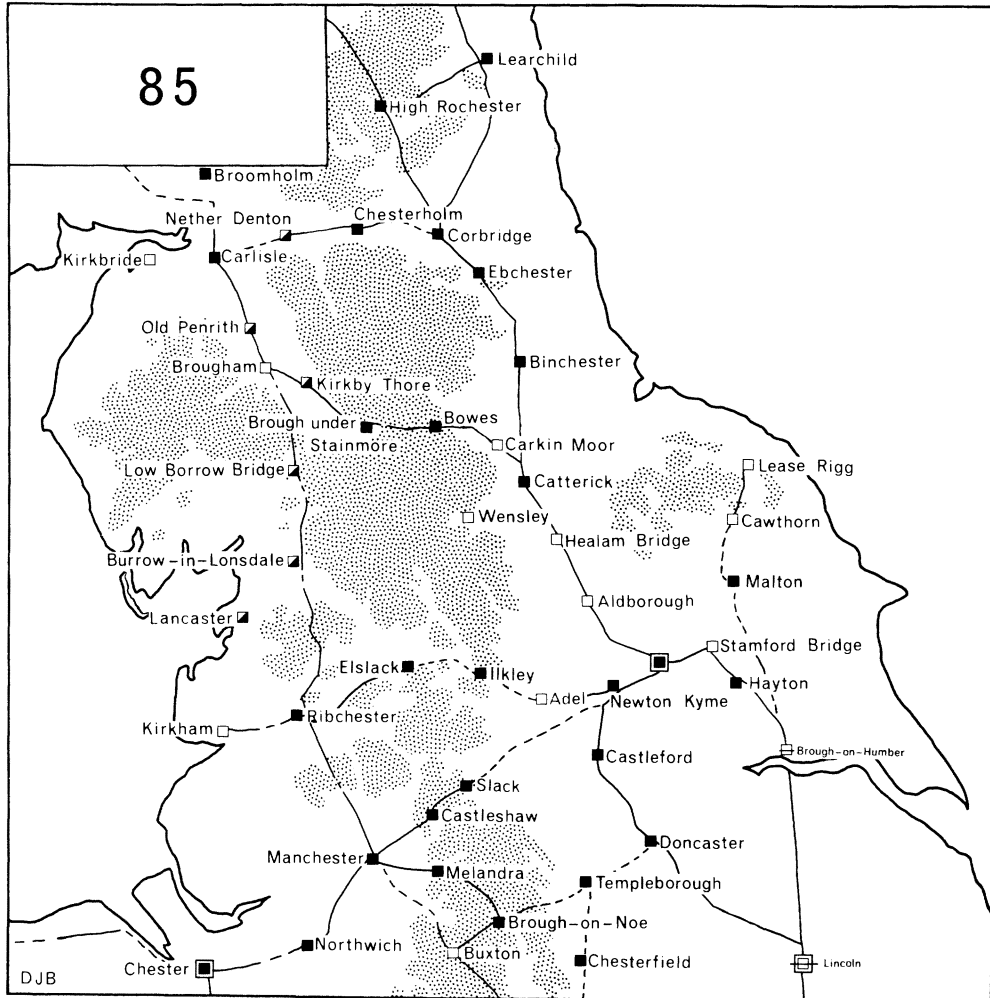
FIG. 2. Military dispositions in northern England in 85.

One final problem in connection with this map is the existence of several undated forts. All these forts, most of which are relatively new discoveries, were probably built of turf and timber and it therefore seems likely that they date to the late first century, or, less likely, the early second. They fit most happily into this period, when the situation is fluid and forts, little more than winter quarters, were built and abandoned more frequently than in later years.

[23] M. J. Jones, *Roman fort defences to A.D. 117*, BAR 21 (Oxford, 1975), 126.

FIG. 3. Military dispositions in northern England in 95.

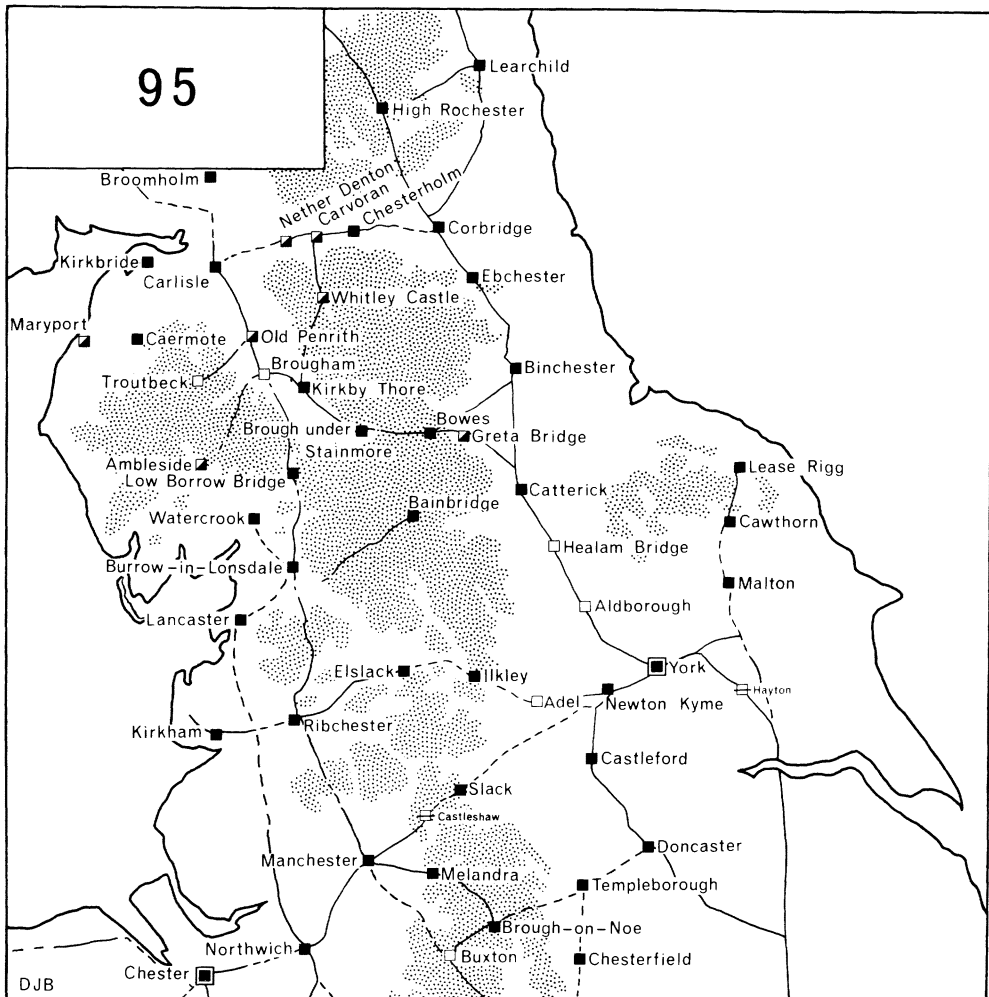Sometimes, using meagre dating evidence, the occupation of adjacent forts can be arranged in chronological sequence. At the south-eastern end of the Stainmore road lie Catterick, Carkin Moor, Greta Bridge and Bowes, while the proximity of Piercebridge may also be noted, though in spite of finds of early pottery here, the existence of an early fort is still unproven.[24] It is doubtful if all were occupied at once. Greta Bridge does not appear to have been established until the turn of the century[25] and it seems possible that undated Carkin Moor may have been its predecessor. A problem of a different nature lies on the road north from York. There is an undated fort at Healam Bridge and there ought to be an early fort at Aldborough, the later urban centre of the Brigantes, to break an otherwise long gap.[26]

West of the Pennines, early industrial complexes are known at Wilderspool on the Mersey

[24] We are grateful to Mr Peter Scott for advice on Piercebridge.
[25] B. R. Hartley, op. cit. (note 6, *Soldier and civilian*), 58.
[26] B. R. Hartley, ibid.

and Walton-le-dale on the Ribble.[27] It might be suspected that these sites would have military connections, but their precise relationship to the army has not yet been determined.
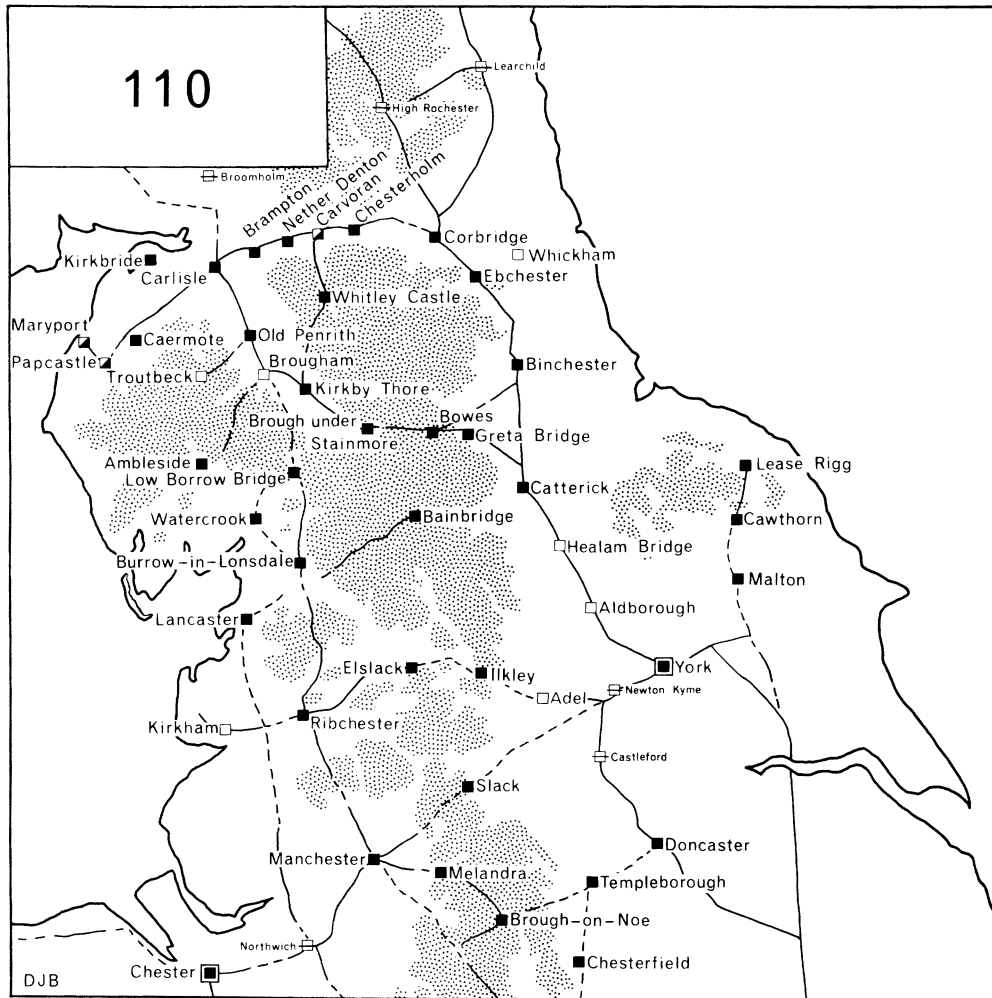
FIG. 4. Military dispositions in northern England in 110.

Towards the end of the first century there appear to have been some alterations to the network of the forts. Castleshaw in the south Pennines was abandoned, to be replaced, probably in the early second century, by a fortlet, while Hayton was abandoned, perhaps in the mid 80s, as were probably other forts in the area.[28] In probably the last decade of the first century new forts were built in and around the Lake District at Watercrook, Ambleside, Caermote (if not before) and possibly Troutbeck.[29] Lease Rigg and Cawthorn, and the road on

[27] Wilderspool: *Britannia* vi (1975), 240. Walton-le-dale: *Britannia* xiii (1982), 352; xiv (1983), 296–7.
[28] Castleshaw: F. H. Thompson, *Trans. Lancs. and Cheshire Antiq. Soc.* lxxvii (1967), 3. Hayton: S. Johnson, op. cit. (note 19).
[29] B. R. Hartley, op. cit. (note 6, *Northern Hist.*), 12; T. W. Potter, op. cit. (note 5), 356.

which they lay, also probably date to this time, though in both cases the dating evidence is slight.[30]

The last years of the first century and the early years of the second saw an abandonment of forts north of the Tyne-Solway isthmus. This process possibly took as long as 20 years to complete and may have taken place in as many as four stages.[31] Some of the units withdrawn from these northern forts may have been transferred out of the province: legion II Adiutrix certainly was, and it was probably accompanied by some auxiliary units.[32] The move of the legion was presumably linked with the Dacian War of Domitian (86–88). The Dacian wars of Trajan (101–102 and 105–106) may have led to the transfer of further units from Britain. How many auxiliary regiments, if any, left the province is not known. The occupation of new forts in northern England at this time may have been connected with the withdrawal from Scotland. The Lake District, while presumably subdued and brought within the province during the Flavian advance, had not been occupied by forts. It may not be coincidental that forts were built there at about the time that the more northerly commitments were abandoned. Possibly these forts were built to help accommodate the units which had formerly been stationed in Scotland but which had not been transferred to the continent.

In the early second century there seems to have been an increase in the number of forts across the Tyne-Solway isthmus.[33] Forts had lain along the Stanegate between Corbridge and Carlisle at Chesterholm and probably at Nether Denton from the Flavian period. These lay about 14 miles apart. In the middle, Carvoran, at the end of the Maiden Way, has produced a Domitianic corn-measure – but this clearly remained in use after 96 and is therefore not necessarily evidence for Flavian occupation – and a possible Flavian tombstone.[34] Unpublished aerial photographs apparently suggest the existence of a fort below that built in 136/7. We are on rather stronger ground with Old Church, Brampton, between Nether Denton and Carlisle, which seems to have been built in the early second century.[35] It has also been suggested that the gap between Corbridge and Chesterholm was broken, but to date no fort of the right date has been identified, Newbrough producing only fourth-century pottery.[36] To the east of Corbridge, Washing Well, Whickham, unexcavated but of at least two periods according to aerial photographs, probably existed at this time.[37] The evidence for a system of forts forming a 'Stanegate frontier' and dating to the reign of Trajan is meagre. However, the existence of two small forts at Haltwhistle Burn and Throp, built on this line in the early second century, points to increasing emphasis on the Tyne-Solway isthmus: the other postulated fortlets in this 'system' remain unproven.[38] The establishment of these new military installations is generally considered to follow the abandonment of the last forts to be held north of the Tyne-Solway isthmus, probably about 105, though the date is far from certain.[39]

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that the development of frontier installations was more complex than earlier believed. The recently discovered fort at Burgh-by-Sands South,

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[30] B. R. Hartley in D. A. Spratt, *Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology of North-East Yorkshire*, BAR 104 (Oxford, 1982), 211–2.

[31] D. J. Breeze, *The Northern Frontiers of Roman Britain* (London, 1982), 60–72.

[32] E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (Kendal, 1953), 21.

[33] E. Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (Kendal, 1961), 132–50; D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall* (Harmondsworth, 1978), 20–7; C. Daniels, *Scot. Arch. Forum, Glasgow 1970* (1970), 94–5.

[34] *RIB* 1826. E. Birley, op. cit. (note 33), 194.

[35] F. G. Simpson and I. A. Richmond, *Trans. Cumb. West. Ant. Arch. Soc.* xxxvi (1936), 176–7.

[36] E. Birley, op. cit. (note 33), 148.

[37] N. McCord and G. Jobey, *Arch. Ael.*[4] xlix (1971), 120.

[38] E. Birley, op. cit. (note 33), 135, 143–6. Also on the Stanegate: C. M. Daniels (ed.), *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 13th edition, 1978), *passim*, but particularly 176–8 and 206–11.

[39] J. P. Gillam, *Arch. Ael.*[5] v (1977), 56 and 60.

between Carlisle and Kirkbride and immediately south of the Hadrian's Wall fort of Burgh-by-Sands, seems to date to the later years of Trajan or the early years of Hadrian.[40]

The abandonment of forts in south Yorkshire, already noted on FIG. 3, continues with Newton Kyme and Castleford, both considered to have been abandoned before the end of the first century.[41]
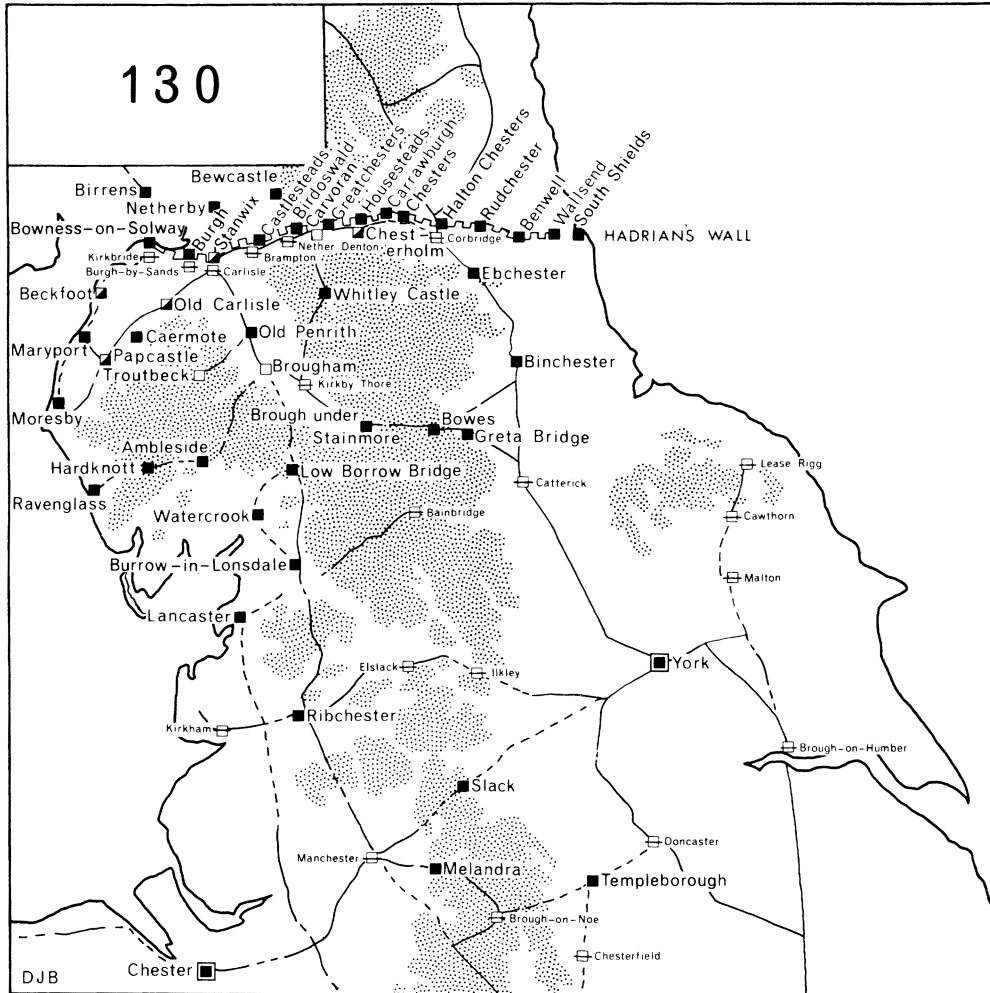
FIG. 5. Military dispositions in northern England in 130.

The Tyne-Solway isthmus was the line chosen in the 120s for Hadrian's Wall. The first plan for the Wall appears to have called for the construction of new forts across the isthmus on the Stanegate line in addition to the barrier itself, which was devoid of forts at this time. Both

[40] G. D. B. Jones, *Britannia* xiii (1982), 285. Professor Jones has kindly informed the first author that he no longer believes that the site at Finglandrigg is a Roman fort.

[41] H. Ramm in K. Branigan (ed.), *Rome and the Brigantes* (Sheffield, 1980), 33; A. Sumpter in P. R. Wilson, R. F. J. Jones and D. M. Evans (eds.), *Settlement and Society in the Roman North* (Bradford and Leeds, 1984), 84.

Corbridge and Chesterholm[42] seem to have been rebuilt and to the east Whickham may have been in occupation. Matching work at Nether Denton and Carlisle might be expected, and may be revealed by future excavation.[43] Further west Burgh-by-Sands South may have been constructed as part of this plan.

In the second plan for Hadrian's Wall most of these forts across the isthmus were abandoned and replaced by new forts on the line of the Wall itself: many of these new forts lay close to the positions of their immediate predecessors. In addition, two or three forts were built on the Cumbrian coast and three outposts were established north of the Wall.[44]

The establishment of the Hadrianic frontier complex led to the construction of 21 new forts across the isthmus and down the west coast. Some of the units to garrison these sites were drawn from the forts already in existence on the isthmus, but perhaps 14 additional units were required. These were transferred to the Wall from northern England and from Wales. At least 11 forts are thought to have been abandoned in northern England in these years and about the same number in Wales, more, than enough for the new forts on the frontier.[45] The areas chiefly affected were east Yorkshire where the forts on the road leading north from Malton to the coast were abandoned now if not earlier, those on Dere Street leading north from York and those in the central and southern Pennines. The establishment of the *civitas Brigantium* has been linked to the withdrawal from many of these Yorkshire forts.[46]

An interesting discrepancy between the documentary sources and the archaeological evidence can be detected at this time. Nine diplomas, dating from 98 to 146, provide the names of 57 or 58 auxiliary regiments in Britain, while inscriptions of the same period add a further four names and two more within the following 20 years, a total of 63 or 64.[47] However, the number of forts in England and Wales considered on archaeological grounds to have been occupied in the Hadrianic period is only 55. It seems possible that there should be more squares on FIG. 5.

The new frontier policy of Antoninus Pius led to the abandonment of many forts in north England (and Wales), in order to provide the 31 estimated units required to garrison Scotland.[48] Many, perhaps most, of the Wall forts were abandoned – though some certainly continued to be occupied for they could operate as forts distinct from the Wall – and about 18 forts further south. Abandonment of the Wall forts led to renewed interest in the Stanegate as a line of communication, with some forts continuing in occupation or being reoccupied at this time.[49] On Dere Street Ebchester and Binchester were replaced by a new fort at Lanchester,[50] but elsewhere there is no evidence to suggest emulation of this attempt to provide cover by the construction of new forts. It is interesting to note the forts which continued in occupation: Bowes on the Stainmore Road, Ribchester on the western route, and Maryport, Ravenglass and possibly Lancaster on the coast. In view of the continuing occupation of Ribchester at an

[42] J. P. Gillam, op. cit. (note 39), 53–4; R. Birley, *Vindolanda* (London, 1977), 108–9.

[43] For a report on the latest work on Carlisle, indicating military occupation continuing through the second century with modifications to the buildings, see M. R. McCarthy, in P. R. Wilson, R. F. J. Jones and D. M. Evans (eds), op. cit. (note 41), 65–70.

[44] D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 43–51.

[45] B. R. Hartley, op. cit. (note 6, *Northern Hist.*), fig. 1; J. L. Davies, op. cit. (note 2), 264–70.

[46] B. R. Hartley, op. cit. (note 6, *Northern Hist.*), 17.

[47] D. J. Breeze in R. Miket and C. Burgess (eds.), *Between and Beyond the Walls, Essays on the Prehistory and History of North Britain in Honour of George Jobey* (Edinburgh, 1984), 264–6.

[48] B. R. Hartley, *Britannia* iii (1974), 25; J. L. Davies, op. cit. (note 2), 269–71.

[49] The Chesters diploma of 146 may indicate the presence of a unit in the fort at that time, recalling the possibility of this fort having a role related to the Stanegate before Hadrian's Wall was built: cf. E. Birley, op. cit. (note 33), 173.

[50] B. Dobson, *Trans. Architect. Archaeol. Soc. Durham Northumberland* ii (1970), 34; V. A. Maxfield and A. H. Reed, *Arch. Ael.*[5] iii (1975), 56 and 64. Hartley op. cit. (note 6, *Northern Hist.*), 8 and 16, suggests that Binchester was evacuated under Hadrian.

150

High Rochester
Risingham
Birrens
Bewcastle
Netherby
Chesters
Castlesteads
Birdoswald
Greatchesters
Housesteads
Carrawburgh
Halton Chesters
Rudchester
Benwell
Wallsend
Bowness-on-Solway
Burgh
Stanwix
Carvoran Chesterholm Corbridge
South Shields
Carlisle
Ebchester
Beckfoot
Old Carlisle
Whitley Castle
Lanchester
Caermote
Old Penrith
Maryport
Papcastle
Brougham
Binchester
Moresby
Brough under Stainmore Bowes
Ambleside
Greta Bridge
Low Borrow Bridge
Hardknott
Ravenglass
Watercrook
Burrow-in-Lonsdale
Lancaster
York
Ribchester
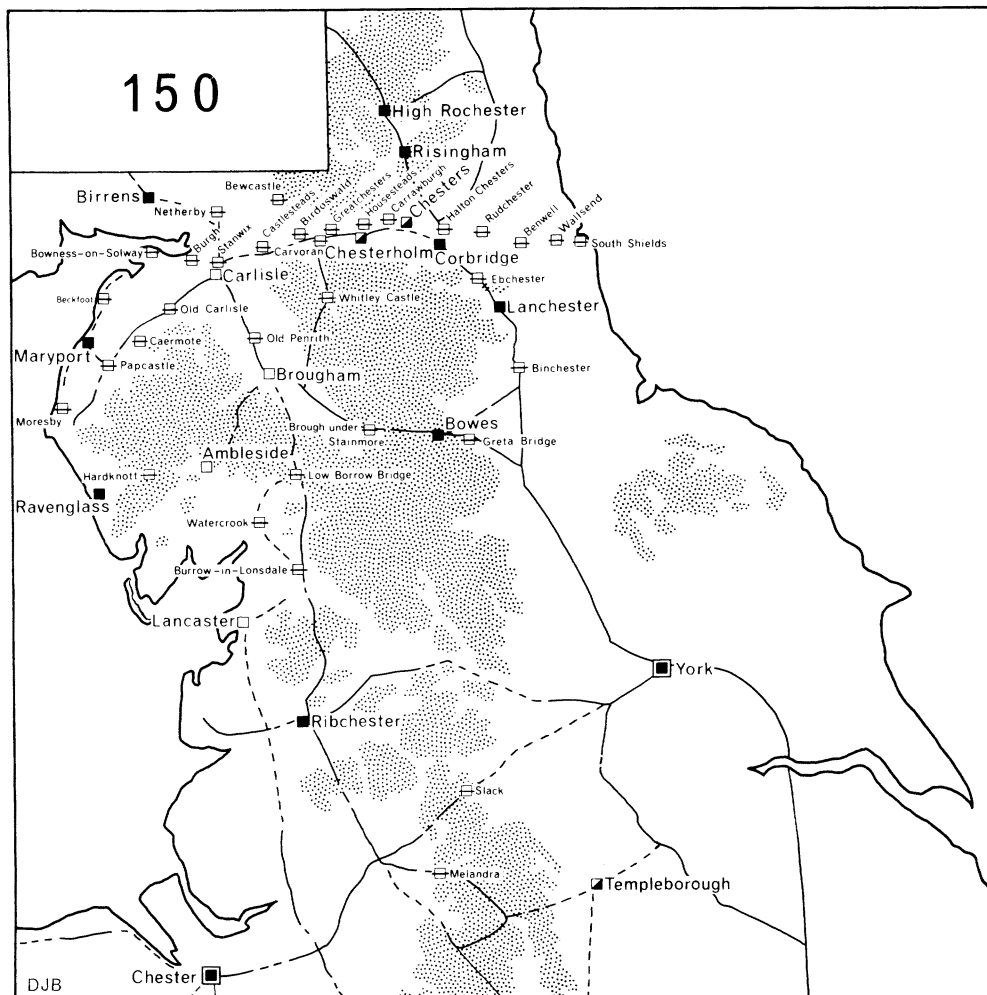Slack
Melandra
Templeborough
DJB
Chester

FIG. 6. Military dispositions in northern England in 150.

important road junction, a fort at Brougham may be postulated. Continuing occupation has also been claimed for Ambleside and Templeborough.[51]

The abandonment of Antonine Scotland in the 160s brought back many regiments south of Hadrian's Wall, not as many as the 31 or so units which moved into Scotland, as more outpost forts in advance of Hadrian's Wall were held now than previously.[52] These units were spread as far south as Little Chester in Derbyshire and some sites in Wales may also have been re-

[51] Ambleside: the recently discovered Antonine samian is from the civil settlement and thus may not be relevant to the occupation of the fort: Mary E. Burkett, *Trans. Cumb. West. Ant. Arch. Soc.* lxv (1965), 93–7; *Trans. Cumb. West. Ant. Arch. Soc.* lxxvii (1977), 179–80. This is implicitly accepted by Hartley, op. cit. (note 48). Templeborough: T. May, *The Roman Forts of Templeborough near Rotherham* (Rotherham, 1922), 11.

[52] The authors have already expressed their reservations about the authenticity of the 'Brigantian Revolt': D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 105–8. However, whether this 'event' happened or not, it has no relevance for these maps as whatever changes occurred in the 150s were subsumed in the greater troop movements of the 160s.

occupied at this time.[53] Brough-on-Noe was occupied now for the first time in 40 years and there were other forts in this category: Manchester, Ilkley, Elslack and Bainbridge.[54] In addition, one new fort was built at Chester-le-Street, and probably another at Newcastle upon Tyne.[55] In some cases the rebuilding was extensive, the work at Manchester, for example, apparently involving the construction of a completely new fort.[56] It has been pointed out that the re-occupation of all these sites reflects not so much a troubled situation in the Pennines, but the need to place perhaps as many as 28 units somewhere.[57] Wherever possible the units
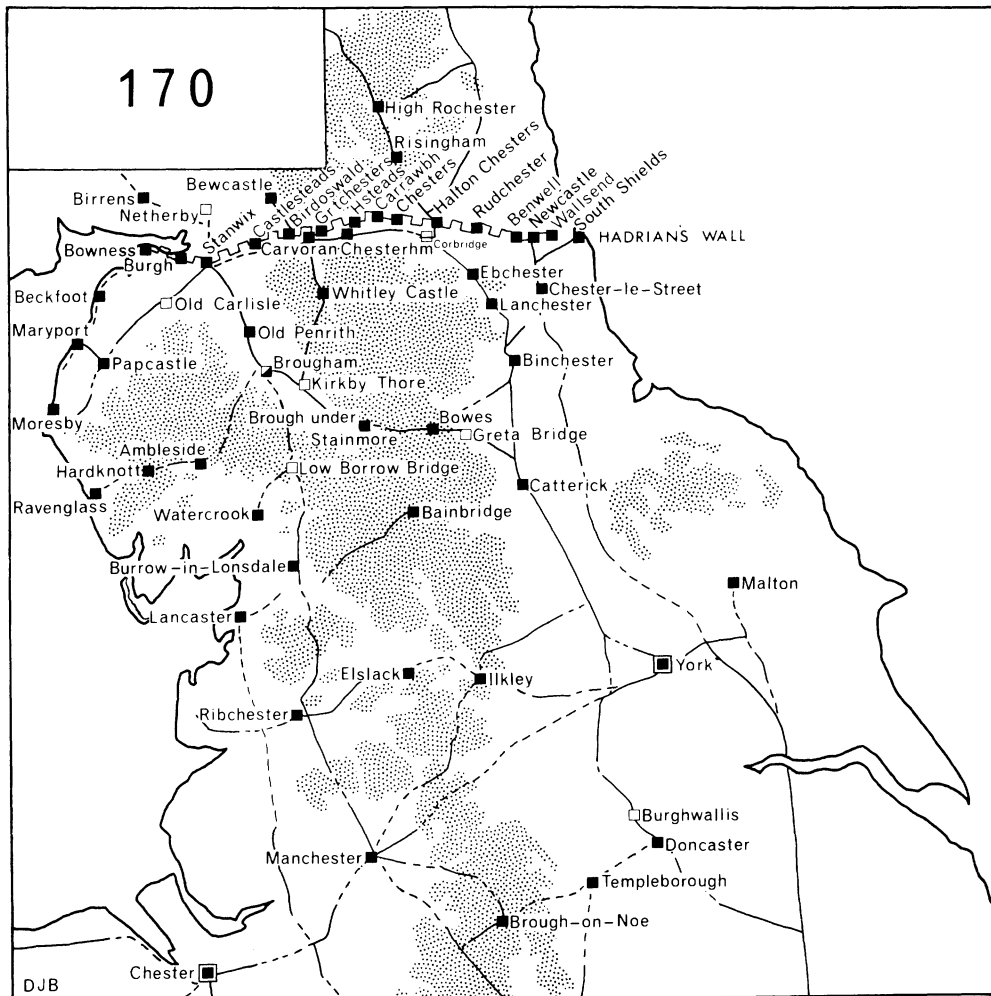

FIG. 7. Military dispositions in northern England in 170.

[53] Little Chester (off the bottom of this map): *Britannia* iv (1973), 285; xii (1981), 335. Wales: J. L. Davies, op. cit. (note 2), 269.

[54] J. P. Gillam, *Trans. Architect. Archaeol. Soc. Durham Northumberland*, pt. 4 (1953), 262–3.

[55] J. P. Gillam and J. Tait, *Arch. Ael.*[4] xlvi (1968), 85. C. M. Daniels and Barbara Harbottle, *Arch. Ael.*[5] viii (1980), 65.

[56] S. Bryant, *Roman Manchester* (Manchester, 1982), 15.

[57] B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 50), 34.

seem to have been placed close to Hadrian's Wall, and it is interesting to note that Lanchester, formerly built to replace Ebchester and Binchester, continued in occupation.[58] It has been suggested that the forts in the southern Pennines may have been maintained to police the mining areas; this explanation also may account for the proposed continuing occupation of Templeborough in the early Antonine period.[59]

The problems of the army in finding new homes for all these units may have been exacerbated by the fact that not all the forts abandoned 20 or 40 years before will still have been available. Thus Aldborough will presumably have been given over to civil use by now. Accordingly more forts were occupied in the southern Pennines, presumably beyond the territory of the *civitas Brigantium*, than in the Hadrianic period. Neither Corbridge nor Carlisle were re-occupied as normal forts, though military activity of a different nature seems to have continued at both sites.[60]

It is perhaps a moot point how far all these units were required for the defence of the northern frontier and how much military inertia governed their continuing presence in the island. Certainly the northern frontier remained unstable into the early third century. In or soon after 175 a force of 5,500 Sarmatians, tribute from beyond the Danube frontier, was sent to Britain.[61] It is not known whether these troops were genuinely all required in Britain, or were merely sent to a conveniently isolated part of the empire. Nor is it known where they were stationed; the *ala Sarmatarum* at Ribchester may have been formed from this force, but it may have come to the island at a different time.

Inscriptions carry the occupation of many sites into the third century. However, during the 50 years from 170 to 220 there were some changes. Hardknott on the road between Ambleside and Ravenglass was abandoned, probably in the late second century.[62] This fort had perhaps only been occupied in the hope of providing a convenient staging-post and could now be seen as an additional, unnecessary encumbrance. Nearby Watercrook, and also Templeborough, may have been abandoned in the early third century.[63]

The major change in the disposition of troops in northern England occurred in the late third century. Professor J. C. Mann, arguing from the presence of new style army units in many of the Pennine forts in the *Notitia Dignitatum* list, suggested that these replaced garrisons either withdrawn or disbanded in the more peaceful years of the late third century: some units were certainly transferred to the Saxon Shore forts.[64] FIG. 9 reflects this suggestion, with the abandoned forts those containing new style units in the *Notitia*. It is interesting to see that the forts retained were those on the two main roads to the north; Ilkley on the road west from York; several forts on the Cumbrian coast; and Brough-on-Noe.

The contraction in the size of the provincial army seems to have extended to Hadrian's Wall, where it is possible that several forts had their garrisons reduced in strength in the late third and early fourth centuries. There are a number of categories here. Some forts show signs archaeologically of abandonment, Halton Chesters and Rudchester, though the former still has its third-century garrison in the *Notitia* list, the latter's third-century garrison being unknown.[65] South Shields also seems to have been abandoned, but there was a new unit there

[58] ibid.

[59] Mining: G. Simpson, *Britons and the Roman Army* (Farnborough, 1964), 139. Templeborough: T. May, op. cit. (note 51), 11.

[60] M. R. McCarthy, op. cit. (note 43), 68; E. Birley and I. A. Richmond, *Arch. Ael.*[4] xv (1938), 260–4.

[61] Dio 71, 16.

[62] T. W. Potter, op. cit. (note 5), 363.

[63] Watercrook: loc. cit. 179; Templeborough: T. May, op. cit. (note 51), 11.

[64] J. C. Mann, *Glasgow Arch. Journ.* iii (1974), 38. M. Hassall in D. E. Johnston (ed.), *The Saxon Shore* (London, 1977), 8–9.

[65] J. P. Gillam, *Arch. Ael.*[5] ii (1974), 12–5; D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 243 for the garrison.
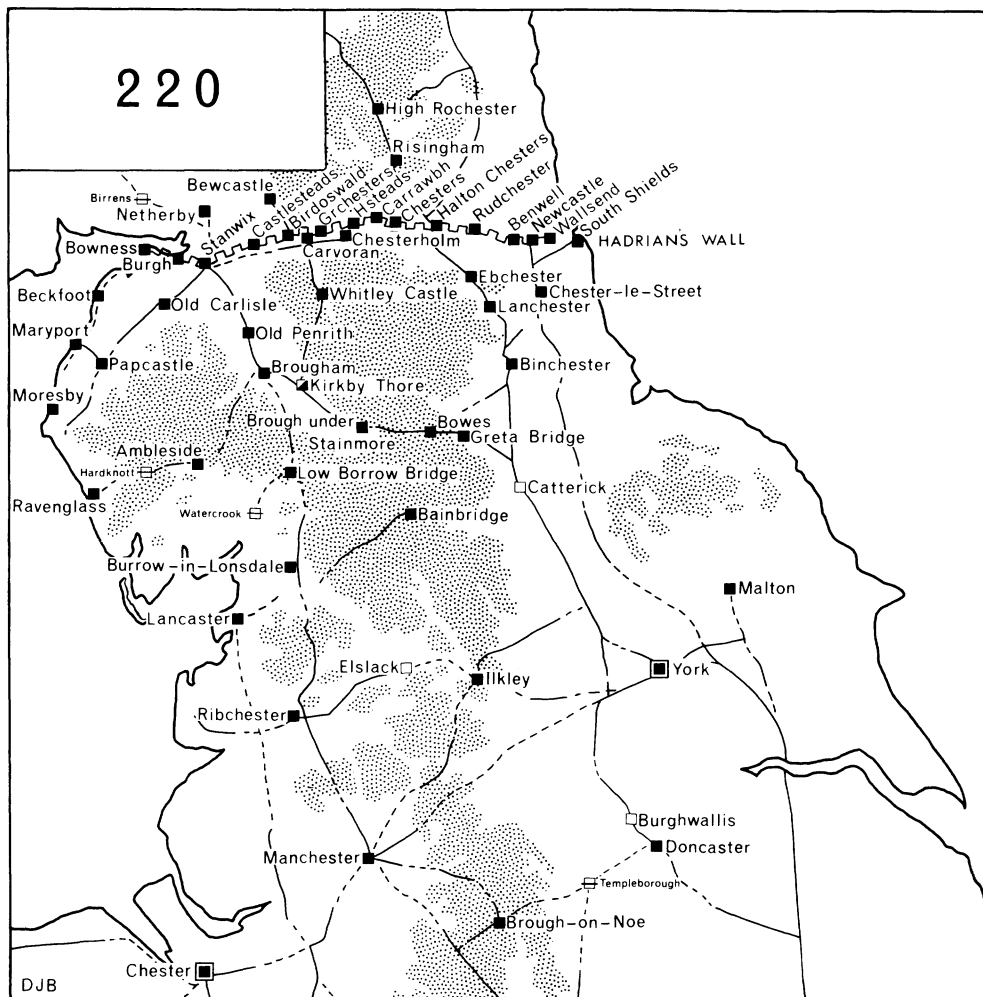
FIG. 8. Military dispositions in northern England in 220.

in the *Notitia*.[66] It has been suggested that occupation lapsed over part of the interior of Bowness-on-Solway in the third century.[67] Certain buildings in Birdoswald are attested epigraphically as having fallen into decay in the third century, but apparently being restored in the early fourth, with the fort's third-century garrison still present in the *Notitia* list.[68] One interpretation of the 'chalet' accommodation, which replaced the normal 'L-shaped' barrack-blocks at several forts in and around Hadrian's Wall in the late third or early fourth century, is that army units had been reduced in size, each chalet now being occupied by one soldier and his family in contrast to the earlier barrack-room which had probably been occupied by eight

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[66] J. N. Dore and J. P. Gillam, *The Roman Fort at South Shields* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1979), 68–70.

[67] T. W. Potter, op. cit. (note 5), 363.

[68] *RIB* 1912. J. J. Wilkes in M. G. Jarrett and B. Dobson (eds.), op. cit. (note 5), 215; D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 245 for the garrison.

soldiers.[69] Whatever the correctness of this interpretation, Duncan Jones has recently argued that the fourth-century units were markedly smaller than their first- and second-century predecessors.[70] It may be that all the evidence from the Wall represents a single process of dwindling numbers in the third century and re-organization with a smaller basic unit size in the fourth, supporting Duncan Jones' contention.
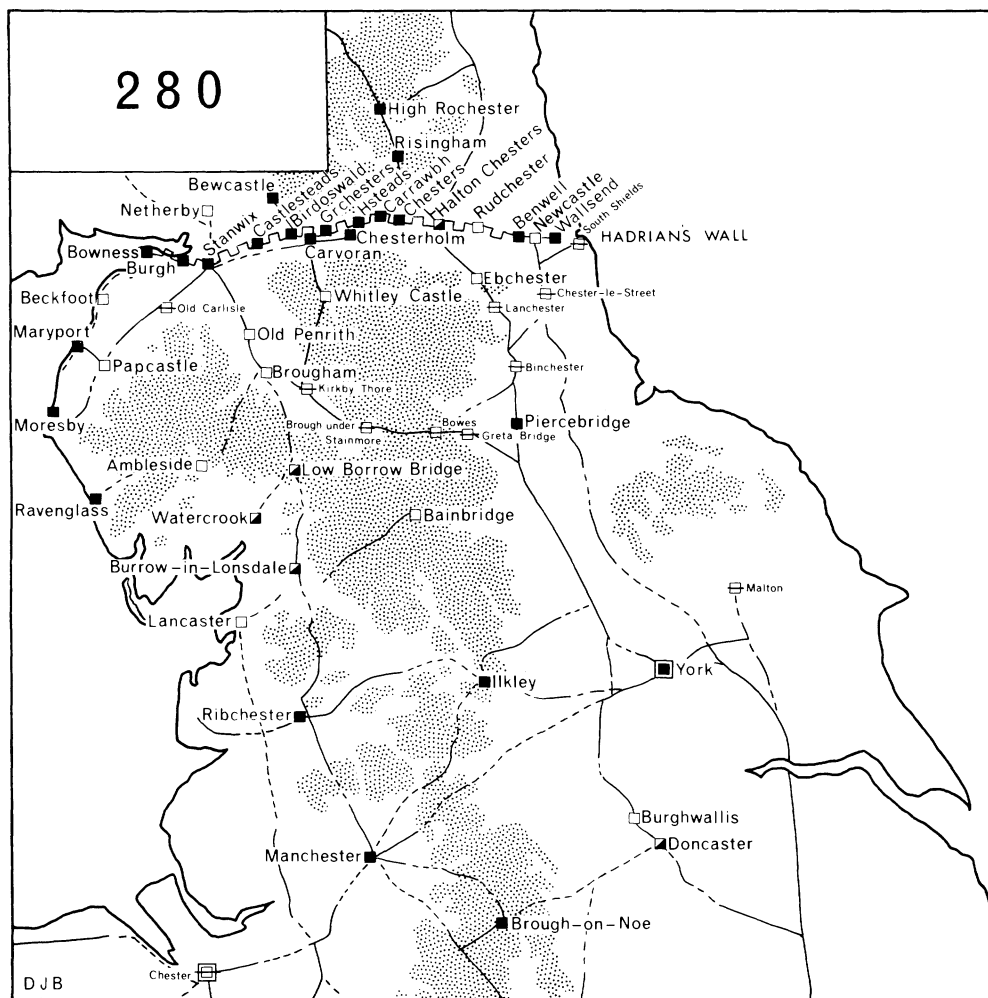
FIG. 9. Military dispositions in northern England in 280.

It has been suggested that the late third century, when many forts were abandoned in northern England, would have been the most appropriate time for the establishment of the civitas Carvetiorum in the Eden valley.[71]

[69] J. J. Wilkes, ibid. 130; C. M. Daniels in W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie (eds.), op. cit. (note 2), 173-93.
[70] R. P. Duncan Jones, Chiron viii (1978), 541-60. See also: A. R. Birley in A. King and M. Henig (eds.), op. cit. (note 6), 39-44; D. J. Breeze in R. Miket and C. Burgess (eds.), op. cit. (note 47), 264-8.
[71] J. C. Mann in P. J. Casey, The End of Roman Britain, BAR 71 (Oxford, 1979), 146.

We have not attempted to produce a map for the 90 years from 280 to 370. This reflects uncertainty about the military position during these years, and, in particular, the date when the new style units were sent to their new stations in northern England.
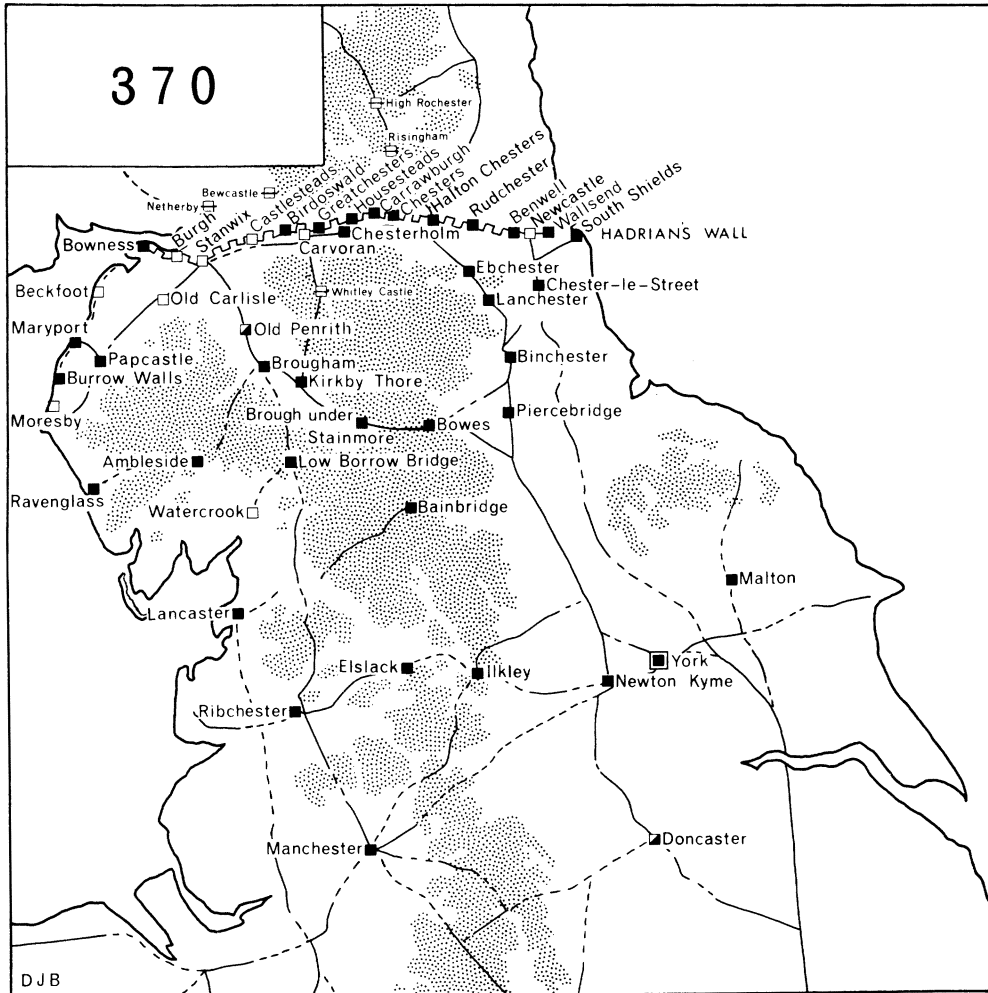

FIG. 10. Military dispositions in northern England in 370.

FIG. 10 illustrates the pattern immediately after the barbarian conspiracy of 367. Forts marked as filled squares have produced material, in nearly every case pottery, dating to the last third of the fourth century.

The date of the abandonment of the outpost forts has long been linked to the events of 342/3 and the 360s. However, it has recently been proposed that their abandonment occurred earlier than hitherto supposed, possibly at the time of Constantine I's visit to Britain in 314.[72] On the other hand, later in the fourth century there was a strengthening of the army in northern England, as reflected in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, in response to the growing threat to the

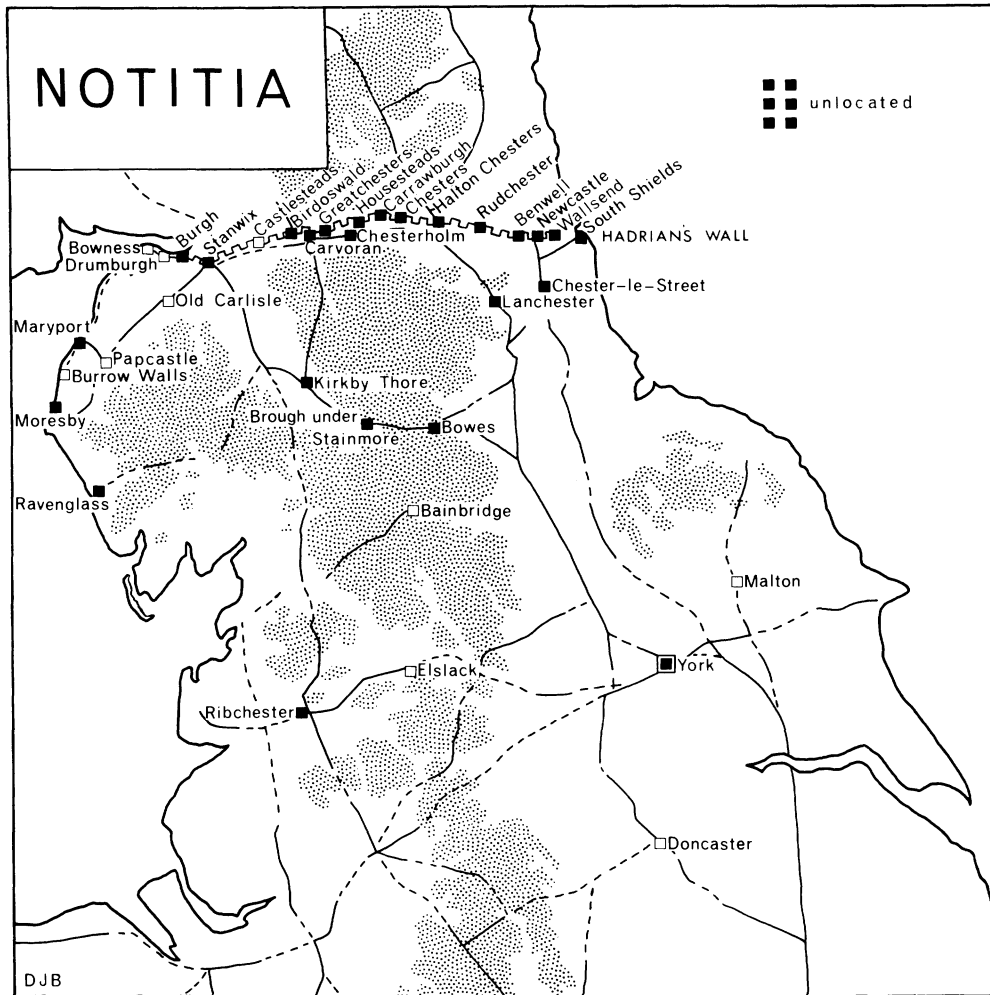[72] P. J. Casey and M. Savage, *Arch. Ael*[5] viii (1980), 79–80.

FIG. 11. Military dispositions in northern England according to the *Notitia Dignitatum.*

diocese.[73] That document contains 37 units in north Britain, including the legion at York, 38 if the proposed emendation of the Wall list is accepted.[74] Here a discrepancy arises between the archaeological and the documentary evidence. There is archaeological evidence for fourth-century occupation at certain forts not apparently listed in the *Notitia*. It might be that this is occupation of a civil rather than a military nature, or that some forts were abandoned before the *Notitia Dignitatum* was drawn up, or that some forts were omitted from the *Notitia* list by chance or mistake. Again, the basic differences between the archaeological and the documentary sources are clear. The *Notitia Dignitatum* reflects a situation at a particular point in time; archaeological evidence reflects the presence of pottery of the period, not that the fort was occupied at a particular date. For this reason the evidence adduced from the *Notitia* is presented on a separate map (FIG. 11).

[73] *Notitia Dignitatum, Occ.,* 40.
[74] D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 274–5; A. L. F. Rivet and Colin Smith, op. cit. (note 7), 220–1.

The new threats to Rome are clearly reflected in the new frontier dispositions. Some rebuilding was undertaken in the forts of Hadrian's Wall; the defences of the west coast were strengthened; a series of watch-towers was erected down the Yorkshire coast.[75] As yet, however, there is no clear evidence how these towers related to the fort network. The units behind these front lines presumably acted as support for the frontier regiments, in the same way as their predecessors over 300 years before. It seems likely that these changes took place over a period of years, not as the result of a single decision.

FIG. 11 portrays only information recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[76] In that way it differs from earlier maps in that no attempt has been made to indicate sites which might have been abandoned between 370 and 400. One major problem with this army list is that it is still not possible to identify many of the forts recorded as lying in the command of the Duke of the Britains. Thus six forts ought to be added to the map, while both Malton and Old Carlisle are included as doubtful as it is not known which is the *Derventio* of the *Notitia*; indeed the site may be Little Chester, also named *Derventio*, though recent excavations have suggested that the fort was abandoned before the end of the fourth century.[77] However, there are nine more forts, plus one possible site, on FIG. 10 than FIG. 11, possibly indicating that some sites were abandoned in the late fourth century.

CONCLUSIONS

The network of forts in northern England was clearly based on the two main roads north. These roads provided speedy communication between the units stationed there and the main area of activity, the northern frontier. This is emphasized by FIG. 7. After the abandonment of Scotland in the 160s many regiments had to be found new homes and, as there was insufficient space on Hadrian's Wall, units were distributed along the lines of communication.

Certain cross-routes were also regarded as most important. FIG. 6 demonstrates this. Ribchester remains in occupation, presumably because of its position at a road junction. Bowes, at the east end of Stainmore, is also retained and continuing occupation at Brougham might be expected. The late third-century pattern is slightly different, with forts retained close behind the frontier east of the Pennines but abandoned in comparable positions to the west, possibly a result of the establishment of the *civitas Carvetiorum*.

A further factor in the positioning of forts is the proximity of good agricultural land, necessary for the easy supply of the unit. Dr Higham has drawn attention to the close relationship between many forts and such land.[78] This factor would help account for the re-establishment of forts well south of Hadrian's Wall in the second half of the second century.

The spread of forts across the face of northern England reflects the geography of the area and the distribution of good agricultural land. The shape of Britain meant that the large military force assembled for conquest and retained for the security of the frontier could not all be deployed along its 73-mile length.[79] The pattern of forts in northern England reflects this,

[75] D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, op. cit. (note 33), 221–7; S. Johnson, *The Roman Forts of the Saxon Shore* (London, 1976), 133–6, 149. P. J. Casey (ed.), *The End of Roman Britain*, BAR 71 (Oxford, 1979), 75–6, suggests that 'the Yorkshire coast signal stations could have been built by Maximus rather than Count Theodosius.'

[76] We accept a date of about 400 for the *Notitia Dignitatum*: J. C. Mann in R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew (eds.), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, BAR Suppl. Ser. 15 (Oxford, 1976), 8; A. L. F. Rivet and Colin Smith, op. cit. (note 7), 216–25.

[77] *Britannia* xii (1981), 335.

[78] N. J. Higham in P. Clack and S. Haselgrove (eds.), *Rural Settlement in the Roman North* (Durham, 1982), 108.

[79] Professor Mann sees the defence of the province falling into a series of layers – a zone of surveillance, the outpost forts, the Wall, the units in the hinterland forts and finally the legion at York: J. C. Mann in P. J. Casey (ed.), op. cit. (note 75), 145–6.

and is no 'defence in depth',[80] still less a response to the intransigence of the local inhabitants.[81] They give no hint at trouble after their conquest by Cerealis, and would appear to have succumbed to the 'seductive vices' of Rome.[82]

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[80] *Pace* G. D. B. Jones, 'Concept and Development in Roman Frontiers', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 61, 1 (Autumn 1978), 138–42, following E. N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore and London 1976), 130–90.
[81] *Pace* A. L. F. Rivet in A. L. F. Rivet (ed.), *The Roman Villa in Britain* (London, 1969), 192.
[82] H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany* (Harmondsworth, 1948), 67.