

ART. VIII. – *The Roman garrisons of Maryport.*

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IN 1976, when the Society published a monograph on the Roman fort at Maryport it seemed that the last word had been said on its garrison until new evidence became available (Jarrett 1976). However within a year Dr R. W. Davies had published his own account of the subject which was clearly in press before the 1976 report became available to him (Davies 1977). His conclusions, though similar, differed in some ways from those of Jarrett. Since the 1976 report was written the relevant section of the *Notitia Dignitatum* has been reinterpreted (Hassall 1976) and we have had a comprehensive study of the place-names of Roman Britain which makes a suggestion which must be considered, even if it is eventually rejected (Rivet and Smith 1979). It therefore seems appropriate to reconsider the evidence and current ideas about it, and to bring these different (and sometimes conflicting) interpretations under scrutiny.

Archaeology has little to contribute directly. Excavation has been on too small a scale to provide evidence of the number or type of barracks. The excavations of 1976 indicate that the cliff-top fort was built in the early years of Hadrian (emperor 117 to 138) and remained in occupation until c. 400 or later (Jarrett 1976). Specifically it appears to be earlier than or contemporary with the milefortlets and towers of the Hadrianic frontier south of Moricambe Bay, for these structures appear to have been located by measurement from the north-west and south-west angles of the fort. The epigraphic evidence from Maryport suggests that it was built c. 122 or 123, and the archaeological evidence from the coastal structures is compatible with such a foundation date.

There is little dispute about the earliest garrisons of Maryport, and the evidence may therefore be summarised. The fort was built by and for *cohors I Hispanorum milliaria equitata*, i.e. a mixed infantry and cavalry unit with a notional strength of 1000 (RIB 855, cf. 851). The size of the fort (2.64 ha) is appropriate for such a unit. The first commanding officer at Maryport was probably M. Maenius Agrippa. He is recorded at Maryport on four altars dedicated to Jupiter Best and Greatest (RIB 823 to 826). His career is recorded on an inscription from Camerinum in Italy, which tells us that he was a friend of Hadrian and that the emperor chose him for an *expeditio Britannica* and made him tribune of *cohors I Hispanorum* (CIL xi 5632 = ILS 2735). The *expeditio* is probably that of 122 when Hadrian himself came to Britain and determined the plans for his new frontier. If we are correct in thinking that these and similar altars commemorate the renewal every January of oaths of loyalty, Agrippa will have been at Maryport in the January of each year from 123 to 126 or, less probably, 124 to 127. His likely successor, C. Caballius Priscus, has also left us four altars to Jupiter, representing the years 127 to 130 (RIB 817 to 820).

Both these officers were tribunes, the rank appropriate to the command of a *cohors milliaria*. The remaining known commanders were prefects; from this lower rank were drawn the commanders of standard-size cohorts with a paper strength of 500. The explanation is presumably that part of *I Hispanorum* was detached for service elsewhere, leaving the rump at Maryport as the equivalent of a quingenary cohort with a commander

of appropriate rank. There is plentiful evidence for this practice (Birley 1966; Davies 1967; 1977), though the detachment of *I Hispanorum* is not specifically recorded.

Of the known prefects L. Cammius Maximus is recorded on three altars to Jupiter (*RIB* 827 to 829); Helstrius Novellus on one (*RIB* 822) plus another to Vulcan which was buried with the Jupiter dedications (*RIB* 846); L. Antistius Lupus Verianus and M. Censorius Cornelianus on one each (*RIB* 816 and 814). *RIB* 814 is dedicated to *Iovi Aug(usto)* rather than *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*: we take this to be a variant of no significance. *RIB* 815 seems part of the same series: it was set up by the cohort but does not name a commander. *RIB* 836 is an altar which has lost most of its text. The ornament indicates clearly that it is attributable to *I Hispanorum*, and the find-spot suggests most strongly that it was an official dedication, probably to [*I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)*] *et [num(ini) Aug(usti)]* The eight altars to Jupiter listed in this paragraph would take the series down to January 138, and there is no need, *pace* Davies, to postulate three year commands for Novellus and Verianus. To do that would be to create new problems. It would mean either that the fort was built before 122, which is unlikely since it clearly formed an integral part of Hadrian's new frontier and was therefore probably not built before his visit to Britain, or that *cohors I Hispanorum* remained at Maryport later than 138. This is also improbable. The unit received the battle-honour *Aelia* from either Hadrian or Antoninus Pius. It is not recorded on any of the inscriptions from Maryport, so was presumably won after it left the fort: the most likely opportunity for distinction would be during the early years of the reign of Pius, when the army advanced into Scotland and built a new frontier between Forth and Clyde; preparations for the campaign were in progress as early as 139 (*RIB* 1147, Corbridge). Moreover under Antoninus Pius (though not necessarily throughout the reign) we find a new garrison, *cohors I Delmatarum*, at Maryport. One of its dedications there (*RIB* 832) fails to give the emperor the title *pater patriae* which he accepted in 139. Unless the omission is accidental *I Delmatarum* must have reached Maryport in 138 or early in 139 (Davies 1976, 9). We do not know how long it remained. We have only one, or at most two, of its annual dedications to Jupiter Best and Greatest, though the series need not be complete (*RIB* 831; 833 may not be official). We have therefore no clear evidence for its departure, though it was at Chesters at some date before c. 184 (*JRS* 47, 1957, 229, no. 4); it was not the Hadrianic garrison of that fort, which is now known to have been *ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata (Britannia, x (1979), 346, no. 7)*.

The next known garrison is *cohors I Baetasiorum civium romanorum*. It is recorded on five altars, one to Jupiter, two to Mars Militaris and two to Victoria Augusta (*RIB* 830, 837-8, 842-3), which between them mention two prefects. None of the altars is dated, nor is the career inscription of T. Attius Tutor, one of the recorded prefects (*CIL* iii 5331 = *ILS* 2734). The unit was stationed at Bar Hill on the Antonine Wall, but whether in the first or second period of occupation remains uncertain despite much learned discussion; for a balanced summary of this see Keppie 1975. It is also recorded at Old Kilpatrick, where it is unlikely to have been the Antonine I garrison; it may have been there during the campaigns of Severus (208-211). From a date in the third century, perhaps c. 225, it was at Reculver in Kent. It might have been at Maryport at any date from the departure of *I Delmatarum* to the 220s. In favour of a relatively early date within this period is the fact that four of its surviving altars were buried with others of *I Hispanorum* and *I Delmatarum* in an area north-east of the fort which is thought to

have been close to the second-century parade ground; at an unknown date a new parade ground was created outside the south gate.

This may explain why we lack such good evidence for the later garrisons of Maryport, for no pits were found when the area was developed in the 1920s. Three altars may relate to the garrison in the late second or third centuries. Of these the most useful is *RIB* 821, known only from a seventeenth-century copy. It is a dedication to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus by a *cohors quingenaria equitata*. Of the units recorded at Maryport only *cohors I Hispanorum* is known to have been *equitata*, and the unit's name is consequently restored in *RIB*. But the drawing of this altar contains nothing to suggest the elaborate and distinctive decoration favoured by that unit. Moreover the abbreviation of *cui praeest* to its initial letters is a clear indication of third-century date. Of 60 British inscriptions which include the phrase only 13 have the abbreviation *c.p.*; two others have *c. praeest*. At least 11 of the *c.p.* inscriptions and both those with *c. praeest* are of the third century (Stephens and Jarrett 1985). Of the remaining two the lettering on *RIB* 1980 (Castlesteads) suggests a third-century date. We are left with *RIB* 821, and there can be no doubt that it also is of the third century. Davies (1977, 10; 1981, 202) has indeed expressed doubt, on the grounds that many third-century inscriptions have *cui praeest* in full; he has missed the point, which is that no earlier inscriptions have the abbreviation. We have therefore clear evidence of a *cohors quingenaria equitata* at Maryport in the third century.

RIB 812 is a large and elaborate personal dedication to the Genius of the place, to Fortune the home-bringer, to Eternal Rome and to Good Fate. It was found in the north-west corner of the fort, probably in the commandant's house; there is no reason to suppose, with Davies, that it had been moved there after its original dedication. It was set up by C. Cornelius Peregrinus, a local councillor at Saldæ in Mauretania Caesariensis (modern Bougie, Algeria) and tribune of the cohort; amongst all this information Peregrinus neglects to tell us the name of his cohort. On the reverse of the altar we have the phrase '*Volanti vivas*' – 'May you live long, Volantius'. A *signum* (personal name) like this is unlikely to appear before the late second century, and would be much more characteristic of the third and fourth centuries. The altar is elaborately decorated, leading Dr Joyce Kewley to suggest that 'the elaboration and general style would point to a date in the second century' (Davies 1977, 14 n. 39). But elaborately decorated altars are not rare in the third century (Kewley 1973; cf. *RIB* 1074, 1224, 1423-4, 1982 etc.); it is to that period, or the very late second century, that *RIB* 812 is to be assigned. The title *tribunus* has been used as evidence that Peregrinus was commanding a *cohors milliaria* at Maryport (Jarrett 1976, 25). Only seven such units are known in the army of Britain, and in the third century all were stationed on Hadrian's Wall or in its outposts; none seems available for Maryport, and given their rarity we are not justified in postulating another unless we must. Davies points out (1977, 16 n. 61) that by c. 400, when the *Notitia Dignitatum* was compiled, all cohorts were commanded by tribunes, regardless of their notional size. The third century was a period of transition when, for instance, we meet a man who was *militans tribunus in praefecto* (*RIB* 1791, cf. Stephens 1984); we also have several tribunes recorded for whom no milliary cohort seems possible (e.g. *RIB* 937; 2057-8; 2042?). If we can accept that these represent a transitional stage when some men in prefect-commands had received advancement to the tribunate, we can see that Peregrinus may have been commanding the *cohors quingenaria equitata* of *RIB* 821 rather than an unknown milliary cohort.

The third altar to be considered is largely illegible (RIB 834). It is another dedication to Jupiter Best and Greatest by a prefect of a cohort; in this case it seems to have been set up *p[ro] salute*, i.e. for the welfare of someone, doubtless the reigning emperor(s). Davies (1977, 11) adduces some evidence for this as a third-century practice, and cites Kewley (1973) for the third century custom of carving I.O.M. on the capital of the altar rather than its shaft. RIB 834 is the only example of this at Maryport. There is no reason to doubt this dating; the dedication by a prefect is further evidence that the third-century garrison was a *cohors quingenaria*. Unfortunately no inscription from Maryport gives any indication of the name of this cohort. A tombstone found in 1966 was originally thought to include a reference to *cohors III Nerviorum* though this was soon shown to be a misreading of a text which mentions no unit at all (JRS 57, 1967, 204 no. 14; revised reading, JRS 58, 1968, 214).

This brings us to the problem of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in relation to sites in Cumbria. The *Notitia* is a list of civil and military posts throughout the Roman Empire. It was compiled at the very end of the fourth century, and while modifications were made to it down to the 420s none of them concerns us. The relevant section is chapter 40 of the western section (ND Oc. 40), which lists the units under the command of the *dux Britanniæ*; this ends with a sub-section *item per lineam valli*, which actually deals with a number of units and sites beyond the west end of Hadrian's Wall. Maryport, whose name was clearly *Alauna*, is not certainly mentioned in ND. Oc. 40. From Wallsend at the east end of the Wall to 47: *Aballaba* = Burgh-by-Sands all serious problems of the wall sub-section seem to be solved (Hassall 1976). Beyond this nothing is clear. Rivet and Smith do their best with 48: *Congavata*, equating it (as do most commentators) with Drumburgh. We have no corroborative evidence for this equation and know virtually nothing about Drumburgh. There is no evidence that the *Notitia* list gets lost at 49 rather than 48; it therefore seems sensible to leave *Congavata* unidentified until such time as we have good reason for locating it.

After this the list reads as follows:

- 49: tribunus cohortis primæ Hispanorum, Axeloduno
- 50: tribunus cohortis secundæ Thracum, Gabrosenti
- 51: tribunus cohortis primæ Aeliae classicae, Tunnocelo
- 52: tribunus cohortis primæ Morinorum, Glannibanta
- 53: tribunus tertiæ Nerv[i]orum, Alione
- 54: cuneus [S]armatarum, Bremetenraco
- 55: praefectus alae primæ Herculeae, Olenaco
- 56: tribunus cohortis sextæ Nerviorum, Virosido

Of these eight forts only 52 (Ravenglass) and 55 (Ribchester) can be identified with confidence, though most scholars would accept, in desperation, that 56: *Virosidum* = Brough-by-Bainbridge where VI *Nerviorum* was in garrison in the third century. The *Notitia* frequently records a garrison attested in the third century, which leads Rivet and Smith to the conclusion that 50: *Gabrosentum* = Moorsby; II *Thracum* is attested at that site on inscriptions which may well be of the third century.

Eric Birley (1961, 267) and Davies (1977, 10-11) prefer to see the trio 50 to 52 as a sequence along the coast; 50 = Burrow Walls, 51 = Moorsby, 52 = Ravenglass. (This ignores the possibility or likelihood that another coastal fort has been lost between

Moresby and Ravenglass: Rivet and Smith believe this, and identify it with 51: *Tunnoce-lum*.) Davies takes this one stage further, and after 48: *Congavata* = Drumburgh suggests 50: *Axelodunum* = Maryport, giving *cohors I Hispanorum* as the garrison in the third and fourth centuries. This is not the unit which built Maryport under Hadrian, which by now included the battle-honour *Aelia* in its title. There was another *cohors I Hispanorum* in Britain, at least in the second century (Birley 1953, 19).

The simplicity of this argument is attractive, but it errs in being too simple. On the evidence of the rest of the Wall sub-section 50: *Gabrosentum* is almost certainly Moresby. The place-name *Axelodunum* is unlikely, and is almost certainly a copyist's error (Rivet and Smith, 221). There is merit in the suggestion of Rivet and Smith that we should replace *Axeloduno* by *Mais* = Bowness-on-Solway; at least we should have the Notitia list complete for the line of the Wall, even if we are in considerable doubt about the route from Bowness to Bainbridge.

Most damaging of all for Davies's argument is that, as he admits, the Ravenna Cosmography shows that the Roman name of Maryport was *Alauna*. He is compelled to postulate two names for Maryport, and cites several places for which two names are known. He does not note that in those cases one name is of Celtic derivation and the other an imposed Latin name, usually associated with a unit in garrison. For Maryport he is left with two Celtic names, if we are prepared to accept that the philologists may be wrong in condemning *Axelodunum* as a copyist's error.

Alauna itself poses problems. The 'au' diphthong was doubtless pronounced as a long 'o', as in *cone*. The name recurs in the Antonine Itinerary as *Alone*, probably Watercrock and certainly on a road from Ravenglass to Whitchurch. ND Oc. 40, 53 gives *tribunus cohortis tertiae Nerviorum*, *Alione*, and most writers have equated this with the *Alone* of the Itinerary. Rivet and Smith suggest, without supporting argument, that *Alione* = Maryport. They are probably wrong, for *cohors III Nerviorum* was not *equitata* and until we have contrary evidence we should expect a *cohors equitata* at Maryport. Moreover if there is any geographical logic in the last part of ND Oc. 40 – a point which has yet to be established – *Alione* ought to lie much further south.

In considering late military belt-fittings from Maryport, David Brown suggested that some were of continental origin and were 'likely to indicate the presence of new detachments of troops' (Jarrett 1976, 81-2). We know too little for certainty; if we accept Brown's suggestion presumably a new-style unit occupied Maryport in the late fourth century. While this is not impossible it seems unlikely. In the north of Britain such units do not seem to occur as far west as the coast or along the Wall; they are concentrated in the north-east and on the Stainmore road across the Pennines. In any case it is difficult to see that the point can be established without new documentary or epigraphic evidence, neither of which is to be expected.

We may summarise the evidence for the garrison of Maryport in tabular form:

Period	Unit
122-138/9	<i>cohors I Hispanorum milliaria equitata</i>
138/9-?	<i>cohors I Delmatarum</i>
(perhaps to 158)	
158 ?? to ??	<i>cohors I Baetiasiorum c. R.</i>
Third century	<i>cohors equitata</i>

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