

VI.—THE BUILDING OF HADRIAN'S WALL: A RECONSIDERATION¹

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Abbreviations employed in the text:

- BHW* *The Building of Hadrian's Wall* by C. E. Stevens, CW extra series, volume xx, Kendal (1966).
DN *Transactions* of the Durham and Northumberland Architectural and Archaeological Society.
MC Milecastle.
RHW *Research on Hadrian's Wall* by Eric Birley, Kendal (1961).
RIB *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* by R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright, Oxford (1965).
SW Stone Wall.
T Turret.
TW Turf Wall.

The new edition of C. E. Stevens' paper *The Building of Hadrian's Wall*, published in 1966 by the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, presents a stimulating revision of his 1947 Horsley Lecture. It is an attempt to use the evidence of the structural differences in the turrets, milecastles and curtain of Hadrian's Wall, together with the epigraphic evidence, to produce a reasoned theory of the allocation of the building of the Wall.

The present writers, though working from the same

¹ For a bibliography of Hadrian's Wall see *RHW* and the *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, 12th edition, edited by I. A. Richmond. To these should be added *AA*⁴ xliii 87 ff. for Ts 18b, 25b, 26a, 35a, 45a and 51b and *AA*⁴ xlvi for T 41a. The writers would also like to thank Mr. R. Harris for his information about T 31b in advance of publication.

evidence, and agreeing with many of Mr. Stevens' arguments, have reached entirely different conclusions as to how the Wall was built. One of the bases of Mr. Stevens' theory rests on the centurial stones from the Wall, which are the major evidence for the division of work within the individual legionary blocks. The structural evidence provides the clearest indication for the different working parties on the Wall and it seems best to discuss this before proceeding to those centurial stones which mention legions. No attempt will be made to divide the work within the legionary blocks between the cohorts and their centuries. Mr. Stevens has also argued,² on the basis of epigraphic evidence, that each legion was divided into two gangs, one constructing foundations and the other curtain. There is no real evidence to support this, especially since Professor Birley has pointed out³ that the four cohorts considered to be building foundations, and therefore infrequently represented on centurial stones, are precisely those four which are, according to Vegetius, detailed to train recruits.⁴ Mr. Stevens' elaboration, that his eight "cohort equivalents" built legionary blocks of sixteen structures, would appear to be invalid and is in any case unnecessary. Only the broader aspects of the problem, such as the division of labour between the legions, are dealt with here. It will be preferable to indicate the nature of the evidence before proceeding to theory.

Professor Eric Birley has recently discussed the normal classification of milecastles,⁵ but a slight modification seems necessary here. A simpler, and equally valid classification, is that suggested by Mr. J. P. Gillam in discussion with the writers and is as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. short axis | 2 pairs of responds |
| 2. long axis | 2 pairs of responds |
| 3. long axis | 1 pair of responds |

² *BHW* 12 ff.

³ *RHW* 257.

⁴ Vegetius, *de re mil.* II, 6.

⁵ *RHW* 89 ff.

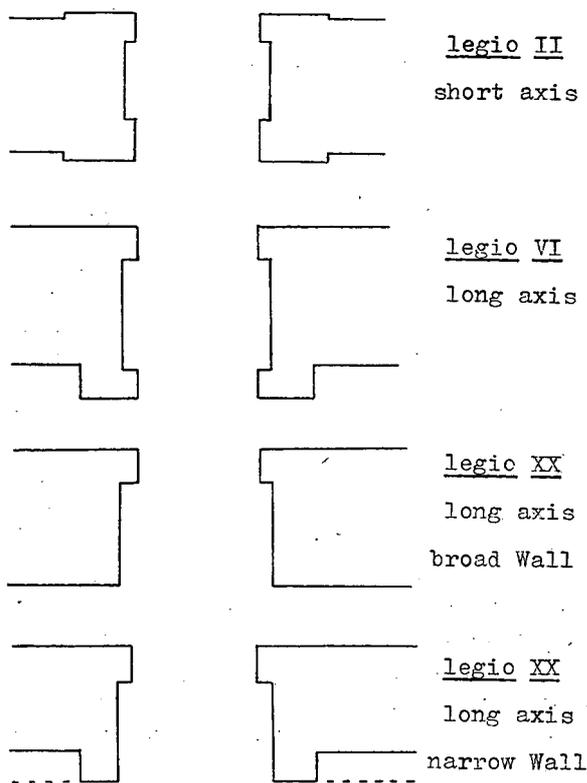


FIG. 1

It has been suggested that there is a variation of the gateway with one pair of responds. In fact this is not so. Where the gateway is found in broad Wall it is no longer than the thickness of the Wall itself; in narrow Wall the passage walls of the gateway, built to receive Broad Wall, project beyond the face of the milecastle wall into the milecastle (fig. 1).

Epigraphic evidence enables us provisionally to assign these milecastles to the various legions attested on the Wall. Dedication slabs of legion II, found in MCs 37, 38 and 42, show that this legion built the first type of milecastle. A

dedication slab of legion XX was found in 1849 built up in a stable three hundred yards west of MC 47. Since this is the nearest milecastle to the findspot the inscription is usually taken as evidence of building here by the twentieth legion. This impression was re-inforced when the milecastle was excavated in 1935 and the south gateway was found to correspond to one of the two types of gateways not associated with legion II, since it appeared to have only one pair of responds. In addition the milecastle had a long axis and the side walls were of Standard A construction. It was therefore assumed that these three factors—long axes, gateways with a single pair of responds and Standard A—were the hallmarks of the twentieth legion. It has already been noted that gateways with one pair of responds and a projection into the milecastle are found only in milecastles with narrow walls. The walls of MC 47 are, however, broad. Moreover, the present writers believe, on careful examination of the plan, that there are in fact two pairs of responds. Long axes and gateways with two pairs of responds are associated in all other cases with Standard B construction,⁶ while long axes and one pair of responds are always found in conjunction with Standard A construction. MC 47 therefore appears to be a hybrid, with the gateways, which determine the axis of the milecastle, built by one legion, and the side walls completed by another.

Inscriptions found on the narrow Wall in the central sector⁷ imply that the twentieth legion completed the building of the Wall in this area. The MCs in the same sector⁸ have Standard A construction, long axes and gateways with one pair of responds. Rather more than a hint of a sixth legion type comes from MC 50 SW. Here two inscriptions of legion VI were found unstratified when the milecastle was excavated.⁹ This milecastle has a long axis and a gate with

⁶ Mcs 18, 19, 20, 22, 48.

⁷ *RIB* 1645, 1762 and *JRS* L (1960) p. 237, 11.

⁸ For example 30 and 39.

⁹ *RIB* 1933 and 1934. The inscription of the second legion also from this milecastle appears to be of a later date (*RIB* 1932).

two pairs of responds.¹⁰ It is therefore possible to assign the remaining two types of milecastles. Legion VI built milecastles of long axis and gateways with two pairs of responds, legion XX milecastles of long axis with only one pair of responds. This is, however, only a provisional interpretation, and must rest until further evidence materialises.

In addition Mr. Stevens has correctly distinguished¹¹ three types of turrets. These are:

1. broad side walls (4 feet) door to east
2. narrow side walls (3 feet) door to east
3. narrow side walls (3 feet) door to west

There may be a modification to the second type since in the central sector of the Wall several turrets have their doorways towards, but not at, the east end.

Differences have also been noted in the curtain of the Wall. In 1931 a change in the treatment of the courses above the foundation was discovered between MC 17 and T 17a.¹² These two standards are referred to as A and B. In Standard A only one course is laid over the foundations before an offset course occurs, whereas in Standard B, three courses are laid over the foundations, below the offset.¹³ The foundation and the curtain, which includes the courses below the offset,

¹⁰ The Standard C construction found in the north wall of the milecastle and elsewhere in this rebuilt sector appears to have no significance as far as legionary working parties are concerned, though this may simply reflect our lack of knowledge. (For a discussion of Standard C construction see below.) *RIB* 1427 from Halton Chesters demonstrates that legion VI was in fact involved in building on the Wall. As will appear later, the work of this legion was dislocated and its gangs re-deployed building forts. This strengthens the theory that the twentieth completed the Wall in the central sector and therefore that its milecastles, gateways were not of the type found at MC 47.

¹¹ *BHW* 10 f. Cf. *RHW* 108 f. for a different suggestion. The classification advanced by Mr. Stevens has superseded this.

¹² *AA*⁴ ix 255 f.

¹³ At Willowford there are in places four courses below the offset. In Standard C construction, found west of the river Irthing, there is no offset in the curtain wall. Since Standard B is not uniform in its offset courses it may be that in certain places what has been taken for Standard C is in fact Standard B with one course more than usual below the offset.

were probably built by separate gangs, since they obviously needed a different treatment and technique.¹⁴

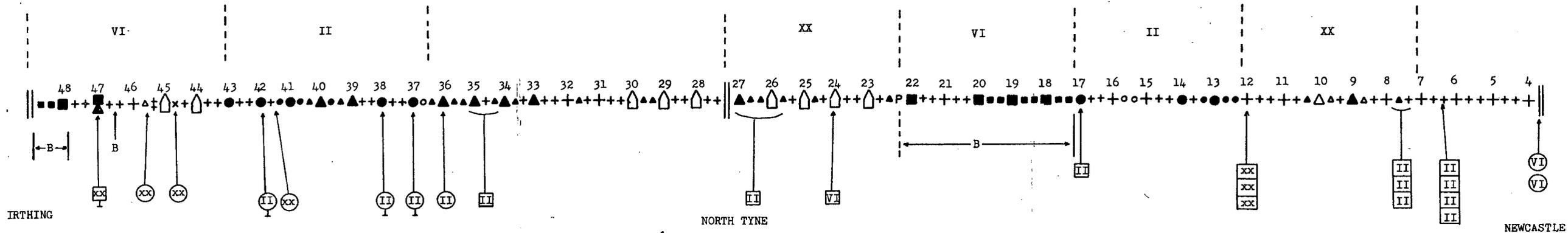
Mr. Stevens has pointed out that where several consecutive milecastles belong to the same type and the turrets associated with them also correspond to one of the three types enumerated above, it is logical to suppose that they were both built by the same legion. The case is further strengthened if a distinctive standard of construction or inscriptions are present. Such a stretch of wall may be termed a legionary block.

The allocation of the milecastles, turrets and curtain to the three legions has been set out in diagrammatic form below (fig. 2). It can be seen that in the area 7b to 22, that is before dislocation takes place, there are three distinct legionary blocks. The peculiarities of the three legions can be summed up as follows:

legion	milecastle	turret	curtain
II	short axis	broad wall	A
	2 pairs of responds	east door	
VI	long axis	narrow wall	B
	2 pairs of responds	west door	
XX	long axis	narrow wall	A
	1 pair of responds	east door	

As Mr. Stevens points out, the sector 17a to 22 inclusive is the clearest legionary block. MCs 19, 20 and 22, which have all been excavated, belong to the sixth legion, as does MC 18 in spite of its slightly unusual north gate. Ts 17a, 17b, 18a, 18b, 19a and 19b all have narrow walls and west doorways. Furthermore between MC 17 and T 17a there is a change in the standard of construction and in all the structures mentioned above Standard B is found. T 22a is the first structure which, on examination, displayed Standard

¹⁴ The position of the drain, left overlying the broad foundation in a stretch of narrow Wall at Planetrees, demonstrates that an offset course, built by the foundation team, has not been removed.



ALLOCATION OF STRUCTURES

legion certain probable

	MC	T	MC	T
II	●	•		○
VI	■	▪		□
XX	▲	△	△	△
unknown	+	+		

- ⤴ long axis
- P Port Gate
- ||| bridge
- B Standard B construction

- x 44b - built for the narrow Wall, but with a west door
- ‡ 45a - signal tower, built independently of the Wall

- INSCRIPTIONS
- ⊗ exact findspot known
 - ⊠ exact findspot uncertain
 - ⊥ milecastle dedication slab

HADRIAN'S WALL MC 4 TO THE RIVER IRTHING
 THE ALLOCATION OF THE STRUCTURES
 AND CURTAIN TO THE THREE LEGIONS

FIG. 2

Note: the sign for M.C. 36 should be for a long axis M.C., not for a legion XX type.



A construction. There are fifteen structures from T 17a to MC 22 inclusive, though the Port Gate might be included in this block, making sixteen. Westwards, in the stretch up to the North Tyne, it is obvious that something unusual happened to the building of the Wall. There are places where broad Wall ends and narrow Wall, laid on broad foundation adjoins it, and where some courses of broad Wall have been built. It looks as though all the foundation has been laid in readiness for broad Wall, but that the curtain builders were, for some reason, unable to finish their task. The evidence for such points is well set out on pp. 26-27 of Mr. Stevens' article. Since there are complications in this sector it is better to work eastwards from MC 17.

MCs 17, 14 and 13 are assignable to the second legion. Ts 12a, 12b, 13a, 15a and 15b all have east gateways and four foot wide walls, which as we have seen, in association with the milecastles already mentioned, points to work by legion II, who are attested on an inscription (not a dedication slab) found in MC 17 (RIB 1419). Standard A construction prevails throughout the block. It is difficult to say exactly where the block ends. None of the structures between T 10a and MC 12, where the change-over must have come, have been excavated. T 10a is certainly of the type associated with legion XX. However, three centurial stones of legion XX have been found in the region of MC 12¹⁵ and it seems safe to assume that legion II's block began and that of legion XX ended either just east or just west of that milecastle. This allows legion II fifteen or sixteen structures from about MC 12 to MC 17.

Working eastwards again, MC 9 is a twentieth legion type and MC 10 has a long axis. Ts 7b and 10a, which have east doorways and narrow side walls, T 8b with narrow side walls and T 9b with an east door correspond to those already ascribed to legion XX. The standard of construction, where obtainable, is Standard A. Unfortunately, in the face of modern development, it is unlikely that the eastern end of this

¹⁵ RIB 1385, 1390, 1391.

block will ever be known, but from MC 12 to T 7a or MC 7 there are fifteen or sixteen structures.

The remaining nine or ten structures to MC 4, the eastern terminus of the original broad Wall, cannot be assigned to any legion, since all have been destroyed or made inaccessible by modern building. Two inscriptions of legion VI have been found, fallen from the bridge at Newcastle (*RIB* 1319 and 1320). These may imply that the bridge was built by this legion; if this is so, and it is only a guess, the other two legions may have divided the sector 4 to 7a between them.

Mr. Stevens finds some difficulty in explaining the three building stones from Denton of legion II (*RIB* 1358, 1359 and 1360), which probably came from the curtain between T 7a and MC 8, and which may be connected with four others from Benwell (*RIB* 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344). He points out that they occur in the so-called "long mile" (7-8),¹⁶ and shows the latter to be a misconception based on the failure of the North of England Excavation Committee to find MC 7, in its measured position, in 1928, and its wrong assumption that T 6b stood half-way between Benwell fort and MC 7. MC 7 is probably further west than the Committee thought and as Mr. Stevens goes on to show the only valid assumption about the spacing of the structures in this sector is that the curtain lengths 7a to 7b and 7b to 8 are longer than usual. These curtain lengths are exactly those in which the three centurial stones of legion II were found. Mr. Stevens explains them by postulating an extension of the Wall from MC 4 to the river at Newcastle—"the Lort Burn extension"—which would allow ships to berth within the frontier line and which was a precursor of the later Wallsend extension. The twentieth legion, he thinks, were given this extension to build as an addition to their original allocation. To compensate them for this extra work, they were "let off" the piece of Wall between 7a and 7b, which, after the whole block had been re-surveyed, was filled in by legion II—hence the inscriptions.

It is, in fact, very difficult to date these intrusive and very

¹⁶ *NCH* XIII 528 f.

ornamental stones of the second legion. They probably belong to a later reconstruction of the Wall in this area and may, as Brenda Swinbank considered, be Antonine.¹⁷ Because there is such doubt as to their date and because they do not look at all like any of the ordinary centurial stones on the Wall, the authors feel obliged to discard the Lort Burn extension theory as complicated and unnecessary.

Three legionary blocks from T 7b to MC 22 inclusive have therefore been established and we can return to the sector T 22a to the North Tyne. All the excavated turrets in this sector, 24b, 25b, 26a and 26b, have narrow walls and east doorways. They are associated with Standard A construction, and with one twentieth legion milecastle (27). The complications, already noted above, which occur in this block mark it out as later than those to the east, which, as far as is known, were completed, according to plan, in broad Wall. Something happened to prevent legion XX from finishing the curtain of its block, though it does seem to have finished the structures and foundation. At Planetrees (between MC 26 and T 26a) and at T 26b the points of reduction from broad to narrow Wall show that here, at least, the legion was building east to west. It would be interesting to see if other "areas of dislocation" can be found anywhere else on the Wall, to be associated with the other two legions.

As Mr. Stevens points out, MC 48 and parts of Ts 48a and 48b all display Standard B construction, which is the mark of legion VI. MC 48 is a sixth legion milecastle and T 48a has a west doorway and narrow side walls. In addition, as noted above, the authors believe that the gateways of MC 47 were erected by legion VI.

In 1957 Dr. Peter Salway examined a piece of Wall on the west side of the Greenhead to Gilsland road, which cuts through its line in the curtain 46a-b. He found broad foundation and though no course remained above the foundations on the north side, there were on the south, three courses, un-

¹⁷ *DN* x part iv, 382-99 Cf. *RIB* 2054 which must be post-Hadrianic.

interrupted by an offset, in broad Wall. Though, in the absence of an offset, this may not indicate Standard B construction, it certainly rules out Standard A. Standard B construction also occurs in parts of the Wall between MC 48 and the river Irthing with one course of broad Wall built above the offset in places before the narrow Wall was built on top of it. Both these examples suggest that legion VI had at least begun to build the first few courses of curtain within this sector. The axes of MC 44 and 45 are both long, which could indicate building by legion VI, but also by legion XX.

The present writers agree with Mr. Stevens in supposing that legion VI was at work in the Wall sector just east of the Irthing and that its work was dislocated here. It is difficult to place an eastern limit on their allotted length, but the first structure eastwards which can be assigned to another legion is MC 43. In the absence of further evidence, it is suggested that in their second block, the sixth legion was given an extra amount of work to do, with a possible seventeen structures from T 43a to the Irthing, with perhaps the Irthing bridge as well, while the twentieth legion, east of North Tyne, had fifteen structures from T 22a to the river as well as the bridge over the North Tyne, which would be longer than that over the Irthing. It is unlikely that legion XX was given any structures west of North Tyne, in this particular block, because the sequence of building at Chesters fort, on Simpson's evidence,¹⁸ is such as to suggest that the fort ditches came before the broad foundation of the Wall, and therefore that the foundation here was not laid until the later fort decision had been taken.¹⁹ Neither of the legions completed their allotted blocks though evidence of dislocation in that of the sixth legion is harder to find. It looks as though it may have occurred after the first four or five courses had been laid

¹⁸ *PSAN*³ x 216-217.

¹⁹ This suggests an administrative hitch or demarcation dispute, *cf.* *BHW* 31 ff. Mr. Stevens considered that there was a similar dispute at Housesteads, but this is not so. No broad foundation was laid here, the ends of the western fort ditches were overlain by the narrow Wall.

above the foundation, as seems to have happened at Willowford and perhaps between Ts 46a and 46b. By this time the legion may have built all the important structures in its block, since none have been found of any other legion. It is obvious from centurial stones that the twentieth legion had some part in the building of the curtain in this sector, which is almost invariably narrow.²⁰

The work of legion II ought to have been dislocated at the same time. There are plenty of traces of it in the central sector of the Wall. MCs 37, 38, 41, 42 and 43 are assignable to the second legion as are Ts 39b, 40b and 41a, while 36b, erected before Housesteads and later demolished, clearly precedes dislocation and therefore must have been built by the second legion. It is difficult to determine a pattern of work in this sector because so many of the structures are unexcavated, and, since it must be assumed that each legion would be allowed to build within its own block in its own way, comparison may not be made with the order of building of either of the other two legions. It appears, from the structural evidence, as though at least the gateways of MC 37 were erected by legion II and that both gateways and north walls of MCs 38, 42, and 43 were built by it before dislocation. Perhaps legion II left MCs 39 and 40, later built by the twentieth legion, because they were in poor signalling positions and because, for the time at least, the Wall system could manage without them. The easternmost structure in this block is T 36b, all excavated structures between there and North Tyne being built by legion XX.

The present writers therefore suggest that the block 36b to 43 was assigned to legion II, while the twentieth were building east of North Tyne and the sixth just east of Irthing. The suggested block consists of twenty structures, roughly equal to the allocation of the other two legions, who had both to build bridges. In the legionary block just described complications occurred. Structures assignable to legion II are inter-

²⁰ *RIB* 1645, 1762, *JRS* L (1960) p. 237, 11.

spersed with those of the twentieth legion, that is MCs 39 and 40 and Ts 39a and 40a, while no broad curtain has been found in this stretch. It seems clear that dislocation took place for all three legions in three different areas.

It is generally recognised that the dislocation was caused by the decision to place forts on the line of the Wall. The implementation of the decision to dig the Vallum, however, is contemporary with, or later than, the decision to construct the forts. The Vallum decision was clearly a result of the fort decision, and although they might have occurred at the same time, the dislocation must have been caused by the latter. The reason for the decision is unknown and may reflect unrest north of the Wall, or merely difficulty in deploying through milecastle gates. Several forts overlie the curtain or structures of the Wall which were demolished when the forts were built.²¹ The spacing of the forts has been adequately discussed in a paper by Brenda Swinbank and J. E. H. Spaul.²² The fort decision was obviously important, to be carried out as quickly as possible, and surely accounts for the re-deployment of the gangs building the Wall.²³

The many traces of the twentieth legion, both structural and epigraphic,²⁴ in the central sector, suggest that while the other two legions were removed for fort building, it was this legion which was left to complete the construction of the Wall. The presence of broad foundation in the central sector suggests that some, if not all, was laid by legions II and VI before re-deployment, within their legionary blocks. The rest was presumably laid by legion XX after dislocation, except on the crags where foundation appears to be lacking. At the same time they probably erected the most important

²¹ For example Halton Chesters, Chesters, Housesteads and Great Chesters.

²² *A.A.A.* xxix 221-228.

²³ Mr. Stevens has once again raised the problem of the Vallum at Limestone Corner. The structures here appear to post-date the earthwork. If this is indeed the case it could point to an early date for the digging of the Vallum, since it would take the foundation gangs of the twentieth legion longer to reach this area than the Vallum diggers. In that case the Vallum may have been dug in 124 or 125. For a discussion of the absolute chronology see below.

²⁴ *RIB* 1645, 1762, 1852 and *JRS* L (1960) p. 237, 11.

parts of those structures which were not yet built—particularly the north and south gateways of milecastles and most of the turrets.²⁵ Legion XX would have most work to do in the area west of North Tyne up to 36b, where no building had yet taken place.

When this was done the remainder of the structures and the curtain had still to be built. By this time the decision to narrow the Wall appears to have been taken, since all the curtain in the central sector is narrow. The stage at which the milecastles were finished off is difficult to determine. The walls of MC 47 are broad, and, according to the excavators, of Standard A construction.²⁶ Perhaps it was a "priority" milecastle helping to guard the Irthing and Tipalt gaps, the whole of which was finished by legion XX as they completed the laying of the broad foundation and the construction of key structures. The walls of every other excavated milecastle in the central sector, except MC 48, are narrow, which implies that they were completed after the decision to narrow the Wall. It is significant, however, that the walls of MCs 37, 38 and 42 all fit in with their south gateways and though narrow are much wider than those of other narrow Wall milecastles in the central sector. It looks as though they were originally planned as broad Wall milecastles with narrow side and south walls and were finished to their original specifications, probably by legion XX after dislocation. This implication is borne out at MC 37 where the north wall tapers from the gateways towards its east and west walls to reduce it from broad to narrow. This suggests that the second legion only built the gateway, and that the rest of it was finished off by the twentieth legion after the decision to narrow the Wall had been taken. At MC 42 the side walls abut the broad north wall of the milecastle, suggesting two

²⁵ This explains the points of reduction on many of the turrets in the central sector. These wing walls were built for bonding in with the broad Wall, which was to come later, but was never built. In fact, it was the narrow Wall which was brought up to the turrets.

²⁶ *A.A.*⁴, xiii, 270 ff.

periods of building. How long it was before the side walls of such milecastles were built is not clear.²⁷

The excavated turrets which can be assigned to legion XX in the central sector are 29a, 29b, 31b, 33b, 34a, 35a, 35b, 36a, 39a and 40a. To these 44b must be added. It is a narrow Wall turret and was built after the dislocation. The milecastles assignable to the same region in this sector are—33, 34, 35, 39 and 40. MCs 28, 29, 30 and 36 have long axes and it is probable that they also belong to the twentieth legion.

It is now time to review the relative chronology of the building of Hadrian's Stone Wall. The stretch from, and including, the bridge over the Tyne at Newcastle to about T 7a was built first. There follow three legionary blocks from about T 7a to just past MC 22 consisting of about fifteen structures for each legion. In the next block of work the legions were dispersed. Legion XX was building from T 22a to North Tyne, while legions II and VI were building from T 36b to the Irthing. The total number of structures was intended to be slightly larger than in the previous three legionary blocks. It was while building these blocks that the legions were re-deployed in order to build the forts on the Wall. Legion XX was left to complete the structures and curtain from T 22a to the Irthing, with perhaps some later help from legion II,²⁸ while the other two legions built the forts. Inscriptions have been found on the Wall which allow us to attempt an absolute chronology.

It is generally assumed that legion VI came over to Britain in 122 from Lower Germany with Platorius Nepos, who is first mentioned in Britain on a military diploma of July 122, along with the previous governor Pompeius Falco. Hadrian, whose visit to Britain is recorded by his biographer,²⁹ also came from Lower Germany, and therefore probably in company with Nepos in 122. It is doubtful

²⁷ At MCs 38 and 42 the north walls had been built to broad specifications, while the situation at 37 suggests that the second legion was actually in process of building here when the order to stop was received.

²⁸ *RIB* 1569 and 1574.

²⁹ *SHA* Hadrian XI.

whether such a monumental building programme would be started before the arrival of the emperor and the governor under whose direction it was probably to be built. If Nepos did arrive in the early summer of 122, bringing legion VI with him, there would be only half of that season left, perhaps enough for the sixth legion to erect the bridge at Newcastle and for the other two legions to build the nine or ten structures from MC 4 to about T 7a. It must be remembered, though, that the surveying of the Wall must have taken a long time, and it may not have been until the following year, 123, that the building actually commenced.

The writers suggest that the second season of actual building, that of 123 or 124, was the first full one, with all three legions at work in the three adjacent blocks from T 7a to MC 22. The next season, that of 124 or 125, began as planned, with legion XX building the stretch east of North Tyne and legions II and VI transferred to blocks in the central sector. That the second legion was working in this sector is shown by inscriptions from MC 37, 38 and 42, recording Nepos as governor. Dislocation therefore occurred in these areas while Nepos was still in Britain. The construction of the forts commenced in the same governorship, for two inscriptions from Benwell and Halton Chesters give the name of Platorius Nepos.³⁰ The year 124 is a preferable date for the dislocation in order to allow the construction of the forts to proceed far enough for the inscriptions to be erected before Nepos left. If the dislocation occurred in 125 there would be insufficient time for this to happen, unless the term of office ended in 126.³¹ For this reason the building of the Wall probably started in 122.

The only piece of evidence from the Wall structures after re-deployment is the inscription already mentioned (*RIB* 1852) from near MC 47, which records the names of both

³⁰ *RIB* 1340 and 1427.

³¹ Platorius Nepos was still governor in September 124, when his name appears on a diploma. The usual term of a governorship is three years. Cf. now A. R. Birley, "The Roman Governors of Britain" in *Epigraphische Studien* 4, 69 f.

Hadrian and legion XX. The layout, unusual for a mile-castle dedication slab,³² suggests that it was redesigned to omit the name of Nepos, which it was originally supposed to show.³³ It looks as though it was erected after Nepos, for whatever reason, left Britain after September 124. It is possible that MC 47 was completed by legion XX soon after this event. The original scheme could almost certainly have been finished within the governorship of Platorius Nepos, that is before the end of 125.

The decision to narrow the Wall was taken after the rest of the broad foundation, and probably MC 47 was built. A reasonable date, which would allow time for this to be completed would be 126 or 127, under the next governor of Britain, whose name is not known. That work was still proceeding on the Wall in 128 or later is implied by the evidence from Great Chesters. Here the narrow Wall is bonded in with the fort wall. An inscription, probably from the east gate, records Hadrian with the title *Pater Patriae*, which he only took in 128.³⁴

No mention has yet been made of the Turf Wall, running from the Irthing to Bowness-on-Solway, which accounts for roughly a third of the whole length of the Wall. The present state of knowledge about it makes it quite impossible to decide who built it. A fragment of an inscription from MC 50 TW (*RIB* 1935) dates at least the eastern end of it to the governorship of Platorius Nepos, while the fact that Birdoswald overlies the Turf Wall shows that this stretch at least was built before the fort decision, that is probably before 124. The effect of this on the programme set out above for the Stone Wall is not known; either each legion was divided into different working parties or other units were used.³⁵ The

³² Cf. *RIB* 1634, 1637, 1638, 1666.

³³ It has been suggested that, unlike legion II, legion XX never intended to include a governor's name on the inscription. This is, however, unlikely.

³⁴ *RIB* 1736. The hoard of nine coins, ending in a coin of Hadrian of 128, found under a flag in a "smithy" in the north-west corner of the fort need not necessarily be primary. Cf. *A.A.*² xxiv 33, 43, 62.

³⁵ For the suggestion that legion IX *Hispana* played a part in these operations see E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army*, 27 f.

Turf Wall was therefore being built at the same time as the Stone Wall, and there is a hint that it was built like its eastern counterpart in blocks. All the excavated turrets between MCs 49 and 54 have doorways to the east and Turf Wall MCs 49, 50, 51 and 54 have long axes. This would make a legionary block of sixteen structures. On the other hand T 54a has a west doorway and thicker walls than the preceding turrets, and MC 79 has a short axis. There is no more evidence than this for differences in the Turf Wall structures and it is evident that systematic excavation in this sector is essential.

The sector between the Irthing and MC 54 was soon replaced in stone by the same legion which built MC 48, that is the sixth, since all the stone milecastles have long axes and gates with two pairs of responds.³⁶ Inscriptions of the sixth legion, which cannot be dated, have been found unstratified in MC 50 SW and T 50a SW (*RIB* 1934, 1938 and 1939). Unfortunately the three new turrets, 49b, 50a and 50b, built to the north of their Turf Wall counterparts, have narrow side walls and east doorways, which have previously been taken as the hall-mark of the twentieth legion. Either this part of the Wall was a joint effort, with legion VI building milecastles and legion XX turrets, or the sixth legion had changed the position of its turret doorways. In many of these structures neither Standard A nor Standard B is present, the Wall being carried straight up from the foundations. This is usually termed Standard C construction. The stretch from MC 54 westwards was replaced in stone later than that to the east, and to a different gauge. The pottery from MC 79³⁷ suggests that the conversion to stone here did not take place until about 160.

The eastern extension of the Wall from Newcastle to

³⁶ Except MC 52 which, though having a gate with two pairs of responds, has a short axis. This was presumably the easiest way of accommodating a larger number of men; it is the largest milecastle on the Wall, presumably because it had to accommodate the men stationed in the signal tower on Pike Hill.

³⁷ *CW*² lii 28.

Wallsend is built to the narrow gauge and can therefore be dated to after the narrow Wall decision, which was probably in 126, while the fact that it is not built to the intermediate gauge, which was used by the Antonine rebuilders, points to a Hadrianic date. The west gateway of Wallsend fort is of one build with the narrow Wall, showing that the fort is a secondary one, and only built after the narrow Wall decision.³⁸

The foregoing reconstruction of the building of Hadrian's Wall is, the authors believe, a simpler one than that offered by Mr. Stevens. However, any theory will remain such until further excavation of the minor structures of Hadrian's Wall brings modifications and additions.³⁹

APPENDIX

Mr. Stevens has suggested an alternative dating for the building of the Wall. Although the present writers disagree with his relative chronology a refinement of his theory seems possible. The crucial date, according to Mr. Stevens, is that of the fort decision. If this was a result of Hadrian's visit in 122—assuming this to be the correct date—it may not have been implemented until the following year, which would allow time for the inscriptions of Nepos to be erected in the central sector. Surveying may actually have commenced in 120 or even 119, following the British victory of that year. There is no positive evidence to disprove this theory, but the authors feel that the complications which it entails—the possibility of west to east building on the Turf Wall to account for the inscription of Nepos from MC 50 TW and the situation at Birdoswald, the suggestion that the forts took six years to build, the length of time it took to implement the fort decision, to name but three—tend to detract from its viability.

³⁸ Cf. the other forts in the so-called "secondary" sequence; Carvoran was rebuilt at the end of Hadrian's reign while the precise date of Carrawburgh is still uncertain.

³⁹ This paper was read in draft by Professor E. Birley, Mr. J. P. Gillam, Dr. J. C. Mann and Dr. Brian Dobson, who made several useful suggestions. We would like to thank them for their help and encouragement.