THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF THE COTSWOLDS

By B. H. St. J. O'NEIL and H. E. O'NEIL

The Cotswolds are noted for their ancient earthworks, sepulchral and defensive. There are long barrows in their dozens, round barrows in their hundreds, and many hill-top camps of Early Iron Age type. During the course of years of fieldwork and study of these ancient sites one of us became aware of certain small camps, rectangular or almost rectangular in shape, which do not seem to fit into any of the common categories of earthworks in the south of England. Some of these camps are marked on the O.S. maps ; others are not yet so recorded. One in particular, now known to us as Tunnel Mouth Camp, was brought to our notice by Major W. H. Daubeny, of Dockem House, Coates, near Cirencester. Two visits to it convinced us that its bank and ditch enclose an area which is almost square, with corners very reminiscent of Roman work, whilst Roman pottery recovered from its surface tended to confirm our suspicion of date. Thereafter all the other camps, previously noted, and some others, were visited and planned, with the result that this theory is now propounded to explain their purpose. Before, however, the theory is put forward, the camps themselves will be described.

1. *Batsford Camp* (Fig. 1)

This camp, 165 feet from east to west and 135 feet from north to south, almost rectangular, has been partly destroyed by a road which crosses it. Nevertheless, the rampart can be seen as a bump in the road surface, and is clearly marked south of the road, where it is omitted on the O.S. map. It is here broad and low with well-marked ditch, but the western side has been almost obliterated by the erection of a house, and can only be gauged by faint indications. North of the road the land is pasture. The rampart stands prominently above the interior and three feet or so above the ditch. The corner is well rounded, but in the centre of the curve there is a rather modern cut, which is not marked on the plan. No sign of any ancient entrance is now to be seen. The camp is on flat land.

2. *Penhill Camp, Salperton* (Fig. 1)

This oblong camp, 250 feet from east to west and 170 feet north to south, has been partly levelled by ploughing. The northern rampart stands well above the interior, and about 4 feet above the bottom of the ditch. Its corners are well rounded. The southern rampart is lower, but of the same character. The western rampart has been almost entirely destroyed, as has much of the eastern rampart, but here there seem to be the ends of the ditch appropriate for an entrance. At the

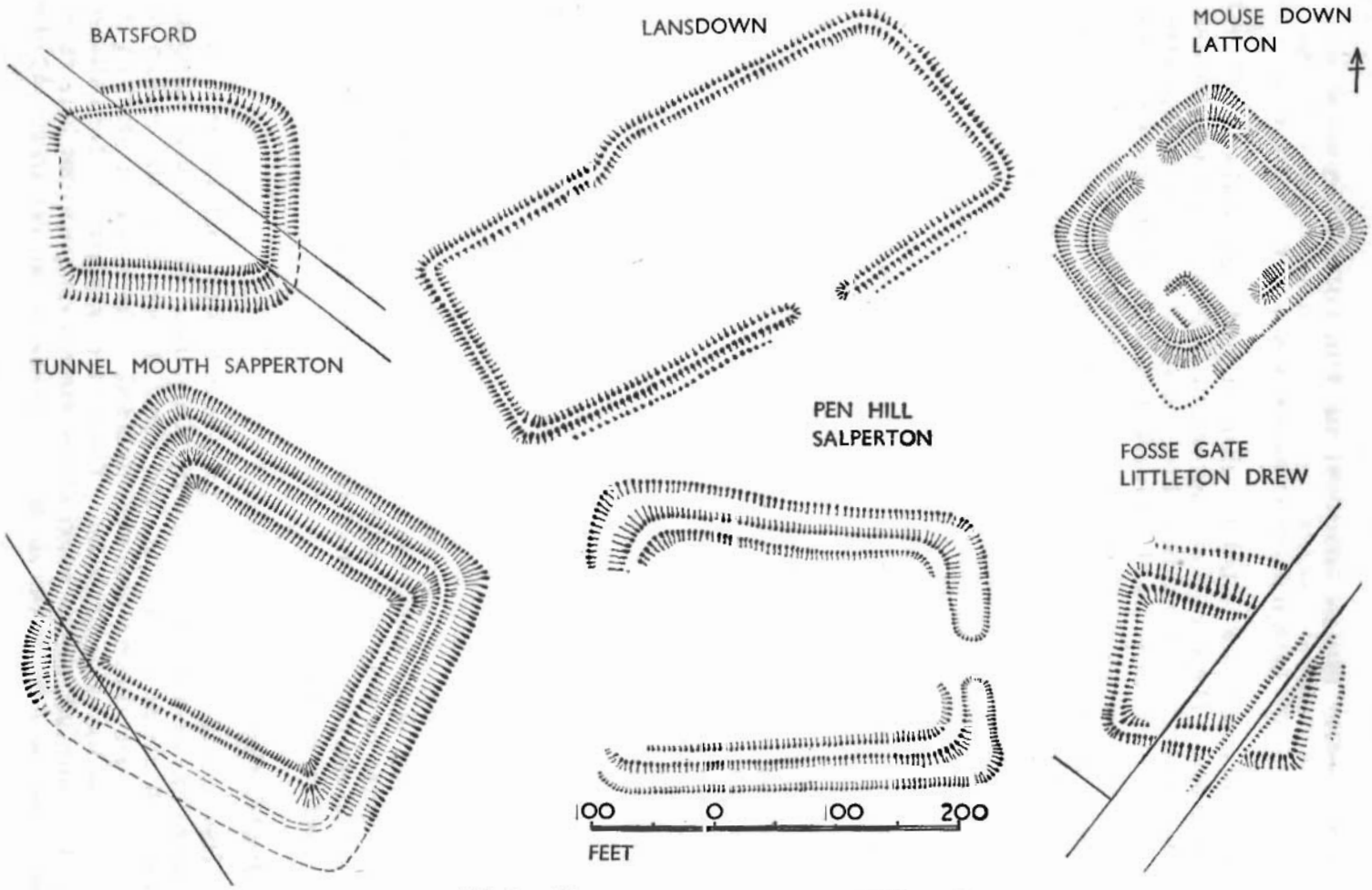


FIG. I. ROMAN CAMPS IN THE COTSWOLDS

time of our visit there seemed to be faint traces of a cambered way leading to the eastern rampart from the trackway 100 yards to the east. This camp lies on part of the flat summit of the hill on which it lies, and commands a wide prospect.

3. *Tunnel Mouth Camp, Sapperton* (Fig. 1)

The area is almost a true rectangle, 200 feet east to west and 170 feet from north to south, measured to the crest of the inner rampart. This is a broad, low bank, now never more than 2 feet high above the interior, with good, round corners, where the rampart is slightly higher than elsewhere. The ditch, outer bank and outer ditch are very low or shallow respectively, but are quite distinct. Beyond a field-wall which crosses the southern side of the camp there are now no signs of ditches or outer bank, but an air photograph, kindly taken by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph, confirms their former existence at this point. There are now no signs of any entrance, but ploughing has much reduced the elevation of this earthwork and may have obscured one. About 100 yards due north there is a raised part of the field, which could be interpreted as a cambered road leading directly for the centre of the north side of the camp.

One abraded sherd of Roman red ware was picked up by one of us on the ploughed surface within this camp, along with a fragment of a flat quern of millstone-grit. This camp is situated below the summit of the hill on which it lies.

4. *Mouse Down Camp, Latton* (Fig. 1)

This camp was first brought to our notice by Group-Captain G. M. Knocker, who noticed it on an air photograph. It is well marked on the ground, and it is curious that it was missed by the Ordnance Surveyors.

The area is almost a rectangle, 155 feet north to south, and 135 feet from east to west. The rampart is broad and low, no doubt because of ploughing, seldom being more than one foot high above the interior. At the corners it sweeps round in a good curve. At the northern side of the western entrance the rampart seems to have been disturbed or spread more than usual, but the ditch is everywhere quite plain. At the south-western corner the ditch has at some recent time been enlarged to make a pond. There are two gaps in the rampart, as shown on the plan. The western may be larger than originally intended because of the disturbance already mentioned. The eastern may also have suffered in the same way, when a building was erected in the south-eastern corner of the camp. For this seems to be the meaning of some low narrow banks in this area, the northern of which definitely seems to overlie the main rampart. The camp is situated on part of the summit of the low isolated hill on which it lies, and is in a commanding situation.

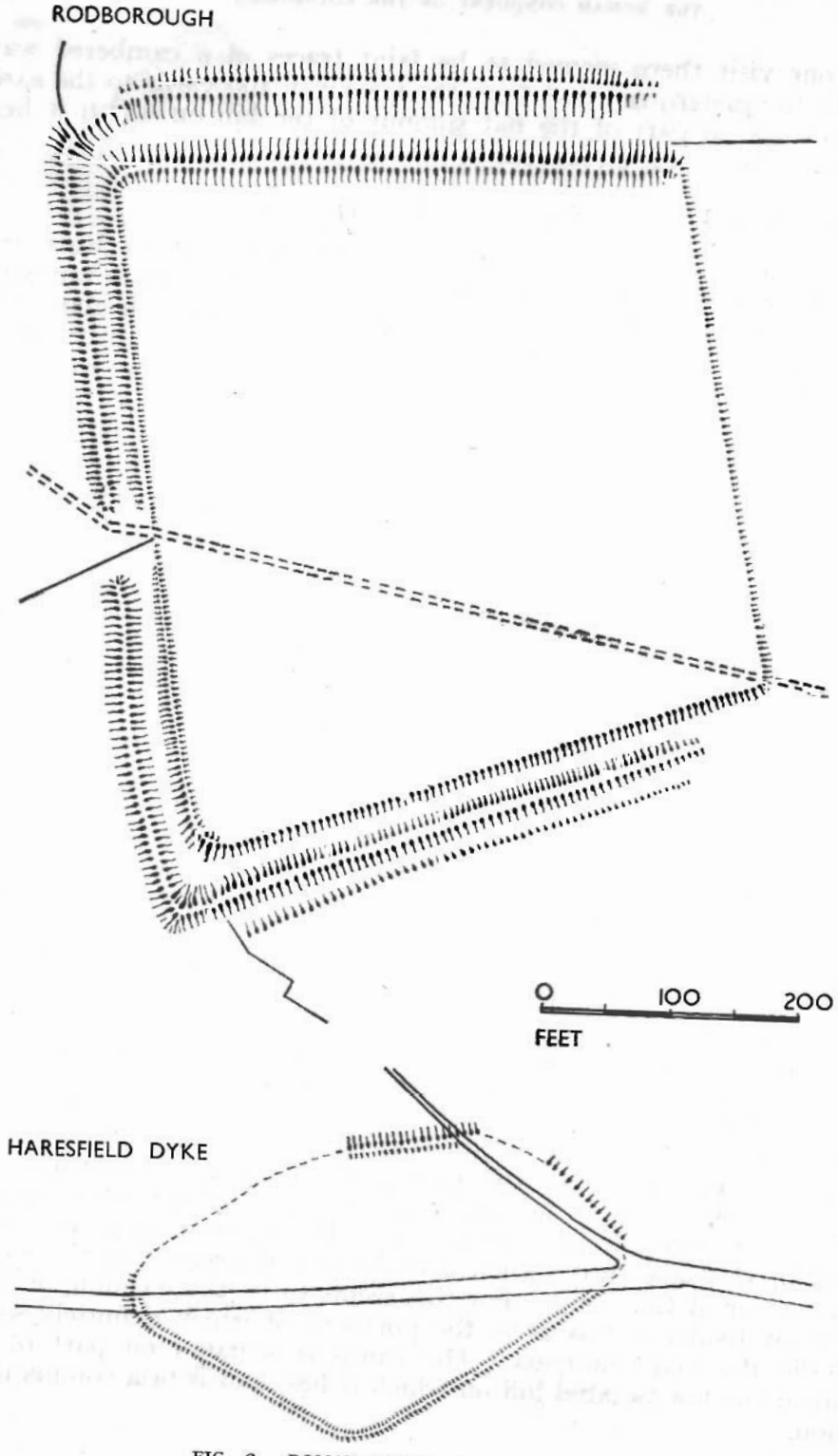


FIG. 2. ROMAN CAMPS IN THE COTSWOLDS

5. *Rodborough Camp* (Fig. 2)

This is quite a large camp with double bank and ditch on three sides, the remaining, eastern, side having suffered much from ploughing. The inner bank is but little raised above the interior of the camp, but in places it is 3 feet high above the ditch, and the outer bank at the north-west corner is 5 feet high. The corner is particularly well marked and of Roman appearance. The line of the southern ramparts and ditches are not very clear on the ground, but their course has been ascertained with precision with the help of an air photograph, kindly taken for the purpose by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph. The gap in the western ramparts probably incorporates an original entrance, but has been widened since the camp became disused.

Mrs. E. M. Clifford cut a trench across the inner ditch and second bank on the western side of the camp close to the north-western corner in 1937.[1] The ditch was shown to have the shape of a Roman military ditch, V-shaped but with the last 2 feet of depth with vertical sides and the bottom flat, 2 feet wide. The potsherds found in the ditch filling and the rampart strongly suggest that the camp is a work of the mid-1st century A.D. and not later. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion in this case that the camp is Roman of the time of the conquest.

6. *Haresfield Dyke Camp* (Fig. 2)

This is an irregularly diamond-shaped area defended by a broad bank and ditch, now only visible in places, as marked on the plan. The line of the southern half of the camp has been confirmed by an air photograph, kindly taken by Dr. J. K. St. Joseph. The camp resembles Rodborough Camp in its situation, since both lie astride a narrow part of a ridge close to its end.

7. *Fosse Gate, Littleton Drew* (Fig. 1)

This very small rectangular camp has a well-defined broad rampart, 1 foot 6 inches high above the interior and 3 feet above the ditch on the north side. A ditch is visible along the north and east sides, but there is no sign of any entrance.

This camp is crossed by Fosse Way, ancient and modern. The modern track plainly 'bumps' over the southern rampart, whilst the Roman road, visible as a cambered way under the eastern hedge of the modern track, clearly oversails the same rampart. It is quite certain that the camp is earlier than the Roman road, which ignores it.

We are grateful to Mr. C. E. Stevens for telling us of this camp, which he discovered.

[1] *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, lix, 290–1.

8. *Lansdown Camp* (Fig. 1)

This is an irregularly oblong area, defended by a low broad bank, now much reduced by ploughing, except at the western end, where the bank remains to a height of 4 feet above the exterior. There are traces of a ditch along the southern side, and the gap here is probably an original entrance.

So far as is known, these eight are the only camps in the Cotswolds, which are not obviously assignable to a particular class and era, and which have the characteristics of rectangularity or rectilinearity, such as are associated with Roman military constructions. It will be noted in passing that there are certain groupings within the eight. For instance, the camps at Batsford, Mouse Down and Fosse Gate form a group ; all are very small and all are on the lower slopes of the Cotswolds, towards the Thames or its tributaries. The camps at Haresfield and Rodborough on the other hand are quite large and are placed in prominent positions on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment with a good view westwards. The camps at Salperton and Lansdown are alike in being oblong and in being situated on a broad summit, but not close to its edge, like the camp at Rodborough. The camp at Tunnel Mouth is the best rectangle of the series. The dating evidence for the whole series of camps, such as it is, is drawn from single examples in three of these four series, viz., Tunnel Mouth Camp, Rodborough Camp and Fosse Gate, Littleton Drew. It is, therefore, permissible to use it as tentative evidence for the whole series. It may well be that all the camps are not strictly contemporary, being separated in time by a few years, but in this stage of the study such minutiae of classification can hardly be attempted.

There being some evidence that these camps are of early Roman date, it becomes necessary to examine the record of the Roman invasion and conquest of Britain. There is here no need to re-enter into the discussion of the reasons which prompted the invasion, save to point out that one of them seems to have been the subjection of those who might help rebels in Gaul. Certainly it was encouraged by refugees, such as a ' certain Bericus, who had been driven out of the island as the result of an uprising ',[1] and one is left with the impression that in A.D. 43 southern Britain was torn between aggressors and oppressed, the former being the Belgic rulers of Camulodunum.

Dio Cassius, whose account in Book LX is the chief source of our knowledge of the conquest, relates the division of Aulus Plautius's forces into three for the Channel crossing, ' in order that they should not be hindered in landing, as might happen to a single force '.[2] It is usual nowadays to argue that only one landing was made. The other two divisions are regarded as feints, the forces thereof later joining

[1] *Dio Cassius*, lx, 19–21.

[2] *Ibid.*, 19.

the main contingent at Richborough.[1] This conclusion is based largely upon the discovery of the great Claudian camp at Richborough,[2] but, although this proclaims itself as a camp covering a landing-place, it has no power to exclude others which may have been used at the same time. It should be remembered that Dio wrote many generations after the events he records, but in any case his words would certainly suit a triple landing.

It is clear from the history of Cogidubnus, King of the Regni (of Sussex), that he and his people readily submitted to the Romans. Otherwise they would not have been so favoured by the invaders. It is presumed that they were foes of the Belgic regime of Camulodunum, and welcomed its overthrow. Such a dissension amongst the ranks of the Britons must have been known to the Romans before the invasion, even without intelligence received from the political refugees already mentioned. What is more natural than that at least part of the expeditionary force should have been despatched to land on a part of the nearest coasts of Britain, which was expected to be at least neutral, if not actually of assistance? Subsequent relations with Cogidubnus look like a reward for services rendered.[3]

The advantage of a landing at this point is obvious. A vigorous commander could send his cavalry far and wide along the trackways of the downs, causing alarm and despondency, cowing the brave and heartening those who wished to be released from Belgic domination. Such a people were the Bodunni, some of whom, Dio says,[4] were ruled by a tribe of the Catuellauni. Under these conditions, namely a landing in Sussex and omission by Dio of more than one line of conquest, equation of Bodunni with the Dobuni, whose territory included the Berkshire Downs, is not out of the question. Excavation at Salmonsbury, Bourton on the Water and at Langford Downs near Lechlade show that the Dobuni were much influenced by the Belgae.[5]

A slight digression may be allowed to amplify the statement, just made, that the territory of the Dobuni included the Berkshire Downs. This statement is based upon the distribution of the coins of the tribe in question, as set out by Mr. Derek Allen,[6] and it is he who notes the river Kennet as the southern boundary of that tribe. It is interesting to see the reverse type of the coins of the Dobuni, which Mr. Allen figures.[7] All have a disjointed horse of the common type except for the last one, which shows Roman influence. But the point to notice is the detail of the horse's head. It is a bifurcated, beak-like head, which has so often been compared with the head of the White Horse of Uffington.[8] There certainly is similarity between the two, and

[1] Collingwood and Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, 80.
[2] *Reports of the Research Committee of Soc. Ant.*, 16, Richborough, iv, 18.
[3] *Arch. Journ.*, xcii, 380.
[4] *Op. cit.*, 20.
[5] Information kindly supplied by Mr. G. C. Dunning, and *Oxoniensia*, xi and xii, 58.
[6] *Archaeologia*, xc, 1 ff.
[7] *Ibid.*, pl. IV, 5–18.
[8] *Antiquity*, 1931, 42.

when it is considered that this particular beak-like head freely occurs on these Dobunic coins and not on those of the Belgic dynasties, it becomes possible to conjecture that the White Horse of Uffington is a Dobunic beast, and that, when it was cut, i.e. early in the first century A.D., if the dating of the coins is correct,[1] the Berkshire Downs were in the hands of the Dobuni.

A Roman force of the kind just described after advancing from the Sussex Coast to the Berkshire Downs could also, if it wished, turn back eastwards towards London and the Lower Thames by means of the Harrow Way. But if it did this, it would soon find the need for a more direct route from its base to the new foundation, Londinium. Hence the existence of Stane Street. This very fine example of a Roman road has one peculiarity, which makes it unique amongst the Roman roads of southern England. It has on its line and directly associated with it, i.e. clearly built in relation to it, two forts, at Hardham[2] and Alfolddean.[3] The forts are astride it just like any fort in Wales, and there cannot be any doubt that Stane Street and the forts are of one build for one purpose, a military purpose. Much mid-1st century Roman pottery was found at both sites, and the suggestion must be that Stane Street is the product of one part of Plautius's invading army after advancing from a friendly base, building forts at regular intervals—another at Morden is suspected—to secure its line of communication and police the intervening area on the way to the Thames.

This note on Stane Street and its camps is here inserted in parenthesis in order that its peculiarity may be noted and assessed and contrasted with the character of the other Roman roads of southern Britain.

The progress of the Roman conquest of Britain immediately after the capture of Camulodunum is nowhere described in detail in ancient writings. There are references to Vespasian in the Isle of Wight, etc.,[4] which may or may not indicate military activity affecting the Dobuni, and no doubt there were advances also in other directions, but owing to the gap in the Annals of Tacitus there is no connected account until A.D. 47, when Ostorius Scapula became Governor. The events and dispositions of his governorship have been conveniently summarised by the late Dr. T. Davies Pryce in the *Antiquaries Journal*,[5] and we need but repeat them here :—

A.D.	
47	Irruptions of the enemy into the territories of the allies—their defeat and dispersal.
47–48	Ostorius decides to disarm suspected tribes and to occupy the country on the proximal side of the rivers Trent and Severn.
48	Rebellion of the Iceni and neighbouring tribes—their defeat.
48–49	Expedition against the Deceangi. Return of the invaders owing to threatening movements amongst the Brigantes.

[1] *Archaeologia*, xc, 38.
[2] *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, lxviii, 89 ff.
[3] *Ibid.*, lxiv, 101 and lxv., pl. IV and V.
[4] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, viii, 4.
[5] *Ant. J.*, xviii, 30.

A.D.

49 In order to facilitate operations against the Silures a colonia is established at Camulodunum. Apparently, the greater part of the garrison is withdrawn,[1] their place being taken by time-expired soldiers. A legionary fortress is established against the Silures.[2]

50–51 Invasion of the territory of the Silures.[3] The war transferred to the country of the Ordovices. Defeat of Caratacus. He is delivered up to the conquerors 'in the ninth year after the beginning of the war in Britain'.[4]

51–52 The war with the Silures continues and is fraught with many disasters to the Roman arms.[5] The Silures take the offensive and invade Roman territory. Ostorius Scapula dies and is succeeded by Aulus Didius Gallus, A.D. 52.

It will be noticed that in common with most who have dealt with the much-discussed passage of Tacitus, *Annals*, xii, 31, we accept Bradley's emendation of the difficulty and read *cis Trisantonam* for *castris Antonam*; but it does not follow that we also accept all the implications which in recent years have been made to follow this emendation.

Other points to observe are that the Dobuni are not mentioned by name, but that they must have been affected by whatever happened this side of the Trent and Severn in A.D. 47, and that they can hardly fail to have suffered from the ebb and flow of the contest between Romans and Silures. The Silures are first mentioned by Tacitus in A.D. 49, when a legionary fortress—now known to have been at Kingsholm, Gloucester—was founded on their confines. They were whipped up into fierce resistance by the fugitive Belgic Prince, Caratacus, but continued to plague the Romans after he left them, even to the extent of raiding territory nominally Roman.

The conclusions regarding the Cotswolds which may be deduced from the available written records of the years of the Roman conquest seem, therefore, to be that they may perhaps have been affected to the extent of having a few military posts planted therein in the earliest months of the invasion. By the time that the legionary fortress was founded on the Severn at Kingsholm, Gloucester, A.D. 49, the Cotswolds must all have been under Roman sway. It is conceivable that forts therein were still needed at that time, but there is no real reason for supposing that any fresh ones would be built after the founding of the fortress, i.e. after the conclusion of military dispositions, except for any required to protect the countryside from raids of the Silures which accompanied its foundation. It follows that any Roman camps of conquest which exist in the Cotswolds should be attributed to the period A.D. 43–50. It may well be that more than one scheme should be accommodated within this brief period—and differences of style in the

[1] Tacitus *Annals*, xii, 32.
[2] *Ibid.*, xii, 32.
[3] *Ibid.*, xii, 33.
[4] *Ibid.*, xii, 36.
[5] *Ibid.*, xii, 38–40.

camps have been noted—but at the present time no such differentiation can be attempted.

Now let us put ourselves in the shoes of a Roman commander, ordered to advance in the direction of the Cotswolds, to receive their submission and to secure it in permanence. How would he direct his line of march? We may be sure that he would know the ground or be able to obtain guides or both. For the Romans had been established in Gaul for a century, and are not likely to have neglected opportunities for spying out the ground; our authorities show us that dissatisfaction with Belgic rule or menace must have yielded willing help in certain directions.

If in fact a commander was detached immediately after landing in A.D. 43 on a long-range patrol, to receive the submission of certain tribes, such as the Bodunni, who may have been the Dobuni, there can be no doubt at all of his method. He must have followed the established routes, that is what are known to us as prehistoric trackways, often ridgeways. He cannot have waited for the making of a Roman road. He could not afford to wait. His success depended partly on the surprise of speed. If indeed the Bodunni are the Dobuni he may have aimed at cutting the line of communication between Camulodunum and the Silures, which the later flight of Caratacus to the Silures shows to have been important. In any case, he must have used known routes, and of these there are plenty from the vicinity of the supposed Sussex landing-place. From this area an expeditionary force could range far and wide along the chalk downs of Sussex, of Hampshire, and in due course of Berkshire, where they face north towards the Cotswolds, making use exclusively of already existing native ways.

It has been said that the forward movement after the surrender to Claudius at Camulodunum spread fanwise from London, but there is no ancient authority for any such statement. It seems to be based entirely upon the fact that to this day Roman roads spread fanwise from London in those directions, three of them conveniently in the three required directions. But is it not strange that nothing suggesting an early military base has ever been found in London? And, even if this argument be rebutted by a statement that even now so little of Roman London has been explored, how is it that no military post has been found on the roads in question? There is nothing of the kind at Verulamium or at Silchester, or so far at any smaller place on these roads, whereas undoubted military posts in Warwickshire and Staffordshire, at Metchley (Birmingham)[1] and Shenstone,[2] are not on the road at all, but beside it.

Surely the truth is far otherwise. Let us get away from this preoccupation with Roman roads, that is from the idea that no Roman soldier could ever move unless he had a Roman road to walk on. Stane

[1] *Trans. Birmingham Arch. Soc.*, lviii, 68 ff. [2] *Ibid.*, lxiii, 1 ff.

Street certainly is a military road. It has forts on it, which are an integral part of it, but all the other Roman roads in southern England are strangely unlike it, whereas all Roman roads in Wales and northern England are like it. Even there, however, they are more likely to be the product rather than the prelude of conquest, the means of maintaining rather than of obtaining it. An analogy from modern times may help in understanding the position. In the Highlands of Scotland the second Jacobite Rising occurred and was suppressed in 1745. There was no third Rising because of the precautions taken after the '45. These included the construction of roads with forts upon them to maintain the rule of the sovereign. They were constructed sometimes under difficulties, even under fire, but they were constructed and fulfilled their function. But the important point is their date, 1748. They were not built for the conquering forces, but for the patrolling forces after conquest.[1]

So it was no doubt in Roman Britain, and this is the cardinal point of the theory here propounded, namely, that Roman forces in their advance used not Roman roads, but native tracks.

The point of departure was presumably Camulodunum. It is perfectly true that no sign of legions has been found at Colchester, but legions there certainly were at the time of the capital's submission to Claudius, and Tacitus's words about the events of A.D. 49 imply that at least one legion, presumably the second, was there then. In *Annals*, xii, 32, he says that a legionary fortress was to be built against the Silures, and ' in order to achieve that end, the colony was founded '. This must surely mean that the veterans of the colony were to be in the place of the legion. A forward movement thence, wisely conducted and not waiting for the construction of roads, would seek the main native tracks, which naturally followed the lines of least natural resistance. It is not proposed here to follow these lines in detail, or even to attempt a reconstruction of any tripartite advance. Suffice it to say for the present purpose that, after attaining the line of route known now as the Icknield Way, access to many parts of Britain became an easy matter. Particularly was this so for the advance towards the west along the well-known route by the Chilterns, the Thames crossing at Goring, and the Berkshire Downs.

Thus it comes about that whenever one regards an advance to the Cotswolds in A.D. 43, in A.D. 47, or even in A.D. 49, when the first Glevum was founded at Kingsholm, according to our view the route to them lay along the Berkshire Downs.

Arrived at the northern escarpment of the Berkshire Downs a Roman commander 1,900 years ago saw before him a wide vale as now, but considerably more wooded, with a distant ridge of high land beyond. If desiring to reach those hills, he would naturally cross the vale at the

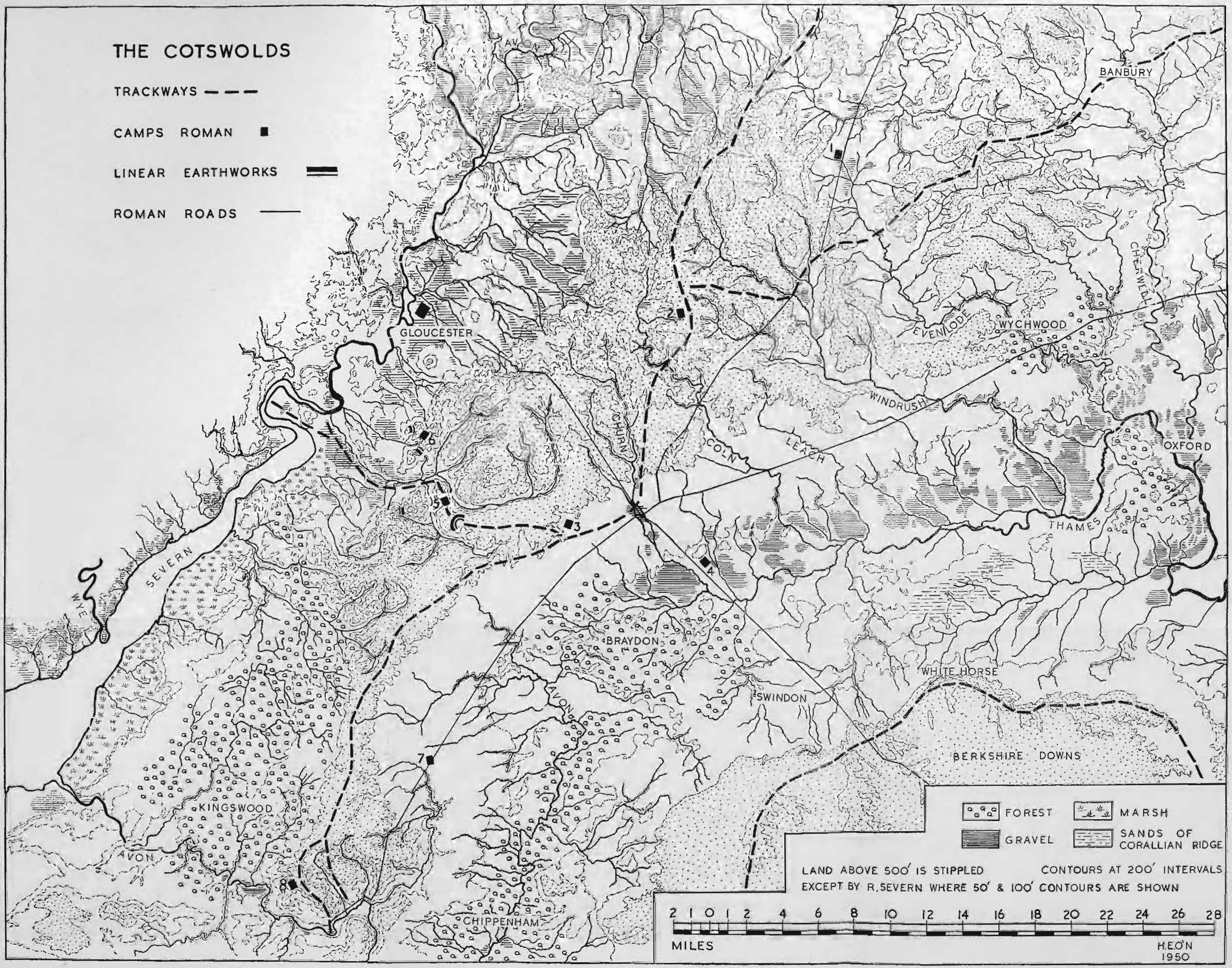
[1] We are indebted to Dr. W. Douglas Simpson for this analogy.

least encumbered point in the right direction. Careful plotting of geological features from published accounts by one of us with the help of friends,[1] and from a great deal of searching on the ground, has produced the map of the Cotswolds, which is reproduced in Pl. II. This is not the place for dealing in detail with all its features, but there should be noted here the extent of forested land based upon the underlying deposits—Braydon Forest on clay with flints and Kingswood Forest on Coal Measures, alluvial flats, i.e. marshes beside the Severn, gravel along the north side of the Thames, but never south of the river, and gravel elsewhere as marked, e.g. at river crossings, indicating open land suitable for human settlement. The broad band of country left blank north of Braydon Forest and the gravels of the Upper Thames is the forest-marble and cornbrash country, i.e. the lower slopes of the Cotswolds, which seems to have carried thick scrub in a natural state and has few traces of occupation in prehistoric times. Finally, there is the main ridge and subsidiary ridges of the oolite of the Cotswolds.

Human progress has at all times been easy along the Berkshire Ridgeway and the main Cotswold Ridgeway from Bath northwards. Furthermore, the continuation of the latter as a through route may be followed without much difficulty. It crosses the Churn at Cirencester on a patch of gravel, changing direction abruptly at the head of the Turkdean Brook, thereby avoiding deep valleys, crossing the Windrush and Dikler at Bourton-on-the-Water, and the Evenlode at Adlestrop, all on gravel spreads. It continues to Banbury, where it crosses the Cherwell, not on gravel—for there is none—but at the only feasible place for many miles. It is throughout part of the main trackway of the ' Jurassic Zone '.

More difficult to define is a through route from east to west, but there must have been one, and it is likely enough that Caratacus used it when he fled westwards and eventually reached the Silures. The Romans in pursuit of him may well have taken the same route. The main obstacle is the river Severn. South of the Arlingham Bend, except at Sharpness, marshes fringed the eastern side of the river. North of that Bend the river valley is very wide and is bordered by low-lying land, liable to be flooded, as far as Tewkesbury. Only at that Bend itself was there a crossing-place under primitive conditions. At its extremity there is high ground on the western side of the river, whilst at its northern side gravel spreads occur on both sides of the water. There are large expanses of gravel at the base of this peninsula which extend south-eastwards right to the foot of the hills. There is plentiful evidence of human habitation on this gravel in prehistoric times ; there

[1] In the preparation of this map I have received valuable help from the geological publications of Miss M. E. Tomlinson, Dr. K. S. Sandford, Mr. W. J. Arkell, Mr. L. Richardson, and also personal help and encouragement from Dr. F. B. A. Welch, Dr. F. S. Wallis, Mr. G. A. Kellaway, and Group-Captain G. M. Knocker. The 1 inch O.S. Geological Survey Drift Maps for Moreton in Marsh, Witney and Cirencester have been consulted (H. E. O'N.).



THE COTSWOLDS AND UPPER THAMES VALLEY WITH TRACKWAYS, ROMAN ROADS AND CAMPS

is a hitherto unrecorded long barrow on the low hill in the middle of the Bend ; and there is evidence that cattle were driven across the river from the tip of the Bend up to about 100 years ago. There is, therefore, little doubt that the east to west through route must have crossed the river Severn at this point and have climbed up to the summit of the Cotswolds at Rodborough. Its course thence to the main Ridgeway is plain enough.

The crossing of the Upper Thames is less clear, and has not been marked on our map. There may have been a way south of Braydon Forest, but this would hardly have been of service to one who had crossed the Severn at Arlingham. As already mentioned, there is gravel along the north bank of the Thames, but not along the south bank ; here there is clay. This occurs everywhere, but one of the places where this deposit is least wide is below Blunsdon Hill between Cricklade and Swindon. As it happens, this is suitably placed, i.e. in the right direction, for the east to west route, which is under consideration. It, therefore, seems probable that the route taken followed gravel deposits from Cirencester south-eastwards almost as far as Cricklade, crossed two miles of clay, and then climbed Blunsdon Hill, proceeding by way of Swindon to the main ridge of the Berkshire Downs. This at least seems to be the line of least resistance, such as prehistoric peoples normally took, and such as, according to this theory, the Romans followed in their wake.

These seem to have been the main lines of communication in the Cotswolds in the middle of the first century A.D. It is now necessary to determine whether or not the earthworks, which are recorded in this paper, seem to be related in any way to them, bearing in mind especially that, because of the difficulty of the Severn crossing—elsewhere than at Arlingham Bend—any irruptions of the Silures into Roman territory are likely to have taken this course.

The small square camps at Littleton Drew (7), Latton (4) and Batsford (1), are not close to any known track, although the camp at Latton is not far from the line of the main east-west route, and the Littleton Drew camp may be near a subsidiary route not yet determined. But the Tunnel-Mouth (3), Lansdown (8) and Salperton (2) camps are admirably placed for commanding the main Cotswold Ridgeway at points of importance, i.e. junctions with other routes. This is especially true of the Tunnel-Mouth camp, which is the strongest of the series ; it commands the junction of the Ridgeway with the east-west route. The camps at Rodborough (5) and Haresfield (6), which are the largest of the series, are alike in that they are on the escarpment of the Cotswolds with a good view to the west. Prominent in that view is the Arlingham Bend, and Rodborough camp is placed right above the east-west route as it climbs the hills. The series of camps which have been described do, therefore, appear to be related to the trackways already mentioned. They do not seem to be prehistoric. Two at least are not later than the first century A.D. They appear, therefore, to be Roman camps of conquest.

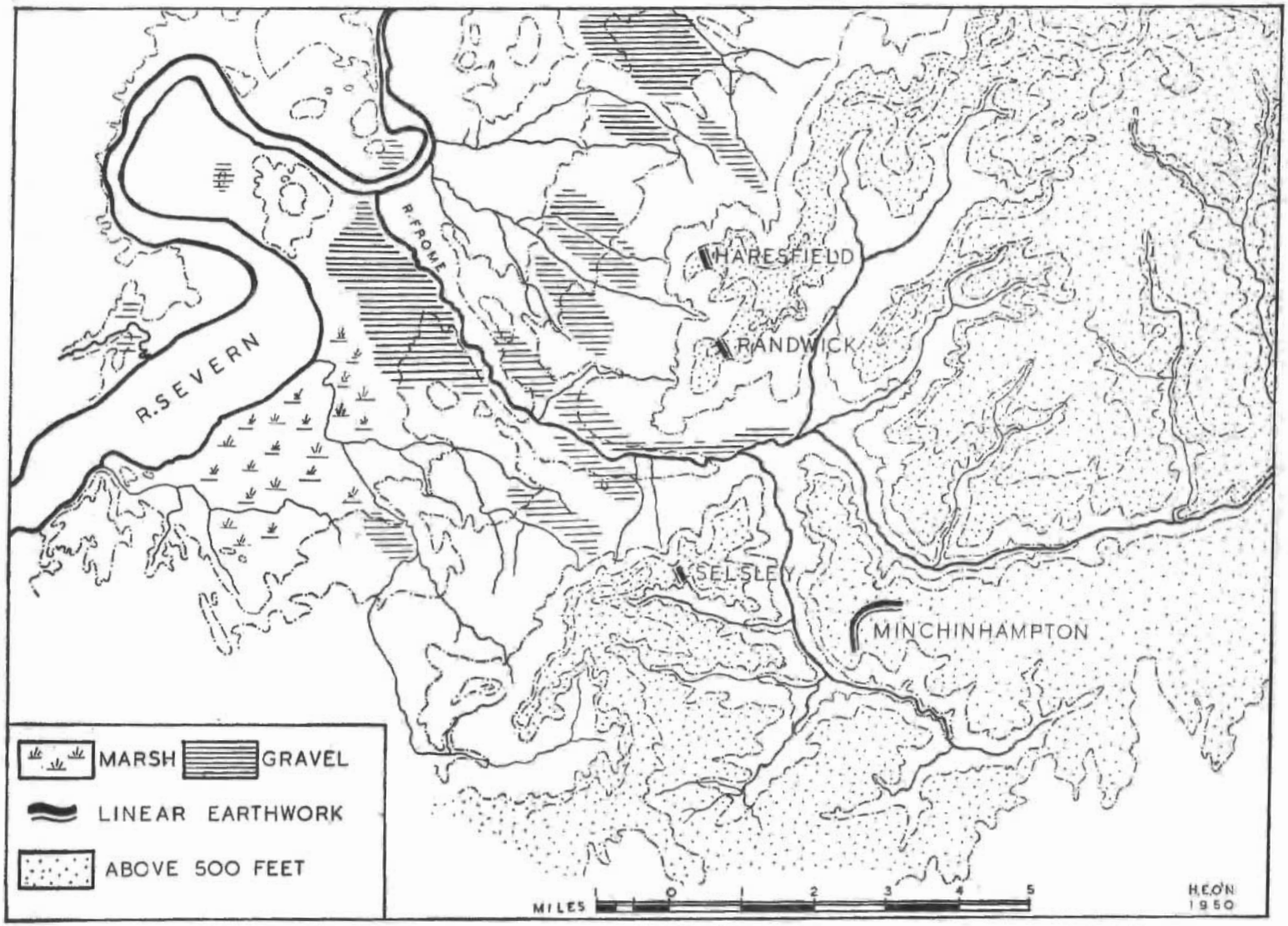


FIG. 3. THE ARLINGHAM BEND OF THE SEVERN AND ADJACENT LINEAR EARTHWORKS

There is more to be said about Rodborough and Arlingham Bend. Across Minchinhampton Common there is a linear earthwork called The Bulwarks (Fig. 3). It runs in a curve for about a mile with ditch to the east. It must, therefore, have been devised by men living on or possessing the Common against others coming from the east. Excavation by Mrs. E. M. Clifford has shown that the bank was in existence by about the middle of the first century A.D.[1] Linear earthworks, where they have been tested, have usually proved to be of post-Roman date, but those few which are known to be pre-Roman can usually be attributed to the Belgae. Is it not an attractive idea to attribute this earthwork to the Silures under the influence of Caratacus, the exiled Belgic Chieftain? There are three other short linear earthworks on adjacent hills—Randwick, Haresfield and Selsley. Together these four lie athwart all the reasonable ways down from the Cotswolds to the gravel lands towards and in Arlingham Bend. There are no such earthworks elsewhere on the escarpment of the Cotswolds. Surely they are the defences or at least defining lines of a bridgehead of the Silures under the influence of Caratacus, the result of one of their incursions into Roman territory or the base from which they made those incursions.

If that be so, the foundation of the legionary fortress against the Silures at Gloucester (Kingsholm) is seen in a new light. Caratacus, if it was he who built the Bulwarks, expected that he had thereby barred access to the land of the Silures. But he reckoned without the Roman general's genius. The Romans refused to make a frontal assault on the earthworks, which might be costly in men. They advanced another way and outflanked the Silures' position by securing another crossing of the Severn at Gloucester. With the legion established there, the native position at Minchinhampton became untenable. No doubt it was abandoned, the Roman camps at Rodborough and perhaps at Haresfield being founded immediately afterwards, to keep watch over the Arlingham Crossing.

In summary this theory is as follows. There are in the Cotswolds eight earthworks, more or less rectangular, which from their position and appearance do not seem to be prehistoric or of medieval date. One of the larger of these camps has been shown by excavation to belong to the middle of the first century A.D. (Rodborough); another is earlier in date than a Roman road (Littleton Drew). At another Roman pottery has been found (Tunnel-Mouth). It is suggested that all these camps were made for use by the Roman forces during their conquest of Britain.

Some of the camps may even date from A.D. 43. Those of Batsford, Latton and Littleton Drew would have been of use as small posts, to maintain the submission in that year of the local population, the Dobuni, whose emblem may well have been the White Horse at Uffington. Others of the camps seem certainly to have been sited to command

[1] *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, lix, 295–7.

junctions of native tracks, and others again give a good command of the approach to the land of the Silures by the Arlingham Bend.

It is indeed likely that, if such detailed evidence could ever be recovered from the soil, these camps and the linear earthworks would be shown to illustrate the ebb and flow of Roman conquest and Silures' resurgence in the years between A.D. 43 and A.D. 50.

The chief point of the theory is that Romans, like others, in their initial advance relied not upon roads, which we call Roman, but on existing tracks. If this theory is a correct one, it will be capable of application elsewhere than in the Cotswolds. At Pentrich in Derbyshire, for example, there is a small oblong camp, almost certainly early Roman in date, which lies on a hill-top.[1] It is near a Roman road, but is totally disregarded by it. In the same way the Roman road, the same one, Rikneild Street, passes close by Metchley Roman Camp (Birmingham), and Shenstone Roman Camp (Staffordshire), already cited, ignoring them. They are known to belong to the time of conquest. Clearly they were out of use when the road was made.

Just so in the Cotswolds the Fosse Way, we believe, did not exist at the time of conquest or for some years afterwards. It is seen to override one of the camps which are the subject of this paper, just as it overrides Margidunum in Nottinghamshire.[2] In any case its junction with Akeman Street just east of Corinium strongly suggests that it is later in date than the east-west road, which may well be the early Roman successor of the prehistoric Berkshire Ridgeway used in the early stages of conquest. Over a decade ago Dr. Davies Pryce showed that the central portion of the Fosse Way at least could not archaeologically be related to Ostorius Scapula's line of A.D. 47.[3] The new reasoning confirms his words, adding to them the probability that it did not exist at the time. Miss K. M. Kenyon has likewise expressed doubts of the early dating of the Fosse Way at Leicester,[4] and it will probably be found in due course that this model Roman road, practically straight for 200 miles, has that nature quite fortuitously. It may be found to be but a series of separate links between towns, in no way intended as a through route. After all, it does not appear as such in the Antonine Itinerary.

[1] *Journ. Derbyshire Arch. Soc.*, xxxiii, 111–114.
[2] Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, Fig. 5.
[3] *Ant. J.*, xviii, 34 ff.
[4] *Reports of the Research Committee of Soc. Ant.*, 15, Jewry Wall, Leicester, 39.