

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE ROMAN FORCES IN BRITAIN.

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As a continuation of my paper on "The Roman Forces in Britain," which embodied the names and titles of the corps stationed in our island, it seems fit that an analysis should be made of the various nationalities represented, and the points noticed where the concentration of force appeared to the Romans to be most necessary, and this I now propose to do.

Of the legions themselves it is difficult to fix, with any degree of certainty, the nationality of the troops composing them. We have instances of officers belonging to them who were natives of all parts of the empire, *e.g.*—at Chester we have two different officers who were natives of Com-magene in Syria, and another who was a Bavarian. We have two instances of a *vexillatio* being named with the nationality. One is at Lowther, (Westmoreland), where a *vexillatio* of Germans is named which Dr. Hubner thinks is that of the eighth Legion; the other is at Manchester, where we meet with a *vexillatio* of *Raeti* and *Norici*. This may be the same as the *vexillatio Raetorum Gaesati* named in the inscription found a few years since at Jedburgh.

But when we come to the auxiliary forces, although their officers were Italians, or in many instances of a totally different race to the men they commanded, there can be little doubt from the evidence of tombstones, &c., that the various *corps* were themselves composed of men of the same nationality as the title borne by their *corps*, and we find that Belgic Gaul, and the Iberian Peninsula, seem to have been about the two largest contributors. From the first named province we can identify two *alae*, twenty cohorts, three *numeri*, and three *cunei* (including Frisians

and Batavians), whilst from Spain and Portugal three *alae*, seven cohorts, and a *numerus* occur. From France proper we find traces of three *alae*, and four cohorts; from Germany of one *ala* and three cohorts; from Hungary one *ala*, another body of horse (*equites*) and three cohorts; from Poland one *ala* at least (besides probably the *Equites Cataphractarii*). Of Austrians there are named three cohorts and two bodies of horse, all from Dalmatia, but although we are told by historians that a large number of troops from the present Moravia and Bohemia were sent over to Britain, there are no traces of them. From the present Roumania we have one cohort, the first of the Dacians, from the Roumelian province of Turkey one *ala* and two cohorts (of Thracians); from Turkey in Asia one cohort, from the banks of the Euphrates (the *Hamii*), two *numeri*, and apparently three other bodies of horse (*equites*). Switzerland sent us two cohorts, one of *Raeti* and another of *Alpini*, and North Africa a *numerus* of Moors. There are also numerous *alae* and cohorts, &c., of which the nationality is not named, or if named (like the *Cohors I Cornoviorum*), the geographical position of the tribe cannot be ascertained at the present day.

As nothing bearing a date later than the reign of Antoninus Pius has been found on the line of the Scotch Wall it is almost certain that it could not have been held later than the reign of his next but one successor, Commodus, when the well-known insurrection related by historians broke out. Until that time it would be the limit of the Roman empire, and be strongly garrisoned, as was also from the reign of Hadrian, the southern wall, and numerous stations near it, both to the north and south, especially those on the Cumberland coast. After the restoration of the wall of Hadrian, by Severus, it appears again to have been strongly garrisoned, with all of the before-mentioned forts until about the time of Constantine, for mile stones of Diocletian, of Constantine, and of his family have been found on its line. But after this the western half of the wall, probably from the result of frequent attack by the Picts, seems to have been abandoned, though the forts on the Cumberland coast were still strongly garrisoned, as was also the eastern half of the wall. On this latter when the *Notitia* was compiled (circa A.D. 400) there were

between Wallsend and the Cumberland boundary, in eleven stations, three *alae* and eight cohorts, whilst along the Cumberland seaboard there appear to have been one *ala*, four cohorts, and a *numerus*. These were evidently placed there with the intention of repelling Irish marauders. There was probably a second and internal line of defence here, but the *Notitia* does not specify it.

The next portion of Britain honoured with the attentions of a strong garrison was the country of the Brigantes, chiefly the north Yorkshire part of their territory, though the whole of that county, with the greatest moiety of both Durham and Westmoreland, as well as Lancashire, were included; and this military occupation apparently continued until the time of the *Notitia*. Besides the head quarters of the legion of York, we find in Brigantian territory, as late as the time of the *Notitia*, one *ala*, three other bodies of horse (*equites*), two cohorts, eleven *numeri*, and a *cuneus*. The southern boundary of this tribe which reached from sea to sea, there can be little or no doubt was the line of the Mersey and Humber, these rivers also forming the boundary between Britannia Superior and Britannia Inferior, (see *Roman Cheshire*, p. 13). South of this line, or in the province of *Britannia Superior*, the country, except in the case of the Commodian insurrection and similar outbreaks, seems to have been in a state of peaceful quiescence from the time of the subjugation of the Ordovices, and the Isle of Anglesea by Agricola. Before the time of the *Notitia* the two legions which had kept guard, one at the northern and the other at the southern extremities of Wales, had been withdrawn, the twentieth from Chester to the continent—where it took part in the battle of Pollentia, and the second from Caerleon to Richborough (Kent), to assist in the defence of the Saxon shore. Even the auxiliary forces which were in Wales (and these were few in number, though we do not yet know the complete list) seem to have been withdrawn some time previously, and the inscriptions found, erected by them, are of early date. The auxiliaries which have left inscriptions in Wales are: the *Ala Vettonum*, at the Gaer near Brecon, the first cohort of the *Sunuci* at Caernarvon, the first cohort of the *Nervii* at Caer Gai, the second cohort of the *Astures* at Llanio, and the first cohort of a people

whose name commenced with C (probably the *Celtiberi*) at Caer Sws.

As it was with Wales, so with the midland, western, and southern counties of England. The stations were more or less converted into large towns or municipalities, with the exception of the *mansiones*, *mutationes*, or posting stations. The same may be said of the eastern counties until about the time of Carausius, when the frequent incursions of the Saxon pirates necessitated the erection of strong *castra*, and the disposition of a large force at intervals along the coast, from north Norfolk (near the Wash) southwards past Dover and round to the present Portsmouth. With the exception of the last named place and another station at Felixstowe in Essex (probably abandoned on account of the ravages of the sea), these stations were still held when the *Notitia* was compiled, and they were garrisoned by one legion (the second), one cohort (of the *Vetasii*, i.e. *Baetasii*), two bodies of horse (*equites*), four *numeri*, and one other body of troops who are simply named *Milites Tungricani* or Tungrian soldiers. In the earlier part of the Roman dominion Dover and Lymne (in Kent) had been the head-quarters of the British fleet, consequently an altar and tiles have been found at these stations naming the *Classiarii Britannici* or British marines.

The discoveries which have taken place since the issue of my paper in vol. xli. have been few as far as they bear on the distribution of the various corps. They are as follows :

*Ala I. Asturum*.—An inscription found at South Shields names this corps.

*Cohors Cornoviorum*.—An inscription recently found at Ilkley names a female who was a Cornovian citizen *Civis Cornovia*.

*Cohors I. Nerviorum*.—The tombstone of a member of this cohort has been found at Caer Gai near Bala. It is the first trace of the cohort found in Britain.

*Ala Petriana*.—An inscription found in Cliburn Church (near Kirkby Thore) names this *ala*.

*Vexillatio Raetorum Gaesatorum*.—At Jedburgh there has been found an inscription naming this force. *Raeti Gaesati* are also named in a large inscription found at Risingham, and at the same station two altars

bear the abbreviation VEXIL. G. R., which I take to mean *Vexillatio Gaesatorum Raetorum*.

The *Gaesati* took their name from using a *gaesa* or light spear.

*Numerus Vigilum*—In addition to my previous remarks on this force, I may add that a *centuria* of *Vigiles* are named in an inscription at Chester.

I have some slight further information regarding an *Ala Pannoniorum*, probably the first, which we know was in Britain, but until I get more distinct corroboration I refrain from publishing it.