ART. II. – *The Roman Army in Cumbria.*

By DAVID J. BREEZE.

The second Dorothy Charlesworth lecture, delivered in Kendal 5 October 1987.

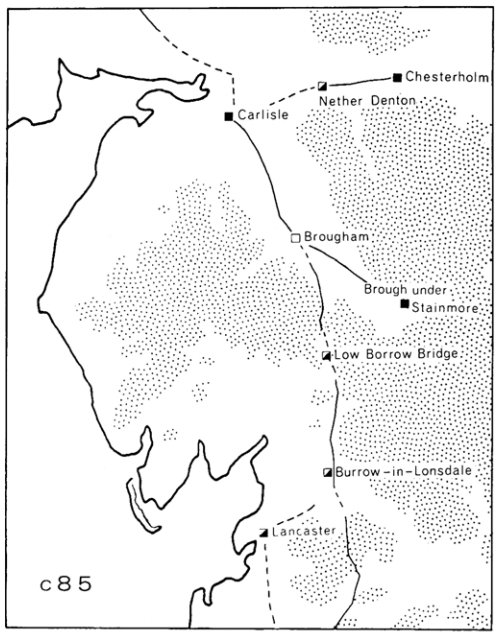
THE first Dorothy Charlesworth memorial lecture was given by Dr Donald Harden on the subject of Roman Glass. My concern is with the other of Dorothy's primary archaeological interests, Roman military affairs. My intention is to consider a range of questions relating to the Roman military presence in Cumbria. These include: what was the nature of military deployment in Cumbria; how did it develop; why did it change; and intimately connected with that, what were the functions of the army units based in this area? Finally, one very important question, how did the presence of the Roman army affect the indigenous population?

The maps which form the basis of this discussion are based upon the painstaking work of scholars and archaeologists such as Dorothy Charlesworth operating both in the field and in the study. In particular the series of papers on individual forts by Eric Birley, published in these *Transactions* from 1931 to 1960, has proved of considerable value in preparing these maps. The maps will inevitably be wrong in detail, yet it is unlikely that the broad pattern of each map will be wrong. Thus I feel that they can stand as general statements of Roman military deployment in Cumbria as perceived in 1987 (for other general statements see Potter 1979, 356-66; Shotter 1980; Breeze and Dobson 1985; Hanson 1987).

The occasion of the Roman invasion of northern England is not in doubt. The unceremonious departure of Queen Cartimandua from her kingdom during the Roman Civil War of 68/9 and the parallel rejection of the client status which that kingdom had enjoyed probably since the mid 40s, led, almost inevitably, to Roman reprisals (Tacitus, *Histories* III, 45; Hanson and Campbell 1986). These took the form of the invasion, conquest and absorption of the Brigantes within the Roman province. Inevitably, because the *coup d'état* against Cartimandua would have been viewed by the Romans as an act of rebellion against themselves: Roman emperors regarded client states as virtually part of their empire (cf *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 27; Luttwak 1976, 30).

Petillius Cerialis, governor from 71 to 73 or 74, certainly attacked the Brigantes and in a series of battles operated, if not actually triumphed, over most of their territory (Tacitus, *Agricola*, 17). None of Tacitus' bluster about the achievements of his father-in-law Agricola can destroy that fact. We are not even specifically told that Agricola ever operated as governor within Brigantia; the reference, in his second season, to many tribes which until then had maintained their independence and the adding of a new part to the province may imply that he was already campaigning beyond Brigantia (Tacitus, *Agricola*, 20; A. R. Birley 1975, 143).

A difference of four or five years between the alternative dates for the establishment of forts in northern England, 73 or 78, is not too serious; and may be impossible ever to resolve. Certainly we can accept the statements that in Agricola's second and third seasons he constructed forts within conquered territory south of the Tay (Tacitus, *Agricola*, 20 and 22) as being as close to proof as we can achieve that some forts had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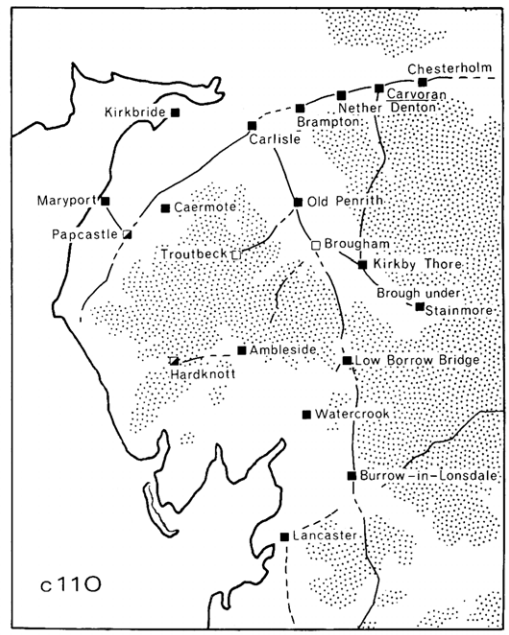
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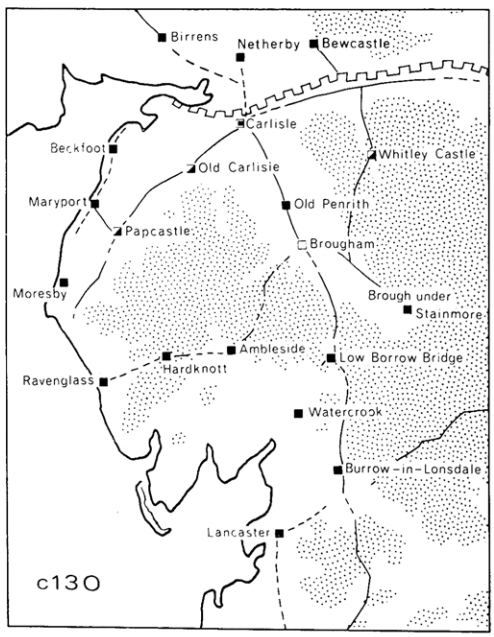
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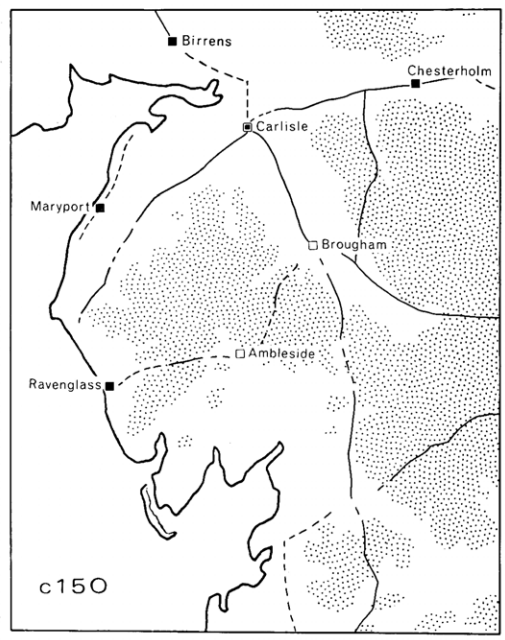
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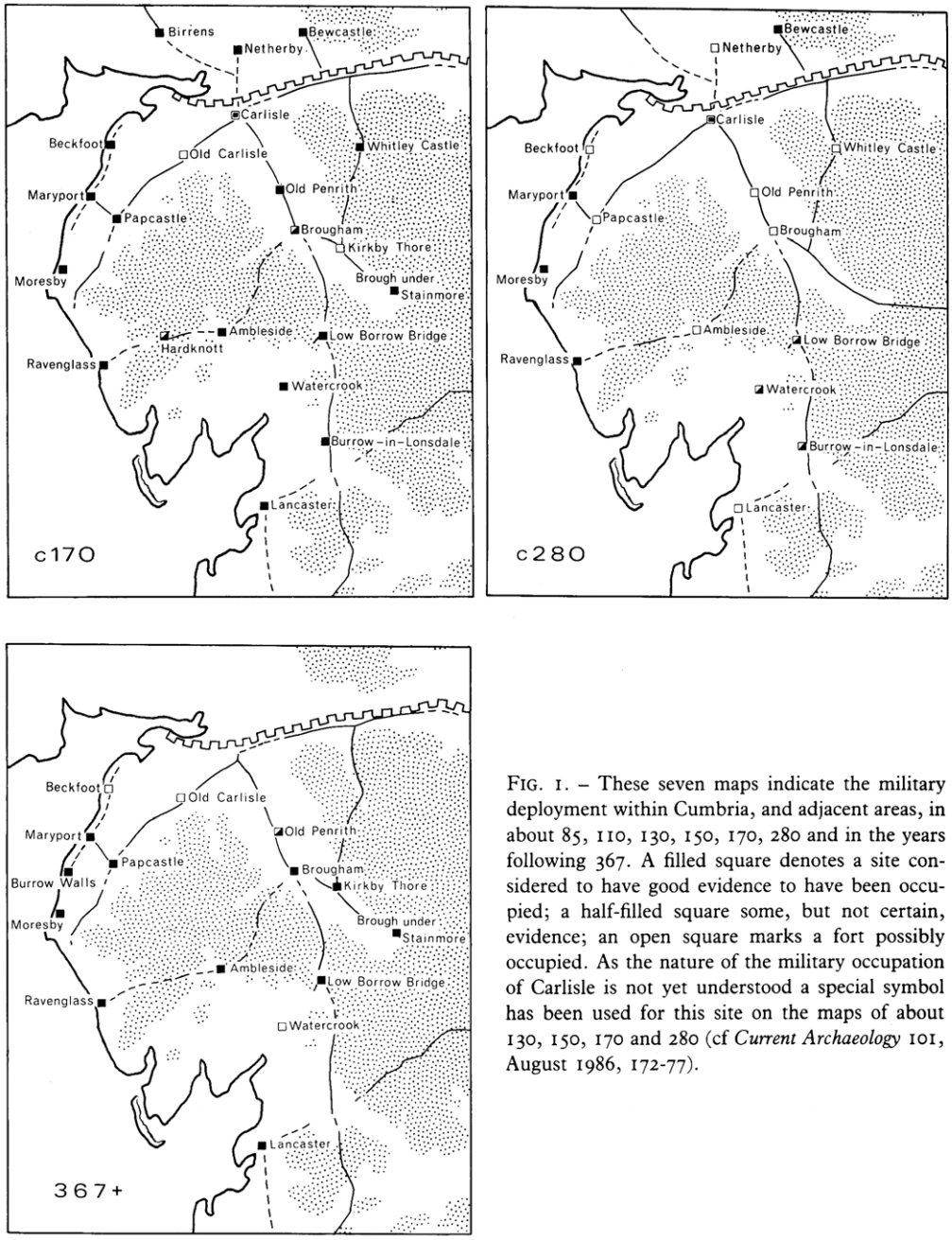

FIG. 1. – These seven maps indicate the military deployment within Cumbria, and adjacent areas, in about 85, 110, 130, 150, 170, 280 and in the years following 367. A filled square denotes a site considered to have good evidence to have been occupied; a half-filled square some, but not certain, evidence; an open square marks a fort possibly occupied. As the nature of the military occupation of Carlisle is not yet understood a special symbol has been used for this site on the maps of about 130, 150, 170 and 280 (cf *Current Archaeology* 101, August 1986, 172-77).

been built in northern England by 79 or 80. In order to find out which forts we have to turn to the evidence of archaeology.

The archaeological evidence is primarily in the form of coins and pottery. These materials are not as good evidence as inscriptions and they can give only an approximate date for initial occupation. Few forts in north-western England have been examined other than by trenches, and, as the earliest deposits can lie beneath 300 years of later occupation, it would not be surprising if the small quantity of late first century pottery obtained from excavations does not reflect a true picture of the earliest days. This archaeological evidence indicates Roman military presence only at forts on the main routes north: that now adopted by the A6 and the other, the A66 over Stainmore. In all cases the amount of dating evidence is small, but nevertheless it does indicate activity here earlier than at other forts in the county, though evidence from Northumberland also indicates an early date for the establishment of the important cross route, the Stanegate.

Where coins and pottery give out, spacing may help. Forts are generally about a day's march apart. This, it seems, was notionally about 14 miles, though it might stray up to 20 miles. On the road north, Ribchester and Burrow-in-Lonsdale were 25 miles apart, Burrow and Low Burrow Bridge 15, Low Burrow Bridge and Brougham 17 miles, Brougham and Carlisle 19 miles; an average of 19 miles. In between Brougham and Carlisle lay Old Penrith. It has produced some pre-Hadrianic material (E. Birley 1947, 175-6, Poulter 1982, 56, 60), but one might wonder whether its spacing suggests a date of construction rather later than the initial advance. Running south-eastwards along the Stainmore road, the distance between Brougham and Brough-under-Stainmore is 18 miles; again we might see Kirkby Thore as an addition to the original pattern.

At a rather later date regiments seem to have been established elsewhere. A new road was formed, the Maiden Way, linking the Stainmore route with the Stanegate. It was presumably because existing forts would not have been satisfactory as the termini of the Maiden Way that Kirkby Thore and Carvoran were added to the primary network. The two forts and the road carry Whitley Castle with them, though its date of construction is not known. All three forts may date to the late first or early second century: the Carvoran modius, which dates to the reign of Domitian, may imply a date for this fort in the late first century, but as the object is transportable not too much weight should be placed on it. A date a little before the turn of the century has been proposed for the construction of a fort at Watercrook, at Kendal (Potter 1979, 358), while Caermote has produced at least one sherd dated 60 to 90 (Bellhouse 1960), though too much weight should not be placed on one piece of pottery. It seems possible that Troutbeck is an early foundation, occupied for a relatively short period (Higham and Jones 1985, 18). Ambleside and Hardknott, it has been suggested, were established under Trajan (Hartley 1966, 14). Hardknott has produced a Hadrianic inscription (*J.R.S.* 55 (1965) 222, No. 7) and one wonders whether the Trajanic pottery might in reality relate to a very early Hadrianic foundation.

The pattern established by the early second century was to change little in essential characteristics for perhaps 200 years, with two exceptions. In the 120s the construction of Hadrian's Wall altered the balance of forces in the north, while from 140 or a little later until probably about 163 many forts were abandoned as a result of the invasion of southern Scotland and its incorporation within the province. This latter interlude was

relatively brief and seems to have had no lasting effect on the disposition of military forces in northern England. The building of Hadrian's Wall did result in an increased military presence in the north, but it was a near constant factor thereafter and thus can be ignored, or at least relegated to the background: my concern in this discussion is with what Eric Birley termed the hinterland of Hadrian's Wall.

John Mann (1974) has isolated a major change in Roman military deployment in northern England in the mid-third century. He has compared the presence at many sites in the hinterland listed in the late Roman official register, the Notitia Dignitatum, of new-styles units, the *numeri* and *equites*, with the continuing existence of old-style units, *cohortes* and *alae*, at other sites, mainly on the Wall, and from this argued that the old-style predecessors of these new fourth-century units had been withdrawn or disbanded at an earlier date, to be subsequently replaced by the new-style units. Thus the appearance in the Notitia of the *numerus Solensium*, a unit with a characteristic fourth-century name (Occ. 40, 28), implies that its base, Maglona, or Old Carlisle as this probably was, had been abandoned for a time and the third-century garrison, the *ala Augusta*, withdrawn or disbanded, sometime between its last recorded mention at Old Carlisle in 242 (*RIB* 897) and perhaps 326, which is the latest date we can assign to the creation of one of the new-style units (Mann 1974, 38). The creation of these new-style units was an empire-wide phenomenon; their appearance in Britain coincides with the rise of the Picts, first mentioned in Roman sources in 297.

The late fourth-century fort distribution pattern is not remarkably different from that of 200 years before. This may obscure, however, other differences. In particular, it does seem probable that the size of the auxiliary unit in the fourth century was markedly smaller than in the earlier empire (Duncan Jones 1978). Whether this reflects a similar decline in the scale of military forces which the enemy could muster is a more difficult question to answer.

In summary, the pattern is thus: the establishment of forts on the main lines of communication in the immediate aftermath of the conquest; the construction of forts elsewhere within the north-west in the late first century and early second century; this pattern continuing until the end of Roman Britain, though with the individual forts changing, particularly in the early second century, Papcastle replacing Caermote, for example, and the balance of forces altered permanently as a result of the construction of Hadrian's Wall in the 120s; and with two interludes, one relatively short in the mid-second century and the other longer from the mid-third century into the fourth century.

We can now turn to examine some possible reasons for these changes. The initial distribution of military forces in the 70s seems to have been restricted wholly to the main lines of communication: the rest of Cumbria contained no physical military presence, or at least no presence manifested by the Roman fort. It has been suggested that the later placing of forts within western Cumbria indicates that the Lake District was by-passed by the Roman army to be conquered and occupied later (Higham 1986, 153-4; 173-4). This argument, however, makes several assumptions; an unconquered area could be left in the wake of a Roman advance; there were unconquered people within the Lake District; and an actual military presence was necessary to indicate the conquest of an area. To take the last point first. It is a common modern assumption that the presence or otherwise of Roman forts within a certain area reflects the political sympathies of the people living within that area: Roman forts indicate a hostile popu-

lation, a lack of forts a friendly tribe. This is too simplistic an assumption. The Roman state controlled people not so much by the establishment of a permanent military presence, but by the certainty of retribution if the Roman peace was disturbed (Luttwak 1976, 30-3). Indeed at times it might make more sense to place Roman soldiers on friendly territory, where they could live more easily, rather than post them within a hostile environment where they would live under the constant strain of uncertainty.

The real power of Rome could make it indifferent to any necessity to bring all people in the north under its sway before proceeding further. Yet, it might seem unlikely that Agricola would have continued his northern advance without covering his rear. Indeed, the whole tenor of the *Agricola*, as Tacitus describes the activities of the second, third, fourth and fifth seasons, does imply the submission or conquest and subsequently consolidation of all south of the Forth-Clyde line.

There is, moreover, some indication that these Lakeland forts were established at different times. Caermote and probably Watercrook date to the late first century; Hartley placed Ambleside and Hardknott in the first decade of the second century. We do not seem here to be dealing with a unified response.

A further point may be made. These forts are all small. Ambleside covers 2 acres, Hardknott 3·25 acres, Caermote 3·6 acres, Troutbeck 3·75 acres, Watercrook is the largest at 3·87 acres. None are thus capable of holding more than the smallest auxiliary unit in the Roman army.

The suggestion that the people of the Lake District were hostile to Rome is relatively new. The starting point is the suggestion by Brian Hartley that the earliest datable pottery at Ambleside and Hardknott falls into the first decade of the second century. Potter (1979, 357-8) suggested that the Lakeland tribes were at first controlled by a treaty, enforced by the presence of Roman units along the main north-south corridor, to be replaced by direct military control in the late Flavian period. Higham (1986, 173-4) has gone further and proposed that Lakeland had been by-passed, i.e. unconquered, in the advance north, to be dealt with later when time allowed. But this has led to a conundrum. The central mountains were practically uninhabited, as Collingwood pointed out and Higham and Jones (1985, 71) in the latest treatment of Cumbria accept, yet the four forts of Ambleside, Hardknott, Caermote and Troutbeck surround the Lakeland massif. Higham (1986, 173-4) thus has to argue for a hostile refugee population within the Lake District, surviving for a generation before being squashed by the Roman army.

Surely Collingwood (1929, 10-13) provided the answer fifty years ago. The Eskdale road from Ambleside past Hardknott to Ravenglass served a strategic purpose, providing a southern connection from the main road north to the sea. Collingwood, of course, believed these three forts and the road to be Agricolan, but we now know that Ravenglass was a Hadrianic foundation (Potter 1979, 48-9), while Hardknott has furnished a Hadrianic inscription. Collingwood connected Ravenglass with the Agricolan proposed invasion of Ireland; we can now see it as part of the Hadrianic frontier dispositions.

Troutbeck, undated, lies on the road across the North Lakeland, a road still imperfectly understood. This may be a northern counterpart of the southern cross-route, though perhaps earlier in date.

Caermote also may be earlier. This fort has been linked with metalworking. It appears to have been replaced by Papcastle and, interestingly, it lies off the line of the road

linking West Cumbria with Carlisle. It looks to have been an early foundation, abandoned and replaced as the Romans came to understand the local geography and their own military requirements better.

This gradual build up of units in Cumbria reached its peak under Hadrian. There is no evidence, either literary or archaeological, for a hostile population requiring control and I suggest that the reason for this military deployment has to be sought elsewhere. Dobson (1970, 34) has suggested that in the later second century more regiments were based in County Durham than in the earlier years of the century simply because in the aftermath of the withdrawal from Scotland in the 160s the army found this area convenient for stationing units which could not be squeezed onto the Wall line but which were part of the expeditionary force for activities north of the Wall. The problem in Britain was simply that the northern frontier was so short that not all units could, with ease, be placed upon it. Thus some were housed within forts to the rear. This is geographical determinism. The build-up of forces in Cumbria in the late first century and early second coincides, interestingly, with the progressive withdrawal from more northern commitments. As units were withdrawn from north of the Tyne-Solway isthmus they had to be located somewhere, presumably as close as possible to the frontier. The placing of these forts in the northern countryside does not indicate that the local tribesmen were still rebellious, merely that their land was convenient for the establishment of Roman forts.

Rivet (1969, 190-2) has suggested that these were "unsuccessful" forts because the locals had not been civilised, thus allowing the army to move on. In fact, for a time, in the mid-second century, the army did move on and we cannot point to a single fort in the hinterland of Cumbria which definitely remained occupied at that time. If the natives really had been restless surely some bases would require to have been maintained. This was but an interlude. Scotland was abandoned, the army returned to Cumbria. The forts were re-occupied because of their useful proximity to the frontier and because of the existence of a powerful enemy to the north. The peaceful conditions which appear to have pertained on the northern frontier between the end of the campaigns of Severus against the Caledones and Maeatae in 211 and those of Constantius Chlorus against the Picts in 305 coincided with the disappearance of many units from the hinterland forts of northern Britain. In the fourth century many of these forts were re-occupied, exactly at the same time that a new threat arose in the north, the Picts. In both cases we can surely see cause and effect in action, underlining the reason for the considerable military strength in Cumbria from the late first century into the middle years of the third. These units were there not to control the local population, but to help defend the province from attack during the decades which saw considerable disturbances on the northern frontier, troubles which were so serious that they led to the creation and continuation of the largest provincial army in Britain and the service within the province of the ablest generals of the day. When that threat receded, in the mid-third century, units could be withdrawn and forts abandoned.

The point is of some importance. Each argument carries with it a view of the north. Those who prefer to interpret these forts as holding units primarily concerned with the control of the local population see the Brigantes as incipient troublemakers throughout the Roman period (e.g. Branigan 1980, 20-1; Todd 1981, 159; Higham 1986, 175). The other view carries with it a more peaceful scenario within the province, while emphasising

the seriousness of the external threat. It seems to me more likely that the concentration of Roman forces in north-west England reflects unsettled conditions beyond the frontier, not behind it, coupled with the narrowness of that frontier which led to the strategy of spreading troops across the countryside rather than squeezing them into the narrow and short line of Hadrian's Wall.

In view of this strategy it is not surprising that the forts should be placed within good farming land as Higham (1982) has pointed out; this was only sensible. But this argument should not be carried too far; when it was considered necessary to place troops in a more hostile environment, such as Hardknott, it was done.

In passing we may note that other reasons may have led to forts being retained in northern England, including mining. Simpson (1964, 139) has suggested that here may lie the reason for the retention of the fort at Brough-on-Noe and Hanson (1986) has proposed the same factor behind the continuing occupation of forts in Wales through the later second into the third century. R. F. J. Jones (1986, 230-1) has recently reminded us of the early exploitation of minerals in the north by the Roman army and the Brough-under-Stainmore lead seals seem to indicate military involvement in this activity into the third century (Richmond, 1936). This may account for the continued occupation of some forts, Whitley Castle for example.

If units were placed in the hinterland of Hadrian's Wall in order to support troops on the frontier, it might be expected that there would be some visible military strategy behind the dispositions.

In the early third century there does appear to be such a strategy in operation. On Fig. 2 a square has been used to indicate an infantry regiment, a triangle, a mixed unit of infantry and cavalry, and a lozenge, a cavalry regiment. The first two types of units, infantry and mixed infantry and cavalry appear to be spread at random, though with a preponderance of mixed units on the roads to the north, with the exception of Whitley Castle, whose occupation, as we have seen, may have been connected with mining. More significant is the placing of the two cavalry units, on the road leading south-west from Stanwix, where a thousand strong cavalry unit was based, while another cavalry unit, a *numerus equitum* lay at Brougham on the main road south, a pairing noted by Eric Birley some years ago (E. Birley 1963, 122). Together these four units could field a cavalry force somewhat over 2,000 strong.

This cavalry force was balanced on the east side of the Pennines by three cavalry units on the Wall, one at Halton Chesters by Dere Street, with one on each side. Behind the Wall, in County Durham, two more cavalry units lay at Binchester and Chester-le-Street. There thus seems to have been a roughly equal balance of cavalry forces on each side of the Pennines, each group focused on a road leading north from the Wall, from Portgate, beside Halton Chesters and from Stanwix.

Ten years ago in a stimulating book, Luttwak (1976, 127-90) suggested that in the late third century the Roman empire responded to the barbarian incursions by changing their defence strategy from emphasis on a frontier barrier to defence in depth. This theory has been effectively challenged by Professor J. C. Mann (1979, 180-1), who has demonstrated the weaknesses of both the evidence and the argument. Nevertheless, an attempt to relate Luttwak's theory to northern England has been made (G. D. B. Jones 1978, 140-2) so it is worth considering the case in some detail. Luttwak (1976, 131) characterised defence in depth by the establishment of mobile forces and strongholds in

the hinterland. The former was represented by field armies and the latter by the defending of towns by walls, and the construction of fortified posts, forts and granaries supported by watch-towers. If such a strategy operated in northern England, some or all of these items should be recognised.

Our knowledge of the nature of the Roman military forces in Britain in the late fourth and early fifth centuries is substantial owing to the survival of the Notitia Dignitatum. In the later third and early fourth centuries it is much more patchy. Yet what evidence we have consistently demonstrates that the establishment of a field army in Britain occurred late in the fourth century, there being no evidence for an earlier field army or mobile force in the island. Indeed in the mid-fourth century, when such forces were required in Britain, they had to be specially brought over from the continent.

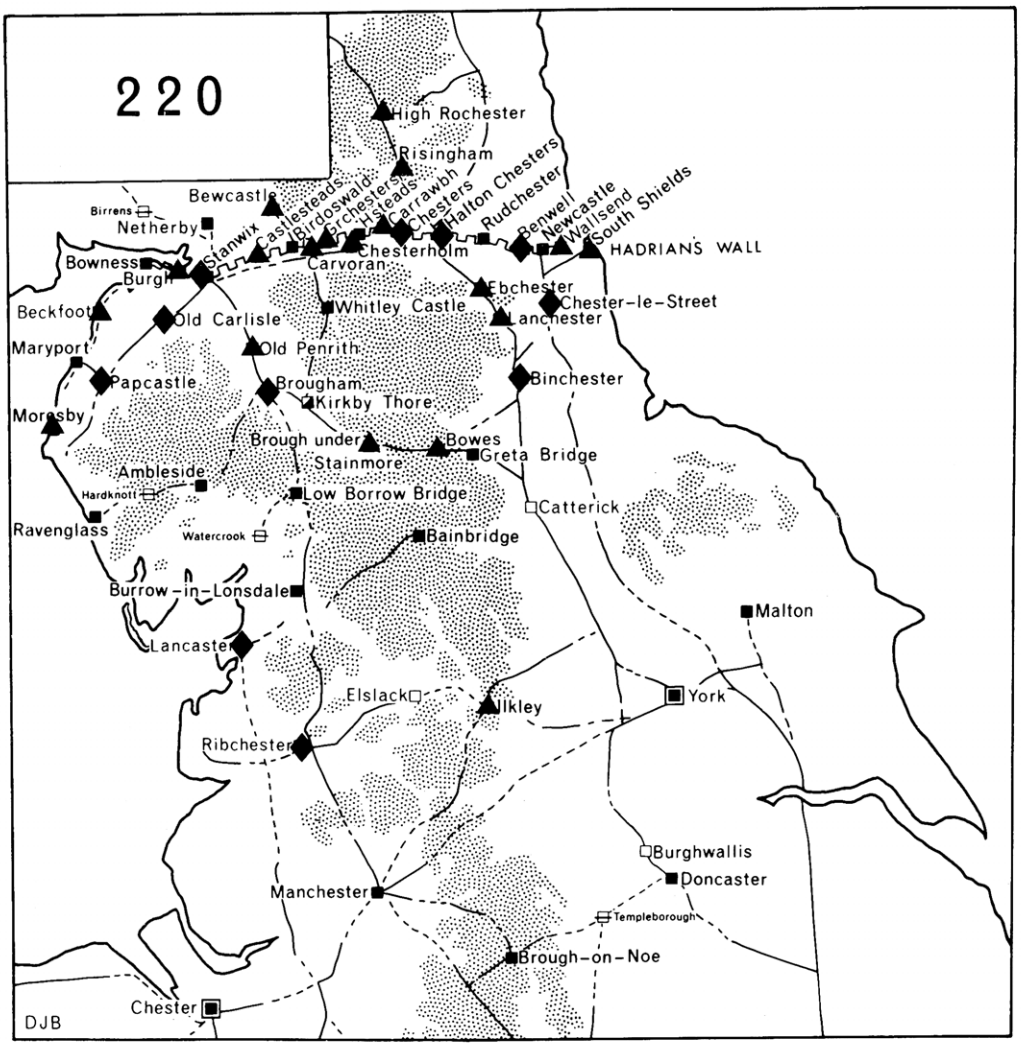

FIG. 2. – This map indicates military deployment in north Britain in about 220. A triangle denotes the location of a mixed infantry and cavalry unit; a lozenge the location of a cavalry unit. A square crossed by a line marks a fort believed to have been abandoned either at the end of the second century or early in the third century.

The town of Corbridge, immediately behind Hadrian's Wall, was fortified by a wall at an unknown date, as was Catterick. But otherwise, and with the exception of Carlisle and perhaps Kirkby Thore, towns such as those which flourished in the southern part of this island or elsewhere in Europe, do not appear to have existed in northern Britain. What we have in the north are civil settlements outside forts and none of these seem to have been defended at any time during their existence.

We may have two defended road posts in Cumbria, Wreay Hall and Barrock Fell, but both appear to date to the late fourth century, not the late third century (Farrar 1980). Fortified granaries of the type discovered on the continent (Petrikovits 1971, 188) are unknown in northern England. Also unrecorded in Cumbria are watch-towers of the type which are known in late Roman contexts elsewhere in Britain, for example on the Yorkshire coast, where again they date to the late fourth century (Collingwood and Richmond 1969, 65). The fact that granaries and watch-towers existed elsewhere in the empire and have been recognised suggest that they did not exist, or at least did not exist as a system, in north-west England. We can therefore state that on present evidence the strategy of defence in depth, even if it existed as a concept, did not operate in northern England in the later third century or the first two-thirds of the fourth.

The regiments created in the fourth century and stationed in northern England occupied, in all cases so far as we can see, earlier fort sites. These units did not form a field army, which would have consisted of several units brigaded together, but, it may be supposed, served the same purpose as their predecessors – to act as support for the troops on the Wall. Hence they were placed on the main routes to the north, as had been their predecessors. Interestingly these new units did not occupy new-style forts. With the exception of Lancaster (Richmond 1953, 11-12), none of the late Roman forts in northern Britain displayed the new architecture embodied in the Saxon Shore forts: the most we can generally point to is the occasional replacing of the earlier two fort ditches by a single broad ditch, typical of the late Roman period. Again, the fact that a "Saxon-Shore type" fort has been recognised at Lancaster emphasises their absence elsewhere in northern England. The reason for the construction of new-style forts with high and thick stone walls with small heavily defended entrances at less than a dozen places in the coasts of Britain and the continuation elsewhere of the traditional style of Roman fort is not clear.

What is interesting in north-west England in the fourth century, so far as the generality is concerned, is the sameness of the military pattern. The only change we may note is the strengthening of coastal installations: a Saxon-Shore type fort at Lancaster, a new fort probably now at Burrow Walls (Bellhouse 1966), reoccupation of some Cumbrian coast posts (Potter 1977, 183) – all presumably against the Scotti – otherwise the pattern of military deployment is the same as operated from Trajan through to the mid third century. This may reflect some inertia on the part of the military authorities; more likely perhaps it reflects a basic sameness in the tactics employed by the enemies of Rome to the north and to the west. We may also note that there is no "running down" of the defences in the north in the later fourth century: they continue to be strengthened and improved even during the last decades of Roman Britain.

The strengthening of the defences in Britain did not prevent the enemy from breaking through them. In 342/3, 360 and 364 the barbarians harassed the frontier, though it is not clear that they broke through; in 367 occurred the so-called Barbarian Conspiracy

when Britain was simultaneously attacked by several enemies (Ammianus Marcellinus 20, 1, 1; 26, 4, 5; 27, 8, 1-4). At an unknown date in the fourth century a tombstone was erected at Ambleside recording the killing of a soldier in the fort by the enemy (*JRS* 53 (1963) 160). The enemy is not defined and we cannot be certain whether the inscription refers to an enemy from outside the province or to brigands or bandits operating within. Even if *hostes* was being correctly used to refer to enemies of the State, it would be pointless to speculate on the occasion of the killing.

The final question I would like to consider concerns the impact of the Roman army on the native peoples of Cumbria. It might be expected that the initial impact would have affected the ruling class primarily. Thereafter the common people will no doubt have settled down under their new masters, continuing farming and paying taxes to the new authority. Taxes in the Roman empire were paid in cash, though in one instance in a backward frontier area they were paid in hides, and in a second possible example of payment in kind, in recruits (cf Breeze 1984, 227; Mann 1985, 21-3). In addition, corn and other military necessities might be requisitioned, to be paid for at a set charge. The requisitioning of corn in Britain is described by Tacitus (*Agricola*, 19). We do not know how taxes were paid in the military zone of Britain, but we can presume that they were paid and that food was requisitioned and paid for.

The arrival of the Roman army and the imposition of peace in northern England might, in simplistic terms, be expected to have led to increased agricultural exploitation and to a rise in population, that is assuming that the tribesmen were not over-taxed and over exploited leading to precisely the opposite. Unfortunately it is not possible to test this hypothesis because there is insufficient known of the extent of settlement and agriculture in the immediate pre-Roman period.

Higham (1986, 177) has clarified for us the effect of the continuing military presence in the north on the settlement hierarchy. Instead of the complex southern pattern of large towns, small towns, villages, Romanised villas and native farms, in the north the ranking is much simpler: fort, civil settlement and farm, or at most farming hamlet. We may note also that the distinction, at least so far as material goods are concerned, is not between military and civilian but between town, as represented by fort and civil settlement, and country, for in comparison with the forts and civil settlements few coins, pottery or other Roman goods have been found in the farms of the northern countryside. Higham has suggested to me that these two factors, simple settlement hierarchy and few Roman goods passing out to the farms, is because, in essence, the army acted as the pinnacle of the social hierarchy, preventing by its demands the growth of a free market economy and thus the establishment of a natural settlement hierarchy and the Romanisation of the countryside.

If this is correct, the removal of regiments from the Eden valley in the later third century, when it may be presumed the civitas Carvetiorum was created (Mann 1974, 38-9), ought to have led to the establishment of a settlement hierarchy similar to that pertaining in southern Britain. Such a development might be most readily recognisable in the presence of the villa. However no villa has been found in Cumbria. It may be that the model is not correct. The withdrawal of army units may even have led to a decline in agriculture as marginal land was no longer so profitable to cultivate (Higham 1978, 7-8). However, it should be remembered that social and economic changes do not happen overnight, but take a generation or two to work through. In southern Britain the

development of the farmhouse often proceeded from the round house through a rectangular timber building to the stone villa. At Ditchley, for example, a rectangular timber house was built about 70, to be replaced by a stone villa a little over 30 years later (Radford 1936, 67-8). A similar, but later, development can be seen in Yorkshire (Branigan 1980, 22-3). In the Eden valley, then, we might expect to see, at some sites, the round timber houses being replaced by rectangular timber houses, which in turn give way to stone villas. The first change might occur at the very end of the third century or in the early fourth century, and the second sometime later in the fourth century.

We can perhaps recognise the first phase in Cumbria. Several farms have been found to contain rectangular timber buildings, or in two cases possibly simple stone buildings (Blake 1959; Higham 1981; Higham and Jones 1983). Where these have been datable, the change in building style was in the third or fourth centuries. Higham and Jones (1983, 65) have recently noted that this "signifies a degree of Romanisation, and the desire to adopt the type of lifestyle suited to the proto-villa structure in the south-east which had been common in the first century A.D." If I am right this new building style should have been but a step on the road to the establishment of stone villas in the Eden valley. However, just at the time that the second phase in the evolution might have been expected to take place, the Roman army returned to place new units in the Eden valley. This may have thwarted the natural development and prevented progress to the last phase, the construction of stone villas. We can never be certain of this, but it would be interesting to try to date more closely those timber rectangular buildings. For also, if I am correct, we can see here the effect of the Roman military presence in the north: the prevention, not the encouragement, of Romanisation in the countryside. The climate and the poor land in so much of the north must have played a part, but the Eden valley is different, for the removal of the military forces, and the establishment of the civitas Carvetiorum, would, bearing in mind the natural advantages, surely have led to a Romanised countryside if it had been allowed to evolve unhindered, as happened in Germany. Here, however, unfortunately for the fourth century supporters of a free market economy, it was possibly the rise of the Picts and the resulting strengthening of Roman defences which put an end to such an evolution. Be that as it may, it was the strength of the native peoples beyond the frontier that led to the continuing presence, throughout most of the Roman period, of considerable military forces in Cumbria. It would be ironic if in turn this led to the inability of the indigenous inhabitants to take full advantage of the pax Romana and develop along the lines of their cousins in the southern, more Romanised, part of the island.

A note on the title *numerus equitum*

By JOHN C. MANN.

The title *numerus equitum* did not describe a regiment which was similar to the *cohors equitata*, the mixed infantry and cavalry unit of the Principate, which was nominally either 500 or 1000 strong. It is the earlier name for an irregular cavalry unit, and was replaced by the title *cuneus*. There is no evidence to suggest that there was any difference between a *numerus equitum* and a *cuneus*.

The title *numerus equitum* is not found after about 300. After that date a new term,

cuneus equitum, does indeed appear. But this title only refers to the superior grade of cavalry units on the frontiers, which ranked as *ripenses*, and they are mainly found on the River Danube. Occasionally *cuneii equitum* are promoted into the field army (e.g. *Not. Dig. Or.* VII 34; *Occ* VI 85), but field army cavalry otherwise appear as *equites* or *comites*.

The inscription recording the *n(umerus) eq(uitum) [St]ratonicianorum* at Brougham (*RIB* 780) must thus date to before about 300. Probably it dates to many years before 300: *N EQQ* is used of the Sarmatae at Ribchester under Gordian III, 238-44 (RIB 583), but this had been replaced by *cuneus* (not *cuneus equitum*) in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*Occ.* XI 54). *Cuneus* is already in use under Severus Alexander, 222-35 (RIB 1594), and was well established by 241-2 (RIB 882 and 883). I suspect that the title *numerus equitum* only has a short vogue, in the late second and early third centuries, before giving way to *cuneus*; this is probably the date of the Brougham inscription.

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