

# I.—THE NORTHERN BRITISH FRONTIER FROM ANTONINUS PIUS TO CARACALLA

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Our purpose is to consider again the evidence for the history of the Roman frontier in Britain during that period of time when both Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall had been built and were thus in simultaneous existence as structures. In its simplest form the enquiry may be reduced to the question whether the two Walls were at any time simultaneously manned. On the face of things it seems extremely unlikely that two complicated frontier works, the one manned by 10,000 troops and the other by 16,000, should have been held at the same time. It is surely inconceivable that the Antonine Wall should ever have been weakly garrisoned. With the weapons and communications of the day, to maintain a weak forward line without a strong counter attack force ready to hand would have been tactically inept; with no large unit nearer than Newstead, 80 kilometres away, no concentrated body of troops nearer than Hadrian's Wall, 155 kilometres away, and no legion nearer than York, 320 kilometres away, and that depleted by detachments,<sup>1</sup> it would have been suicidal. The Antonine Wall will have been fully garrisoned, or not garrisoned at all. Hadrian's Wall on the other hand might well have been lightly garrisoned when the Antonine Wall was fully garrisoned, for its caretaker detachments would be in no danger. Of the six theoretically possible combinations therefore some are *a priori* more likely to have been used than others. Hadrian's Wall without the Antonine Wall, the Antonine Wall without Hadrian's Wall or the Antonine Wall with a lightly held Hadrian's Wall are likelier than both Walls held,

<sup>1</sup> *RIB.*, 1460 and 1461.

Hadrian's Wall with a lightly held Antonine Wall or both Walls unmanned.

Lecturing in 1907 Haverfield<sup>2</sup> said that the object of the fortification of the northern isthmus by the generals of Pius was possibly to provide a breakwater outside the still-occupied Wall of Hadrian and to increase the difficulty of barbarian invasion by a double line. If by a breakwater is meant something weak and makeshift, then, as we have seen, the idea is quite unacceptable. If something strong and effective is meant, then it might be asked why Hadrian's Wall was also needed, and how the manpower was obtained for two systems.

In 1927<sup>3</sup> Collingwood wrote that Hadrian's line was deserted in favour of the Clyde-Forth line, and that the theory that the intention was to form a double frontier was erroneous, there being no doubt at all that garrisons were moved up from the Tyne-Solway line to the Antonine Wall, and that the older line was left to a great extent, if not altogether, undefended. This is so clear a statement of what, forty-three years later, is once more accepted, that it comes as a shock to recall that Collingwood changed his mind. In 1936<sup>4</sup> he wrote that we had to do, not with the shifting of the frontier, but with a doubling of it, and that Hadrian's Wall was not evacuated.

This firm statement was followed by a brief and somewhat inaccurate discussion which reached the conclusion that while garrisons left Hadrian's Wall, they were replaced. The real reason for the change of view emerges in subsequent paragraphs. Collingwood saw the Antonine system as sealing off the region of the Lowlands and Southern Uplands, both on the north and on the south. The region had, it was argued, been to a great extent cleared of its inhabitants by the removal of whole communities to Upper Germany. There

<sup>2</sup> F. Haverfield, *The Roman Occupation of Britain*, revised by George Macdonald, 1924; p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> *Antiquity* 1927; p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> R. G. Collingwood and J. N. L. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, the Oxford History of England, vol. I, 1st edition, 1936; pp. 143-7.

they were settled in the river valleys crossed by the inner and earlier frontier line in the Odenwald. On that line, in 145 and 146, under the designation of *Numeri Brittonum*, they built stone towers and small forts.<sup>5</sup> Collingwood's interpretation had been criticised in this country<sup>6</sup> as well as in Germany, but it was not until recently<sup>7</sup> that Dr. Dietwulf Baatz demonstrated from structural evidence that the same type of unit occupied the *numerus* fort at Hesselbach from 120/130 until after 150, and that a unit of similar type had been there from c. 90. This effectively and finally makes the *numeri Brittonum* irrelevant to any consideration of Antonine frontier policy in Britain.

In 1947<sup>8</sup> Richmond settled the matter of the double frontier once and for all. In two brief sentences in a small and tightly packed work, he wrote that the new advance was undertaken in 139-142, by Lollius Urbicus, and Hadrian's Wall as such was abandoned. The doors were taken off the milecastle gateways and the rearward boundary dyke was systematically breached. Richmond seems nowhere to have elaborated his argument about milecastle gateways. As it is crucial to an understanding of what happened not only early, but also late in the reign of Pius the evidence for the removal of the doors requires consideration.

From excavated examples it is clear that each milecastle gateway had double doors. These swung on pivots inserted in stones in the angle between the outer respond and the passage wall. Where more than one successive example survives the earlier pivot stone is usually an integral part of the structure of the milecastle. It is known from the north gate of milecastle 9, and from the west side of the north gate of milecastle 17, that the pivot turned inside an iron collar, some 10 cm. in height and 8 cm. in diameter.<sup>9</sup> The collar was

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Schleiermacher, *Der Römische Limes in Deutschland*, 1961; p. 221.

<sup>6</sup> I. A. Richmond, *Roman and Native in North Britain*, 1958; p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> *JRS*. LIX, 1969; p. 167 (H. Schönberger).

<sup>8</sup> Ian Richmond, *Roman Britain*, 1947; p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> IX, 1932; p. 256 (Eric Birley, Parker Brewis and F. G. Simpson).

let into a cylindrical hole in the stone to the extent that some 4 cm. projected above its surface; it was then secured with lead. Pivot stone collars survive in position in some of the gates of Chesters fort. The fixing of milecastle gates probably proceeded in this way. The iron collar was fixed in the upper pivot stone while building was in progress, and before the stone was laid, as otherwise there would have been difficulty with the molten lead. The lower pivot stone, laid some time before, was then hollowed to a depth so calculated that the distance from the bottom of the lower hole to the edge of the upper collar was less than the overall distance from pivot to pivot. A loose iron collar was then slipped over the lower pivot, and the upper pivot was inserted into the upper pivot hole which was of such a depth that when the upper pivot was pushed home the lower cleared the surface of the lower pivot stone with nothing to spare. The lower pivot, with its collar, was then slid over the stone and allowed to drop into the hole. Some pivot stones, though not those in milecastles, have a channel in their surface to facilitate sliding the pivot into the hole. The collar, whose rim projected, was then secured by running molten lead between the iron and the stone. When this had solidified it was impossible to remove the pivot by lifting and sliding, for the rim of the collar held it at the maximum height to which the gate could be lifted.

During the Second World War iron railings were removed from public and private property as part of a drive for materials. Most of these railings were of cast iron and set into stone sills. An examination of the sills, made at Richmond's suggestion, shortly after the War, showed that rarely if ever had it proved possible to remove the railings without breaking either the upright or the stone. There are places where the evidence may still be seen. In the sill wall round the Roman Remains Park at South Shields many of the square-section iron uprights are broken off; in a smaller number of instances the stone has been broken. In the sill wall of the boundary on the north side of Durham Cathedral many of the hollow

iron uprights are broken off, while in some instances the stone is broken. In one instance only has an upright come cleanly out of its socket, and here the stone is reddened as if the lead had been melted by a blow-lamp; this method was evidently abandoned rapidly as wasteful of fuel.

From this it follows, as Richmond saw, that milecastle doors could not be removed without damage to something. Wrought-iron collars would break less easily than cast-iron railings, and it would be the stone which would go. In a majority of instances the primary pivot stones in the milecastles are broken, right up to the hole, in such a way that collar and pivot could be removed sideways, leaving the door intact. Broken pivot stones were first recorded by Simpson and Gibson at milecastle 48.<sup>10</sup> At the north gate the primary pivot stones on either side were broken; they had been replaced at some time by new ones which survived unbroken. As the replacement stones were themselves earlier than the narrowing of the portal at the beginning of Period II (HW II), both successive stones belonged by definition to Period I (HW I), and the terms IA and IB (HW IA and HW IB) were applied to them. These terms were applied to levels in the gate, but not at this stage to the two successive occupation deposits in the milecastle, both falling within HW I, though the deposits were distinguished in the report. In all later reports on turrets and milecastles, where separate phases were present and were noted, the terms are used of the deposits as well as of the pivot stones and gateway levels.

It has been implicitly assumed since 1913 that the breaking of the HW IA pivot stones, and the end of HW IA, were strictly contemporary. The realisation of the full significance of the breaking of the pivot stones has converted the assumption into a certainty. That the events were contemporary with the first manning of the Antonine Wall is also a reasonable conclusion. In fact it was because the Antonine Wall required manning that garrisons were removed, and it was because there was a new frontier that

<sup>10</sup> CW<sup>2</sup> XI, 1911; pp. 413-415.

the old frontier could safely be pierced, with open gates wide enough for animals or wheeled traffic, at up to 78 points. There is also archaeological evidence for the date of the end of HW IA. The pottery from the HW IA level includes types which are either wholly absent from or extremely rare on Antonine Wall sites; the pottery from the Antonine Wall sites includes many examples of types which are wholly absent from HW IA. There is however a small but definite number of types found on both Walls, and the degree of overlap is roughly what would be expected if the occupation of the Antonine Wall began precisely when HW IA ended.

There is nothing exactly corresponding to HW IA and IB in the forts of Hadrian's Wall. The primary pivot stones were neither broken at any time, nor replaced before the first major reconstruction. Successive unbroken pivot stones may be seen in some of the portals at Chesters, and especially clearly in the north portal of the main east gate at Birdoswald, while unbroken and un-replaced primary pivot stones may be seen in those portals at Chesters which did not continue in use. There is however evidence of change in two forts after the end of HW IA, but before the end of HW I. At Halton-chesters the building to west of the west granary,<sup>11</sup> whether hospital or commanding officer's house, was enlarged and re-floored, and the new flooring sealed Hadrianic-Antonine and early Antonine pottery, including a mortarium stamped by MESSORIUS MARTIUS. At Birdoswald<sup>12</sup> the deposit of coarse pottery found in the alley between two buildings is Hadrianic as a group. So convenient a dump would have continued to receive pottery through and beyond the reign of Pius, had there not been a change or reduction of garrison.

Unstamped coarse pottery often had a type life of forty years or more, but the working life of an individual potter was considerably less, so that the products of those who stamped their wares reached the market, and thus the rubbish pits, ditches and other occupation deposits over a shorter

<sup>11</sup> A plan appears in Mr. A. R. Birley's Handbook to the 1969 Pilgrimage.

<sup>12</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XXX, 1930; p. 175 (E. Birley).

period. The bulk of a potter's products might well have been made and marketed within the limits of a period of occupation on the Antonine Wall, or within one of the sub-periods on Hadrian's, while the products of some potters will naturally have been marketed during a period of time which overlapped a time of change. The names of seventy-three different samian potters and fourteen different mortarium makers are known on the Antonine Wall from published records only.<sup>13</sup> Each samian potter<sup>14</sup> is represented by from one to ten stamped pieces, and each mortarium maker<sup>15</sup> by from one to seven. As many as sixty of the names of the samian potters, and eight of the names of the mortarium makers, are absent from Hadrian's Wall, forts, turrets and milecastles alike. Most of the datable samian potters represented only on the Antonine Wall seem to be early Antonine, while five of the mortarium makers are also early Antonine, the rest being either undatable or later. If the fort pivot stones suggest the continued exclusion of the unauthorised, by anything from one watchman to a thousand-strong cohort, the negative evidence of pottery suggests that the watch was in fact small.

The movement of auxiliary garrisons from forts on Hadrian's Wall to forts on the Antonine Wall, referred to by Collingwood,<sup>16</sup> who gives as an instance a move from Housesteads to Castlecary by *cohors I Tungrorum*, is incompletely attested. This is in marked contrast to the approximately

<sup>13</sup> Of set purpose the discussion of stamped wares, here and below, is based solely on published material. The study of mortaria and mortarium stamps by Mrs. K. F. Hartley, and that of stamp dies on samian by Mr. B. R. Hartley, are approaching completion, but cannot yet be regarded as available. It has been thought undesirable to use unpublished information freely given to us, orally and by letter. The conclusions here rely on a sample; the future will show how representative it is.

<sup>14</sup> Felix Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillato*, 1931. *PSAS* LXV, 1930-1931; pp. 432-448 (G. Macdonald). *PSAS* XCIV, 1960-61; pp. 100-110 (B. R. Hartley). Anne S. Robertson, *An Antonine Fort, Golden Hill, Duntocher*, 1957; p. 75. *AA*<sup>4</sup> XXV, 1947; p. 58 (E. Birley). *AA*<sup>4</sup> XXXIX, 1960; p. 296 (J. Wilkes). *AA*<sup>4</sup> XL, 1961; p. 93 (J. Leach and J. Wilkes). *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLIII, 1965; p. 165 (Charmian Woodfield).

<sup>15</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XXVI, 1948; pp. 172-204 (E. Birley and J. P. Gillam). *PSAS* XCIV, 1960-1961; pp. 110-113 (Mrs. K. F. Hartley).

<sup>16</sup> Collingwood, 1936, p. 143.

contemporary situation on the Roman frontier in Upper Germany, where auxiliary units were moved from the inner and earlier to the outer and later line, retaining the same order on the ground.<sup>17</sup>

Of the sixteen forts on Hadrian's Wall, in only one, Carvoran, has a Hadrianic inscription<sup>18</sup> been found which records an auxiliary cohort, *I Hamiorum*. The Hadrianic inscriptions<sup>19</sup> from Benwell and Haltonchesters record builders rather than garrisons, while that<sup>20</sup> from Great Chesters records no unit. There are three further inscriptions which possibly record Hadrianic garrisons. *Cohors I Aquitanorum* appears at Carrawburgh on an inscription<sup>21</sup> which is rather more likely to have been set up under Sextus Julius Severus (attested in 133) than Cn. Julius Verus (attested in 158). *Cohors VI Nerviorum* is recorded at Great Chesters on an inscription<sup>22</sup> which is unlikely to be early or mid-Antonine, and may therefore be Hadrianic. *Cohors IV Gallorum* appears on two undated altars<sup>23</sup> from Castlesteads, and as it is attested at two further sites in the Antonine period, it is probable that it was the Hadrianic garrison at Castlesteads.<sup>24</sup>

Of these four units, three are attested on the Antonine Wall. *Cohors I Hamiorum* appears on two undated altars<sup>25</sup> found near Bar Hill, *cohors VI Nerviorum* appears on two inscriptions<sup>26</sup> from Rough Castle, one dated to Pius, and *cohors IV Gallorum* appears on an undated inscription<sup>27</sup> from near Castlehill. In addition, *cohors I Tungrorum*, placed at Housesteads by Collingwood, appears on a tile<sup>28</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Schleiermacher 1961, pp. 222-223.

<sup>18</sup> *RIB* 1778.

<sup>19</sup> *RIB* 1340 and 1427.

<sup>20</sup> *RIB* 1736.

<sup>21</sup> *RIB* 1550.

<sup>22</sup> *RIB* 1731.

<sup>23</sup> *RIB* 1979 and 1980.

<sup>24</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XXXIX, 1939; pp. 211-226 (E. Birley).

<sup>25</sup> *RIB* 2166 and 2167.

<sup>26</sup> *RIB* 2144 and 2145.

<sup>27</sup> *RIB* 2195.

<sup>28</sup> *EE* IX, 1279.



found 5 kilometres west of Birdoswald, and also on an inscription, dated to Pius, from Castlecary. While in no single instance is the same unit known for certain to have been on Hadrian's Wall under Hadrian and on the Antonine Wall under Pius, the general trend of the evidence, with four possible instances of transfer, is clear enough.

The systematic replacement of the auxiliary cohorts and alae of Hadrian's Wall by legionary detachments, drawn from all three legions and commanded by centurions, is well attested epigraphically; structural and ceramic evidence suggests that the detachments were small. At Benwell an altar<sup>29</sup> was set up to Jupiter Dolichenus by a centurion of legion *II Augusta*, for the welfare of Antoninus Pius, while a stone<sup>30</sup> of the same legion from Haltonchesters has zoomorphic peltae, at least as ornate as those on five of the distance slabs from the Antonine Wall. At Chesters parts of two early Antonine inscriptions<sup>31</sup> have been found, each set up by a legion, in one instance *VI Victrix*. From Housesteads are two altars,<sup>32</sup> each set up to Jupiter, by soldiers of legion *II Augusta*; on the more complete, which was found re-used in the *mithraeum* and is therefore of second-century date, the soldiers describe themselves as *agentes in praesidio*, on garrison duty, as doubtless were all the others. At Great Chesters an altar<sup>33</sup> was dedicated to Jupiter by a centurion of legion *XX Valeria Victrix* with the somewhat unusual name L. Maximius Gaetulicus, who also dedicated an altar<sup>34</sup> to Apollo which was found in an Antonine pit at Newstead. In view of these five examples it is probable that similar arrangements obtained also at the remaining eleven forts. At no fort on Hadrian's Wall is there a record of a unit or detachment, in the early Antonine period, other than the legionary detachments discussed. As the cohorts and alae moved out northwards the vexillations moved in.

In addition to fort and milecastle causeways, less sub-

<sup>29</sup> *RIB* 1330.

<sup>30</sup> *RIB* 1428.

<sup>31</sup> *RIB* 1460 and 1461.

<sup>32</sup> *RIB* 1582 and 1583.

<sup>33</sup> *RIB* 1725.

<sup>34</sup> *RIB* 2120.

stantial crossings, usually coinciding with gaps in the north and south mounds, are to be seen at intervals of some forty-one metres in stretches of the Vallum ditch.<sup>35</sup> An excavation at Cockmount Hill in 1939<sup>36</sup> showed that the material of the crossing had been placed in position only after silt had accumulated and the ditch lips had crumbled. The remains of plants which had established themselves on this material were analysed. The assemblage of plants was such as would have established itself in from five to fifteen years. Now that it is known that the Vallum was constructed round about 130, it follows that the breaching, or slighting, fell within the decade centring on 140.<sup>37</sup> It was clearly contemporary with the manning of the Antonine Wall, and part of the same operation to neutralise Hadrian's Wall as was the removal of the milecastle doors.

In the absence of any kind of evidence that they did not, it can only be assumed that things ran smoothly on the new frontier until the next decade. Ever since Haverfield published the theory in 1904,<sup>38</sup> it has been said by each succeeding scholar<sup>39</sup> that there was a revolt of the Brigantes in the 150s. In simple form the reconstruction of the evidence is that by 155 an insurrection of the Brigantes had been suppressed by Cn. Julius Verus, with the aid of reinforcements for battle-depleted legions which had been landed on the Tyne;<sup>40</sup> an officer of legion *VI Victrix*, who had been given both the occasion and the opportunity for vengeance in the insurrection dedicated a monument to Mars the Avenger at Corbridge;<sup>41</sup> the fort of Birrens was rebuilt after violent destruction;<sup>42</sup> the fort of Brough-on-Noe was rebuilt in stone and re-occupied.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XXII, 1922; p. 396 ff (F. G. Simpson and R. C. Shaw).

<sup>36</sup> *JRS* XXX, 1940; pp. 164-165 (F. G. Simpson and I. A. Richmond).

<sup>37</sup> *Britain and Rome*, 1965; pp. 90-91 (Brenda Heywood).

<sup>38</sup> *AA*<sup>2</sup> XXV, 1904; pp. 142-147, and *PSAS* XXXVIII, 1903-1904; pp. 454-459.

<sup>39</sup> Collingwood 1936; pp. 148-150; I. A. Richmond, *Roman Britain*, 2nd Edition, 1963; pp. 54-55; S. S. Frere, *Britannia*, 1967; pp. 152-153.

<sup>40</sup> *RIB* 1322.

<sup>42</sup> *RIB* 2110.

<sup>41</sup> *RIB* 1132.

<sup>43</sup> *RIB* 282.

There is grave doubt whether there was ever a Brigantian insurrection at all. The evidence for victory in 155 depends on a single though extremely common type of coin reverse,<sup>44</sup> of Britannia seated disconsolately with head bowed, which was struck between late 154 and late 155. This takes on its full apparent significance only in the context of other evidence. Without this all that is known is that somewhere in Britain something was worth commemorating in 155. The passage from Pausanias<sup>45</sup> quoted in this context by Haverfield, and frequently since, has no relevance whatever.<sup>46</sup> It refers to an invasion from outside the province of a region, either within the province or on its borders and under its protection, followed by a Roman expedition which led to annexation of territory, at some unspecified date within the reign of Pius. The tribe concerned is given as the Brigantes, but this is clearly impossible for as part of the province they could neither invade Roman territory nor lose territory to Rome. Scholars who have doubted the relevance of the Pausanias passage have still accepted the inscriptions as significant. The inscriptions are indeed significant, though not in the way that they have been taken to be. A re-examination of the fragmentary inscription of Julius Verus at Corbridge reveals the central cross stroke of an E joining the upright of the letter following the V on the first surviving line. The stroke has not been added by a visitor to the museum as it appears clearly on a half-plate contact print taken at the time of discovery. The word then can hardly be VL[TORI]; it might be VE[XILLATIO].

The idea of bloodshed and vengeance within the orbit of legion *VI Victrix* thus loses its basis. The record of the landing at Newcastle upon Tyne of detachments contributed by the two German provinces for the three legions in Britain might refer to reinforcements for formations below strength for any reason, though, while Newcastle is distant from two

<sup>44</sup> Gilbert Askew, *The Coinage of Roman Britain*, 1951; nos. 27-28.

<sup>45</sup> Pausanias VIII, 43, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Professor Eric Birley was the first to draw our attention to what Pausanias probably meant.

of the three fortresses it is conveniently sited to handle replacements for battle casualties in either southern Scotland or Yorkshire. The inscription from Birrens is straightforward; it is the only inscription of those which mention Julius Verus to be closely dated—to 158. The large well-built early Antonine fort at Birrens was violently destroyed and then rebuilt.<sup>47</sup> Birrens is the only fort site between Derbyshire and the hinterland of the Antonine Wall to have produced unquestionable evidence of destruction and rebuilding in the 150s. Whatever happened the Brigantes need have had nothing to do with it; the only mention of Brigantes comes from Pausanias; the inscriptions lie on or beyond the borders of Brigantia. The building inscription from Brough-on-Noe goes with the first stone fort which replaced a Flavian turf and timber fort on a different alignment. The latest vessels from the earlier fort, in 1938 and 1939, were a cooking-pot of black-burnished category 1 (b-b 1) with a wavy line on its undeveloped rim, and a mortarium by G. ATTIVS MARINUS. This suggests that the earliest fort at Brough-on-Noe remained in occupation, like Chesterholm, into the early years of Hadrian, and no later. Re-occupation in c. 158 was by *cohors I Aquitanorum* which had once been at Carrawburgh. There is no evidence here that the southern Pennines were set aflame by the Brigantes, but there is evidence of a change in the distribution of garrisons.

In addition to Birrens it is probable that forts on the Antonine Wall suffered damage at this time. At Mumrills,<sup>48</sup> Cadder,<sup>49</sup> Balmuildy<sup>50</sup> and Old Kilpatrick<sup>51</sup> the first period (AW I) of occupation ended in disaster. It may also have done so at Croy Hill<sup>52</sup> if, as suggested by Dr. Steer,<sup>53</sup> the numbering of the structural periods there is out of phase with that used on the other sites. The date of the destruction

<sup>47</sup> *PSAS* XXX. 1895-1896: pp. 113-114.

<sup>48</sup> *PSAS* LXIII. 1928-1929: n. 574 (Sir George Macdonald).

<sup>49</sup> John Clarke, *The Roman Fort at Cadder*, near Glasgow. 1933: p. 87.

<sup>50</sup> S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmuildy*. 1922: p. 104.

<sup>51</sup> S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Old Kilpatrick*. 1928: p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> *PSAS* LXXI. 1936-1937: pp. 32 ff. (Sir George Macdonald).

<sup>53</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLII, 1964: p. 32.

is usually given as the 150s.<sup>54</sup>

There is of course no epigraphic, numismatic or ceramic evidence for the choice of the particular date; the excavators and writers of reports had Haverfield's story and the Birrens inscription in front of them. The combination leaves us with the totally unacceptable picture of fire and slaughter from Brough to Balmuildy, with Hadrian's Wall and its caretaker garrisons emerging without a scratch. On the other hand the evidence that the first occupation ended in destruction in at least five of the nineteen forts of the Antonine Wall is unshakeable; that the destructions were contemporary, the result of a single disaster, is highly likely; that this disaster took place in or not long before A.D. 158 is possible; though it had nothing to do with any Brigantian revolt.

There is one other inscription<sup>55</sup> which bears the date A.D. 158, additional to that from Birrens. It mentions neither Emperor nor governor, but it is probably the most significant of the whole group. It was found on the line of Hadrian's Wall, possibly near Heddon-on-the-Wall, and records that legion *VI Victrix* rebuilt an unspecified structure when Tertullus and Sacerdos were consuls; Ser. Sulpicius Tertullus and Q. Tineius Sacerdos were ordinary consuls in A.D. 158. A second undated inscription<sup>56</sup> recorded building by a cohort of the same legion. Hadrian's Wall had been abandoned and in mothballs for up to sixteen years. Repair work to the curtain wall or to structures implies that its status was changing.

HW IB is attested in the milecastles by the new unbroken pivot stones, and in the majority of both milecastles and turrets by a fresh occupation beginning after the end of HW IA. Sir George Macdonald<sup>57</sup> dated the beginning of HW IB to A.D. 158, though he thought of it as connected with the widespread revolt; in fact HW IB is not a reconstruction

<sup>54</sup> Mr. J. Little has helped with a check of the Antonine Wall structural reports.

<sup>55</sup> *RIB* 1389.

<sup>56</sup> *RIB* 1388.

<sup>57</sup> *AA<sup>4</sup>* VIII, 1931; p. 6 ff.

after a disaster. Professor Eric Birley<sup>58</sup> suggested that HW IB may not have been contemporary in all turrets and milecastles, and that it was without historical significance. It is true that there is a surprisingly high proportion of pre-Antonine types of pottery in some HW IB deposits, and that the occasional unusual vessel appears, which may not be contemporary, but rubbish survival from HW IA may account for early pieces, while an unusual piece, as Birley himself later pointed out, cannot be treated as a type.<sup>59</sup> Shortly afterwards Birley drew attention to the similarity in make-up of the pottery groups from HW IB to those from the level of Antonine II at Corbridge (Corbridge V) which began in c. 163. The destruction deposits of c. 200, which had not then been published, were not included in the comparison. The possibility that HW IB began at the same moment as Corbridge V, and that the rebuilding of Corbridge in c. 163 and the re-occupation of the turrets and milecastles were part of the same re-organisation, was considered some years ago, and the date 163 suggested for the beginning of HW IB.<sup>60</sup> Since then fresh evidence has shown that Corbridge V is to be subdivided into three structural phases, and that it was at the beginning of the second of these, not the first, that the fort was converted into an establishment concerned with administration and supply rather than personnel. It can then no longer be argued that frontier change was reflected in the replanning of Corbridge in c. 163. At that date the only change which matters was the conversion of the barracks in the *retentura* from timber to stone. There is thus no link between Corbridge V and HW IB, except for the similarity of the pottery groups, and even these deposits, by the nature of the material, could have begun at separate dates and not appear measurably dissimilar. The latest coin sealed by a structure of HW IB is an *as* of Antoninus Pius, dated A.D. 154/5, from turret 18*b*.

<sup>58</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> VII, 1930; pp. 169-174.

<sup>59</sup> *PSAS* LXXII, 1937-1938; p. 319.

<sup>60</sup> *DN* X, 1953; p. 367 (J. P. Gillam).

Thus it now appears that 158 is preferable to *c.* 163 as a date for the beginning of HW IB, on the strength mainly of the Heddon inscriptions. The re-occupation of Brough-on-Noe finds its place as part of the process of re-occupation of the Pennines and Lake District which continued into the next reign, and was itself a consequence of the re-organisation of the frontiers. That HW IB meant the rehabilitation of Hadrian's Wall as the frontier of the province can hardly be doubted. The replacement of the gates meant the closing of the Wall line, while the return of garrisons meant the recommencement of patrols.

On the line of the running barrier itself an important change took place. The Turf Wall between milecastle 54 and the Solway shore was replaced by a stone wall, intermediate in gauge between the Broad Wall of the eastern and the Narrow Wall of the central sector. Turf milecastles were replaced in stone, but the existing stone turrets were retained. The replacement of turf by stone had begun in the 130s; it was later than the construction of the Vallum which avoids milecastle 50 T.W. as if it were still a going concern, and is itself dated to *c.* A.D. 130. After it had proceeded for five Wall miles the work was stopped, doubtless because the decision to invade Scotland had been taken, and there was no point in rebuilding in stone a Wall which was going to cease to be a frontier. Excavation by Simpson and Richmond at 54a<sup>61</sup> showed that a turret which had collapsed into the ditch of the Turf Wall had been replaced by a new one which had seen use before it was joined by a stone Wall, and then finally wiped out by Wall construction across its recess. This showed both that the Turf Wall was not as rapidly replaced by stone as it had been farther east, and that it was replaced before the early third century, as it is to the beginning of Period II that the final abandonment of many turrets has to be assigned. An examination of the unpublished pottery from the turrets has confirmed Richmond's chronological inference from the structures.

<sup>61</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XXXIV, 1934; p. 138.

At milecastle 79,<sup>62</sup> with the exception of two pieces, the pottery from the Turf Wall level was typical of HW IA. A comparison with that from milecastle 50 TW showed many parallels, but that the group from 50 seemed to begin earlier than that from 79 began, and to end earlier than that from 79 ended. This suggested replacement by stone at the end of Hadrian's reign, or the beginning of that of Antoninus Pius, which is the most unlikely time of all. The same evidence could mean that replacement came at the end of a period of abandonment, in other words, at the beginning of HW IB. The two vessels standing out from the IA mass, a cooking pot of b-b 1, no. 20, and a samian vessel, no. 3, could both have been broken in A.D. 158. It is hardly necessary to stress the implication of a task, dropped when the move was made into Scotland, being taken up again.

When Hadrian's Wall was first built there was no military way. At Limestone Corner it runs on the north mound of the Vallum, in a sector where the mounds had been slighted. Mrs. Heywood has pointed out that Newbold's report on turret 29b<sup>63</sup> shows a path linking the turret with the military way; as the published pottery shows, the turret was one of those which was finally abandoned early in the third century. On Dr. St. Joseph's aerial photographs of Housesteads,<sup>64</sup> taken in 1949, the military way shows up most clearly running westward to Crag Lough, and equally clear is a path linking the road directly to turret 37a. This turret is not visible on the ground because it was completely wiped out by rebuilding, presumably, as with others, in the early third century. The road is then post-Hadrianic and pre-Severan, and it therefore almost certainly falls somewhere in IB. While there was no military way on Hadrian's Wall under Hadrian, there was a military way on the Antonine Wall early under Antoninus Pius. It is inconceivable that when Antoninus Pius took over Hadrian's Wall he should

<sup>62</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> LII, 1952; pp. 17-40 (I. A. Richmond and J. P. Gillam).

<sup>63</sup> *AA*<sup>3</sup> IX, 1913; pp. 54-70.

<sup>64</sup> *JRS* XLI, (1951); plate V.



have failed to insist on as good a lateral communication on his second frontier line as on his first.

There is evidence that the legionary detachments handed the forts back to auxiliary cohorts and *alae* before the beginning of HW II. Apart from those which have already been discussed as possible Hadrianic garrisons, ten<sup>65</sup> units which are different from the known third-century garrisons appear on undated inscriptions from forts on Hadrian's Wall. One or two may in fact be Hadrianic garrisons, but it is almost certain most belong to the period between the beginning of HW IB and the beginning of HW II, and there is one chance in two that any of these was in garrison between 158 and the early 180s at which time the next general re-organisation probably took place. Two units appear on dated inscriptions of this period. At Great Chesters an inscription of a cohort,<sup>66</sup> restorable with confidence as *cohors VI Raetorum*, is dated by the titles accorded to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus to the period 166 to 169. At Carvoran an altar<sup>67</sup> records *cohors I Hamiorum* as the garrison, when the governor was Sextus Calpurnius Agricola, attested in 161/166. At each of three forts, Carrawburgh, Great Chesters and Carvoran, there is evidence of what might possibly be three separate auxiliary garrisons, not counting legionary detachments, before the well attested third century arrangements had been made. This is more than enough to suggest that the Wall as a whole was taken over once more by *auxilia*, as in the time of Hadrian.

The Vallum underwent a single set of modifications after it was slighted; these were the removal of some of the crossings, the removal of accumulated silt from the ditch, and a redefinition of the south lip of the ditch by the marginal mound.<sup>68</sup> This activity cannot be closely dated, but one closely involved with research on the Vallum has suggested

<sup>65</sup> *RIB* 1303, 1323, 1350, 1482, 1524, 1667, 1795, 2041, and *JRS* XLVII, 1947; p. 229 and *JRS* LVI, 1966; p. 218.

<sup>66</sup> *RIB* 1737.

<sup>67</sup> *RIB* 1792.

<sup>68</sup> Heywood 1965; pp. 92 and 93.

that it came when the Wall was re-occupied, in other words, at the beginning of HW IB.

That the Wall was re-occupied is certain; forts, mile-castles and turrets were re-occupied, the stone curtain wall was extended, the military way was built and the Vallum was in part refurbished. The only question is what effect this had on other parts of the frontier region. If Roman practice under Hadrian and in the greater part of the reign of Pius is any guide, one fully manned frontier line would be enough, and Pius would no more involve himself in the tactical nightmare of double lines and breakwaters in 158 than in 142. It is notoriously difficult to demonstrate a gap in the occupation of a site or a series of sites. Only if the break was long, and pottery changing markedly, as between Flavian and Antonine Newstead, if an inscription at one end of a gap balances archeological evidence at the other, as at Brough-on-Noe, Chesterholm and Corbridge,<sup>69</sup> or if there are special pieces of evidence, like the milecastle pivot stones, can this fact be established at all. None of these conditions applies on the Antonine Wall. Until recently reports on excavations in forts on the Antonine Wall dealt with pottery from the whole occupation in a single mass, rather than in groups, presumably because the character of the remains made it difficult to do otherwise. At Corbridge, the pottery from the level before c. 125 is distinct from that after 139; among the published material there is one instance only of a similar vessel in the two groups, and even there the type is common in the earlier group whilst it appears only once in the later. Even without the coins in the earlier level and the inscriptions dating the later, this pottery alone might have suggested a gap in the occupation, because there is no significant overlap between the groups like that which ties the end of HW IA to the beginning of AW I. On the other hand it would be perfectly easy to pick out vessels from the groups preceding and succeeding the gap at Corbridge, mix them together and then pass them off as a group from

<sup>69</sup> *RIB* 283, 1147 and 1703.

HW. IA in a milecastle, almost exactly the period not represented at Corbridge. Without separate groups the unstamped coarse pottery cannot be used to ascertain if there was or was not a gap in the occupation of the Antonine Wall. Nobody has in fact attempted to use it to demonstrate that the occupation was continuous, or that any break between I and II was extremely brief. After this had been questioned the evidence was looked at afresh, but ceramic evidence was not appealed to.

It has already been remarked that the wares of certain potters, whose activity may be approximately dated by independent evidence to the early Antonine period reached the Antonine Wall in fair quantity, but reached Hadrian's Wall hardly at all. There is also a small number of potters, mid-Antonine rather than early Antonine on the evidence, whose products are common in the Pennines and on Hadrian's Wall, but rare on or completely absent from the Antonine Wall. If the earlier phenomenon is explicable by the undermanning of Hadrian's Wall, the later may well be explicable by an intermission on the Antonine Wall.

A count, not of dies, which is not feasible when working from published sources, but of potters, reveals that sixty potters are represented on the Antonine Wall but not on Hadrian's Wall; forty-eight potters are represented on Hadrian's Wall but not on the Antonine Wall, while thirteen are represented on both Walls. Mortarium makers are represented on the Antonine Wall by eight, on Hadrian's Wall by eleven, and on both Walls by six potters' names. To find the figure for samian on the Antonine Wall higher than that on Hadrian's Wall is surprising, whatever view is taken of the detailed history and interplay of the two Walls. The answer is probably modern and not ancient; if the potters recorded by Macdonald but not by Oswald are omitted, the Hadrian's Wall figures are the higher.

The striking thing is the smallness of the figure for those found on both Walls. If occupation were continuous and simultaneous from 158 to 186 then a far higher ratio than

thirteen to a hundred and eight would be expected. Admittedly in circumstances of continuous occupation some potters whose wares arrived in the region in small numbers, or happen only to have been found in odd ones, might turn up on one Wall and not on the other by sheer chance. This is insufficient to explain away one hundred and eight examples of separate distribution, especially as there are potters who are represented by as many as ten separate stamped vessels on one Wall and by none at all on the other.

It might be argued that the pattern is due to purchase through different wholesalers or issue through different depots. Quite apart from the difficulty there is in appreciating why the products of different potters, working in the same centre of manufacture, should be handled separately, the distribution patterns are not of this character. At Corbridge, occupied continuously through AW I and HW IB, very many of the same potters are represented as appear on either Wall. The conclusion is not that Corbridge drew from two sources, but that it drew from the same source continuously. Absolute dating is far from easy, but it does seem that, apart from pre-Antonine potters, it is precisely those whose wares were in the market after 160, who are present on Hadrian's Wall but are missing on the Antonine Wall. This strongly suggests that the figures are chronologically and not merely topographically significant.

The straightforward conclusion to draw from this evidence is that, while Hadrian's Wall was fully manned and functioning in HW IB, the Antonine Wall was empty and abandoned, even more completely than Hadrian's Wall had been in AW I.

It has usually been taken that the distance slabs on the Antonine Wall, the stones erected by the legions to record the lengths they built, were taken down and buried at the final abandonment to prevent them from desecration. Miss Robertson<sup>70</sup> has pointed out that there is no real evidence that the distance slabs were ever carefully buried to prevent

<sup>70</sup> Robertson 1957; p. 117.

them being desecrated. Even if it did happen it could well have been at the end of AW I, and it would neither imply that the end of AW I was non-violent, nor that AW II followed immediately. The action would fall between the second and third elements of the sequence: enforced withdrawal—counter-attack—planned withdrawal.

Dr. Steer<sup>71</sup> has produced what seems to be an unshakeable argument that AW II began before the death of Antoninus Pius. Professor Frere<sup>72</sup> has referred to this as an important advance and a convincing demonstration. It is certainly a most impressive argument. The workmanship of AW I is very much better than that of AW II. That of AW I is then the work of legionary craftsmen, who are attested epigraphically, that of AW II of the auxilia. Three forts have each produced an early-Antonine auxiliary building inscription,<sup>73</sup> and these must refer to the beginning of AW II, which therefore began before 161, when Antoninus Pius died.

It may readily be conceded that legionary workmanship is often, though not always, of good quality. The late Sir Ian Richmond greatly admired the workmanship of the defences at Inchtuthil; nobody could admire the quality of the workmanship of VA at Corbridge, whichever of the two recorded legions, *VI Victrix* and *XX Valeria Victrix*, was responsible. On the other hand it is not unlikely that the excellent masonry of Birrens primary was erected by the legion *VI Victrix*, and the inferior masonry of the rebuilt fort by *cohors II Tungrorum*. The work of the *Classis Britannica* at Benwell was not inferior to the contemporary work of the legion *VI Victrix* at Haltonchesters, unless, as is possible, the legion provided the gateway specialists and the fleet, the granary specialists; the quality is high in either case. At Haltonchesters the workmanship of HW II, to the credit of the *Ala Sabiniana*, unless there is an undiscovered

<sup>71</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLII, 1964; pp. 25-29.

<sup>72</sup> Frere 1967; p. 155.

<sup>73</sup> *RIB* 2145, Rough Castle; 2155, Castlecary and 2170, Bar Hill.

legionary inscription, is excellent, while that of what most people would regard as the same unit, at a later date, is not merely indescribably bad, but almost indescribable. Lapse of time, state of training in various units at different times, and degree of pressure, all need to be taken into account. Other things being equal legionary work ought to be better, but we simply cannot say each time we meet good masonry followed by bad that the earlier is legionary and the later auxiliary. At Greatchesters, even in its weathered state, the Hadrianic workmanship is impressive. Certainty is impossible, but it is probable that the Hadrianic unit was *cohors VI Nerviorum*, the precise unit which appears on the early-Antonine building inscription at Rough Castle. It can neither be proved nor disproved that it moved straight to Rough Castle early in AW I, but this is no less likely than that it moved there in 158 having lost its skill. In addition to the early-Antonine building inscription of *cohors I Tungrorum* at Castlecary, there are three undated legionary altars, and a centurial stone, also undated, which must be of a legion, though none is specified.<sup>74</sup> It certainly looks as though legionaries built the fort wall, but there is nothing to prevent shared work here, the Tungrians being responsible for internal buildings, immediately on their arrival from Cumberland.

In addition to the early-Antonine building inscription of *cohors I Baetasiorum* at Bar Hill, there are an undated legionary altar, a building inscription set up by detachments of two legions, and altars set up by *cohors I Hamiorum*.<sup>75</sup> The lettering of what remains of the auxiliary building inscription is remarkably like that of the inscriptions of Lollius Urbicus at Corbridge, while the legionary building inscription is stylistically much later, the letter G in particular resembles that of an inscription of the early 170s from Lanchester.

Steer's further argument from Bar Hill concerns the well

<sup>74</sup> *RIB* 2146, 2148, 2151 and 2156.

<sup>75</sup> *RIB* 2166, 2167, 2171 and 2172.

in the headquarters building. Among the many objects found were arrow heads and other items of bowmen's equipment, at the bottom of the well, and the two inscriptions of the Baetasii. In the well there were no inscriptions of the Hamii, whose full title was *cohors I Hamiorum Sagittariorum*—archers. It is inferred that the inscriptions of the Baetasii were thrown into the well at the end of AW II, and the arrow heads at the end of AW I. Taking for granted that AW II followed AW I with no break or with but a short one, and as the Hamii were at Carvoran between 161 and 166, it is argued that they can only have been at Bar Hill in AW I or AW III. As the use of the well as a repository for inscriptions came at the end of AW II, and as the arrow heads were already there, then the Hamii can only have been the garrison in AW I, while the Baetasii were the garrison in AW II, as is confirmed by the fact that it was they whose inscriptions survived to be thrown into the well.

This is a well-constructed argument, which cannot be countered finally, but while it is not possible to demonstrate that its conclusions are false, it may readily be shown that they are not the only possible conclusions. It is taken for granted that AW II followed AW I quickly, and the conclusion is reached that AW II began before the end of the reign of Antoninus Pius. As an argument this is not precisely a circle, but it is certainly curved, not to say penannular. The Hamii could not have been at Bar Hill when they were at Carvoran, but this is not at all the same as saying that they could not have been at Bar Hill in AW II, which is a structural phase not a period of time measured in years. The possibility raised by a consideration of HW IB and of the potters' names, that the gap between AW I and AW II was more extended, leaves room for the Hamii to have been at Carvoran under Marcus Aurelius, and at Bar Hill subsequently but still in AW II. Inscribed stones sometimes survived barbarian attentions. The Hadrianic inscription at Haltonchesters remained in position through two or three wars over two or three centuries before it fell and remained

until its discovery. The three main altars in Carrawburgh *mithraeum* survived a probable sack and an act of desecration and still remained in position until their discovery. Some of the inscriptions from the nearby Coventina's Well were weathered before they were thrown in, while the range of date of the inscriptions is wide. There seems to be no compelling reasons why the inscriptions of the Baetasii should not have been thrown into the well at Bar Hill long after they were carved, even after the weapons and missiles of their ultimate successors had found their way into the well, perhaps casually, as did the short Lee-Enfield rifle found in the well of Carliisle Castle. As an alternative to Steer's diagram the following may be suggested; the possible movements of the Bar Hill units away from Bar Hill is also indicated.

	HW IA	AW I	HW IB	AW II
Bar Hill	—	I Baetasiurum	?	I Hamiorum
Old Kilpatrick	—	?	?	I Baetasiurum
Maryport	I Hispanorum	I Delmatarum	I Baetasiurum	?
Carvoran	I Hamiorum	?	I Hamiorum	?

In the course of a catalogue of the disasters which clouded the early years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the writer of his life in the Augustan history mentions that a war was threatening in Britain, and that Calpurnius Agricola was sent out against the Britons. As we have seen, it has been argued that Calpurnius Agricola, attested in Britain in 161/166, was responsible for the change of policy leading to HW IB, but an earlier date seems more likely. He was not however inactive. Leaving aside the Carvoran inscriptions, which attest occupation, but not necessarily fresh occupation, under Calpurnius Agricola, the Stanegate fort of Chesterholm was re-occupied after a forty-year gap, and subsequently treated as a fort *per lineam valli*;<sup>76</sup> the period IV fort at Corbridge was rebuilt entirely in stone after having been of mixed construction like the forts on the Antonine

<sup>76</sup> RIB 1703.



Wall;<sup>77</sup> the Hadrianic fort at Hardknot was re-occupied after a gap of some twenty years;<sup>78</sup> there was fresh building at Ribchester for whatever reason,<sup>79</sup> while at Ilkley a roughly contemporary altar attests occupation.<sup>80</sup> Among the sites south of Hadrian's Wall on which occurs the work of samian potters whose period of activity when ascertainable was roughly during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and whose products are found on Hadrian's Wall but not on the Antonine Wall, are Aldborough, Binchester, Carlisle, Chester-le-Street, Corbridge, Ilkley, Lancaster, Manchester, Maryport, Nether Denton, South Shields, Templebrough, Wilderspool and York. The work of approximately Marcan mortarium makers appears at Ambleside, Bainbridge, Binchester, Brough-under-Stainmore, Carlisle, Corbridge, Ebchester, Lancaster, Old Penrith, South Shields and Templebrough. The products of certain potters are found both on the Antonine Wall and in the Pennines.

The concentration on Stanegate, Lake District and Pennines is understandable if Julius Verus had pulled out from the Antonine Wall a few years before. Calpurnius Agricola would seem merely to be completing Verus's policy, exemplified at Brough-on-Noe. But there is probably more to it. Brigantia was doubtless the region from which the threat came with which Calpurnius Agricola was appointed to deal. There is no evidence of a successful revolt, so that we may infer that he was successful. Misled by an interpretation of Pausanias we have all at some time at least dated the Brigantian unrest almost a decade too soon.

Surviving literary and epigraphic evidence for events in Britain during the rest of the reign of Marcus Aurelius has no bearing on major decisions on frontier policy. There is straightforward literary evidence<sup>81</sup> for a barbarian invasion early in the sole reign of Commodus, 180 to 192, which explicitly involved a frontier Wall. No other barbarian

<sup>77</sup> *RIB* 1137 and 1149.

<sup>78</sup> *RIB* 793.

<sup>79</sup> *RIB* 589.

<sup>80</sup> *RIB* 636.

<sup>81</sup> Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 8.

initiative throughout the century has such unambiguous verbal attestation. The British tribes crossed the Wall which separated them from the Roman garrison and slew a general at the head of his forces. In great alarm Commodus sent Ulpus Marcellus against them, who inflicted terrible damage. The General killed in action is no less likely to have been the provincial legate, predecessor of Ulpus Marcellus, than a legionary legate. Ulpus Marcellus was not necessarily appointed so early as the summer of 180, for the inscription which appears to imply this is capable of a different interpretation.<sup>82</sup> The date of the end of the affair is firm. Commodus assumed the title of Britannicus in 184, and in the same year coins of Britannia were issued, while in the following year, 185, coins referring to Victory in Britain were issued.<sup>83</sup>

The important question is which Wall the tribes crossed. Until 1930 it was always taken to have either been both Walls or simply Hadrian's Wall; in fact the invasion under Commodus was invoked to explain the destruction at the end of HW IB in the milecastles and turrets, while reconstruction was taken to have followed rapidly. Then, in 1930, after the inscription of 205-208 was found at Birdoswald,<sup>84</sup> Collingwood<sup>85</sup> put forward the idea that as it is inconceivable that Hadrian's Wall should have remained in ruins for some quarter of a century, leaving the province unprotected, its destruction must have been quite late in the second century. From this it followed that as Hadrian's Wall was untouched by the tribes ultimately routed by Ulpus Marcellus, it must have been the Antonine Wall alone which they crossed. This seemed to fit in well with the destruction at the end of AW II. Both Richmond, who had collaborated with Collingwood in his paper, and Birley, who shortly afterwards published his new scheme for dating HW I to

<sup>82</sup> *RIB* 1329.

<sup>83</sup> Askew 1951; nos. 30 to 36.

<sup>84</sup> *RIB* 1909.

<sup>85</sup> *Antiquity* 1930; p. 72 (R. G. Collingwood).

IV,<sup>86</sup> reached or adopted the same conclusions. With this weight of scholarship behind it, it is scarcely surprising that the notion that the tribes crossed the Antonine Wall and only the Antonine Wall, has been adopted by everyone studying or writing about the subject down to the present day.

The surprisingly early flavour of the pottery of HW IB was remarked on seventeen years ago, though the obvious conclusion was not then drawn.<sup>87</sup> When the pottery from Mrs. Woodfield's turret excavations<sup>88</sup> of 1958 and 1959 was handled, that impression was confirmed and strengthened. In fact so early did the HW IB groups from the six turrets appear, when they were spread out together, that the idea temporarily suggested itself that HW IB was of extremely short duration, as it might be 158-163. This was an over-correction, for further study showed that there were more examples of certain types of pot which did not reach the north in quantity before c. 160, than could be expected in a deposit closing so early.

Stratified coins and samian are both scarce. The potter's names from levels other than HW IA are MACERATUS from milecastle 50<sup>89</sup> and SAXAMUS from turret 45a;<sup>90</sup> neither is later than Marcus Aurelius. The latest coin from any HW IB or HW IA/IB deposit is of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, 140-161.<sup>91</sup>

Nobody presented with an HW IB assemblage, without being told its provenance, would hesitate to place its closing date well before the end of the second century. There can be no reasonable doubt that the tribes crossed, first the unoccupied Antonine Wall, and then advanced on the occupied Wall of Hadrian, where without doubt they inflicted

<sup>86</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> VII, 1930; pp. 164-174.

<sup>87</sup> *DN* X, 1953, pp. 366-367.

<sup>88</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLIII, 1965; pp. 87-200 (Charmian Woodfield).

<sup>89</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XIII, 1913; p. 357 (F. G. Simpson).

<sup>90</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLIII, 1965; p. 165.

<sup>91</sup> *CW*<sup>2</sup> XIII, 1913; p. 337 (H. H. E. Craster). Mr. D. Robinson has helped us to check the published coins from the two Walls.

the first of their heavy casualties. It is not known how widespread the damage was or how exactly the forts fared, though at Haltonchesters, where the pottery from the layer of charred wattle, fired daub and burnt wooden floors which marked the close of HW IB, includes more than one type best matched in the destruction deposits of the end of VC at Corbridge, and there is no earlier destruction. The pottery from the vallum filling at Benwell<sup>92</sup> includes later Antonine types in some quantity. It would seem that some forts at least escaped destruction in the early 180s, continued in occupation, and were in turn destroyed considerably later.

With the turrets and milecastles, or a long run of them, destroyed, and not rebuilt for a quarter of a century at least, Hadrian's Wall could not function. The IB pivot stones were not broken, for there was no need to remove the gates, which had doubtless been burnt or smashed in position. If, as pottery has suggested, some forts continued in occupation, they would seem to have held *auxilia* rather than legionaries. There are no legionary inscriptions of the appropriate date, but there are auxiliary inscriptions, earlier than the third century, and not necessarily Hadrianic or Marcan. There was however no frontier after 185, unless there was one elsewhere.

AW III has long been said to have begun when Ulpus Marcellus reconstructed the Antonine Wall as a demonstration of strength while fighting was still going on. It has been said to have ended almost immediately, when, having restored order and pacified the frontier, Ulpus Marcellus deliberately razed the fortifications and evacuated the position. This will not do; it has no archaeological basis and it is tactical and psychological nonsense. Others have been inclined to place AW III in 208-212; the discovery of the date and nature of Carpow has made that explanation unlikely.<sup>93</sup> In fact AW III is best left out of account altogether. Long ago it was described as a mere incident in the

<sup>92</sup> *AA* XXXIII, 1955; pp. 142-162 (Brenda Swinbank).

<sup>93</sup> *PSAS* XCVI, 1962-1963; pp. 196-197 (R. E. Birley).

final abandonment,<sup>94</sup> and more recently as tidying up in the course of evacuation. The whole question is fully and clearly discussed by Steer.<sup>95</sup>

AW II on the other hand had substance and dimensions. If it had not already opened in 158 and ended in destruction in or after 180, then surely it opened with Ulpian Marcellus, not during the fighting, but after the victory in 185, and we may be sure there was no premature evacuation. When the end of the occupation as a whole came is more difficult to decide. The evidence of coins and of samian would seem to suggest that it came quickly, or even that it had already come before 185. Miss Robertson, using the terminal date of the large hoard of coins from Rumbling Bridge, Kinross-shire as a *terminus post quem* for the occupation, places its end after 186.<sup>96</sup>

As has been said before, it is the coarse pottery which suggests a more extended occupation. The destruction deposit at Corbridge is dated by a coin to not earlier than 198.<sup>97</sup> It has nothing in common with the destruction which closed HW IB, though the destruction at Haltonchesters is possibly contemporary. The only earlier destruction at Corbridge was that of between 98 and 105, so Corbridge, like Haltonchesters, was unaffected by the events of the early 180s.

Type after type of coarse pottery in Corbridge VC is matched on the Antonine Wall.<sup>98</sup> For this kind of comparison the absolute date of single pieces is not the first consideration; in any case dating is often imprecise, still open to discussion or dependent on the historical reconstructions which are the object of the enquiry. On the other hand, if group compositions are similar, dates, whatever they are, are similar, for the inaccuracies caused by survival are ironed out. The HW IA groups from milecastles 50 TW and 79 are

<sup>94</sup> Miller 1922; p. 105.

<sup>95</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLII, 1964; pp. 29-38.

<sup>96</sup> Robertson 1957; p. 119, and *PSAS* XC, 1956-1957, pp. 241-245.

<sup>97</sup> *AA*<sup>3</sup> VII, 1911; p. 165.

<sup>98</sup> *AA*<sup>4</sup> XXVIII, 1950; pp. 199-201.

similar, but with certain specific differences. There it can be checked that the two groups are Hadrianic, and overlap without being identical in date; but if individual pieces had been taken from their context some would probably have been claimed as Flavian, and others as Antonine. When it is considered that Corbridge VC is a destruction deposit, that is a cross-section, with some survival material, while most of the Antonine Wall groups are occupation deposits of AW I and AW II, together with the products of two destruction deposits, similarity between the two sets of deposits is very significant. Among the types of coarse pottery which are common to the Antonine Wall and to Corbridge VC, but excluding those of the early Antonine period, are Gillam types 17, 65, 71, 75, 76, 139, 157, 222, 265, 267, 268 and 311. Mortarium makers whose wares appear in both contexts include *BELLICUS*, *CRICO*, *SIMILIS* and some of the Colchester potters using herringbone stamps.

It had been realised for some time that the black-burnished kitchen wares common in Scotland, northern England and certain other regions, fell into two categories, which may be termed b-b 1 and b-b 2. B-b 1 is black throughout when it has escaped re-oxidation, has a surface burnished in such a way that individual strokes of the tool have left facets, and in fracture shows a gritty or granular fabric. A selection of the second century forms appears on fig. 1. B-b 2 is either black or dark grey, re-oxidised often to red-brown, has a smoothly burnished, almost silky surface, and in fracture shows a smooth laminated fabric. A selection of second-century forms appears on fig. 2. It was not at first certain whether b-b 2 was a morphological development from b-b 1, or whether, as came increasingly to seem likely, the two categories were from different centres and imported, for a time at least, simultaneously. The spectrographic analysis by Mrs. Richards of large samples of both categories, with others for comparison, from the Mumrills west ditch deposit,<sup>99</sup> answered the question clearly and

<sup>99</sup> *PSAS* XCIV, 1960-61; pp. 129-132.

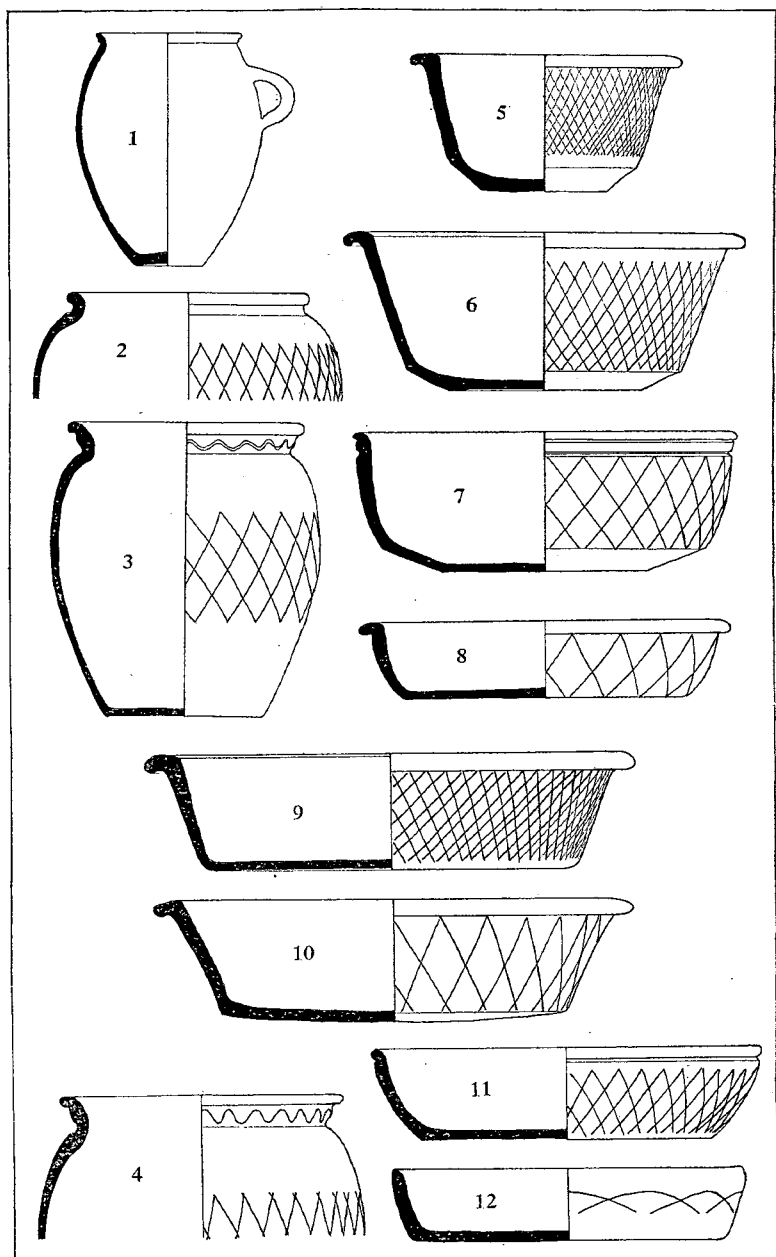


Fig. 1. Black-burnished ware, category 1; b-b 1. (4)

finally. Each category was homogeneous, but the categories differed from each other. It became clear that simultaneous importation was likely.

The two categories did not reach the northern region simultaneously. B-b 1 first arrived in the earliest third of Hadrian's reign, and b-b 2 in the last third of the reign of Antoninus Pius. B-b 1 appears in very small quantities at the close of the Stanegate occupation at Corbridge (III), Chesterholm, Haltwhistle Burn, Nether Denton and Throp, as well as in milecastle 50 TW. It is somewhat commoner in other HW IA deposits, and commoner still in Antonine I (IV) at Corbridge, and in Antonine Scotland generally. After that it came into competition with b-b 2, but it continued to be purchased and used, and ultimately outlived b-b 2. Unlike b-b 1, b-b 2 appears in none of the deposits mentioned, except Antonine Scotland, not even in Corbridge IV. It occurs in stratified deposits of Antonine I at Castledykes.<sup>100</sup> This is its earliest reliably attested appearance in northern Britain. It appears in HW IB in some but not all of the turrets and milecastles, though only rarely. It is common in unsubdivided Antonine Wall deposits, and very common in AW II where this is distinguished. It appears at South Shields in pre-granary deposits. It is absent in its second-century forms from Birdoswald and Housesteads, but is present at Benwell, Carrawburgh, Chester-le-Street and Haltonchesters.

This nicely illustrates the increasing success of the promotion of b-b 1, and then, a third of a century later, of b-b 2. Each took about twenty years to become fully established, though b-b 2 never completely displaced b-b 1.

The table which follows compares the incidence of a single kind of b-b 2, Gillam types 222, 223, 310 and 311, nos. 17, 18, and 20-22 fig. 2, on the Antonine Wall, and in turrets and milecastles from HW IB, HW IA/IB where they are not distinguished, or from unstratified groups where there

<sup>100</sup> Anne S. Robertson, *The Roman Fort at Castledykes* 1964, p. 269.



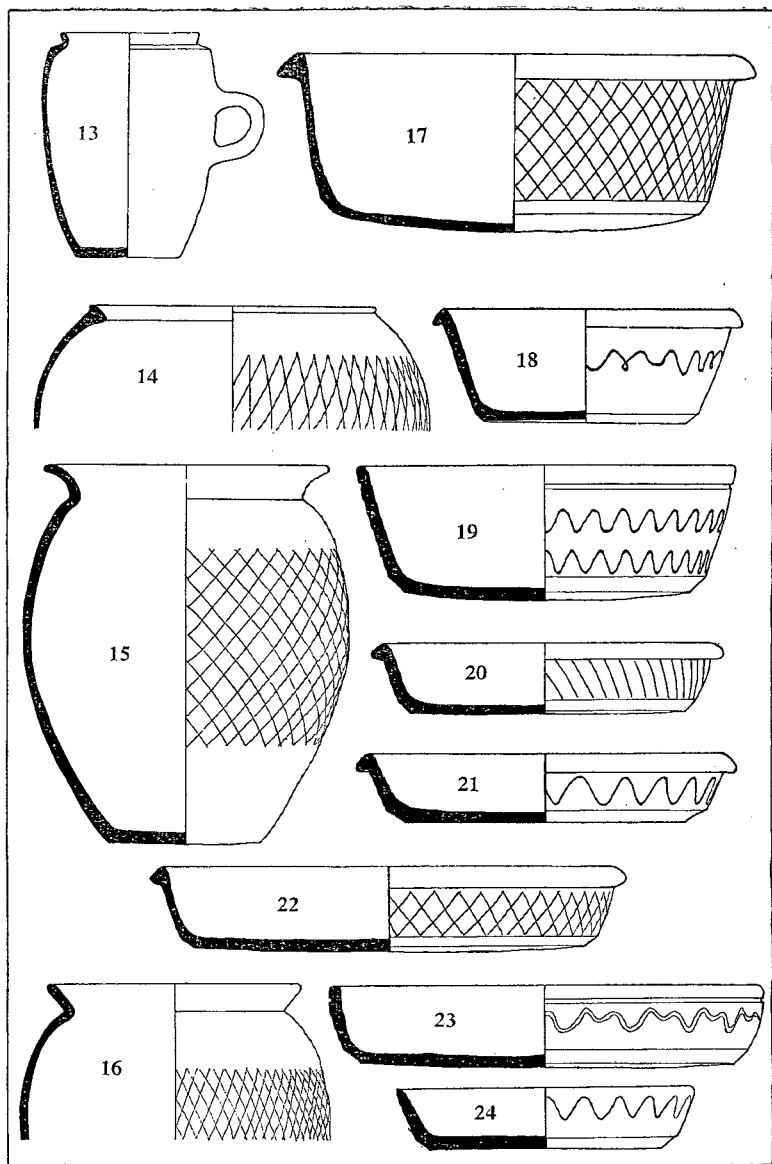


Fig. 2. Black-burnished ware, category 2; b-b 2. (4)

was no occupation after HW IB.<sup>101</sup> Mumrills 2 is the deposit from the west ditch.<sup>102</sup> Mumrills 1 includes both material from the same deposit, and that from occupation deposits, here taken together.<sup>103</sup> The pottery from each of the other Antonine Wall forts is taken together, as representing the pottery of the occupation as a whole. The first figure is the number of samples of the defined type illustrated in the report; the second figure is the total number of vessels illustrated. When the number of specimens represented by each drawing is given in the report, as it is for milecastle 48 and Mumrills 2, these figures are used. At Balmuildy five illustrated examples of the type stand for three quarters of all the bowls found, and they are described as characteristic for the site. Old Kilpatrick is omitted, for one illustrated example of the type stands for one hundred specimens: it is common practice to illustrate common types selectively, though not always so selectively. In the turrets and milecastles, where the type was not common, the illustrations are probably more representative, certainly in the report on turrets 18*b*, 25*b*, 26*a*, 35*a*, 45*a* and 50*b* every piece was drawn which could be drawn.

Turret 7 <i>b</i>	HW IA/IB	1	:	11
Milecastle 9	HW IB	0	:	8
Turret 18 <i>b</i>	HW IA/IB	0	:	10
	HW IB	1	:	5
Turret 25 <i>b</i>	HW IA/IB	1	:	10
	HW IB	1	:	6
Turret 26 <i>a</i>	HW IA/IB	1	:	7
	HW IB	0	:	9
Turret 29 <i>b</i>	HW IA/IB	0	:	37
Turret 35 <i>a</i>	Unstrat., pre-HW II	2	:	17
Turret 45 <i>a</i>	Unstrat., pre-HW II	0	:	8
Milecastle 48	HW I, mainly in débris	0	:	46

<sup>101</sup> Miss Esmée Webb helped with the scanning of pottery reports.

<sup>102</sup> *PSAS* XCIV, 1960-1961; pp. 86-132.

<sup>103</sup> *PSAS* LXIII, 1928-1929; pp. 529-548.

Turret 48a	HW IB	1	:	8
Turret 48b	HW IB	0	:	10
Turret 49b	HW IA/IB	0	:	18
Milecastle 50	HW IA/IB	0	:	17
Turret 50a	HW IB	0	:	3
	Unstrat., pre-HW II	0	:	8
Turret 50b	HW IB	0	:	27
Turret 51b	HW IB	0	:	13
Milefortlet 5	HW IA/IB	0	:	17
Total		8	:	295
Mumrills 1		13	:	131
Mumrills 2		72	:	329
Cadder		6	:	58
Balmuildy		5	:	123
Duntocher		6	:	48
Total		102	:	689

If the groups are taken as a whole as listed, the type appears to be five times as common, relatively speaking, on the Antonine Wall, as on Hadrian's Wall. It will however be noticed that the type occurs much less uncommonly in the eastern half of Hadrian's Wall than the western. This is true of forts as well as turrets and milecastles. When allowance is made for this the type is still more than twice as common, relatively speaking, on the Antonine Wall than in the turrets and milecastles of the eastern half of Hadrian's Wall.

The eastern weight of the distribution on Hadrian's Wall is clearly a result of contemporary differential distribution. There is no such difference in Scotland; there were a hundred specimens at Old Kilpatrick, the westernmost fort on the Wall, and a substantial number at Bishopton, beyond the end. It might be asked if the absolutely and relatively larger quantity in Scotland is not also due to contemporary differences as a whole. This might be so were it not for the fact that at Corbridge the type is relatively even commoner than

in the Antonine Wall deposits, excepting Mumrills 2, which Corbridge closely matches. No acceptable theory of methods of distribution to contemporaneously held sites can explain this. What would explain it is if there was a time, later than Corbridge IV during which the type had not yet arrived, and therefore later than AW I, when Corbridge and the Antonine Wall were held and the turrets and milecastles were not. This could not have been during HW IB by definition. AW II and HW IB could not then be contemporary but only successive, AW II being the later, beginning, one might suggest, in 185 and lasting for one or two decades. The type discussed, together with other second-century types of b-b 2, is not alone in having the particular distribution pattern. Mortaria made at Colchester,<sup>104</sup> and carrying herring-bone stamps had been recorded sixty-one times on the Antonine Wall, down to 1963, once only on Hadrian's Wall, in Birdswald fort, and ten times at Corbridge. It is probable that these mortaria and b-b 2 were manufactured in the same area.<sup>105</sup> What is as important as their common origin is their contemporaneity. They were made during the same period, and that period included the late second century.

It has been remarked both orally and in print that in Mumrills 2 the early-Antonine date assigned to the samian, and the mid- to late-Antonine date assigned to the unstamped coarse pottery as a whole, are inconsistent. In actual fact, though they are certainly different, they are completely consistent. The samian dating is undoubtedly correct. The unstamped coarse pottery as a whole is certainly not dated too late; it may have been dated fractionally too early.

When, in the summer of 1958, the first yield of coarse pottery from the Mumrills west ditch was shown to students of coarse pottery in north-eastern England each expressed the opinion that it was datable as a group to a little before or a little after 200, mainly on the strength of its similarity to

<sup>104</sup> M. R. Hull, *The Roman Potter's Kilns of Colchester* 1963; pp. 110-116.

<sup>105</sup> Mr. B. R. Hartley drew our attention to this probability.

the group from the close of Corbridge VC. Later in the year, at an informal conference between the director of the excavation and the contributors to the report, after there had been further excavation, it emerged that the whole deposit had been interleaved with fired daub in what appeared to be a primary ditch, that the latest coin was of 154, and that the samian and the mortaria stamped with names seemed to be early-Antonine. Only one conclusion appeared possible, that the deposit represented clearing up after the destruction at the end of AW I. It looked therefore as if it had to be accepted that all the coarse pottery belonged to the 150s at latest, nearly half a century earlier than had at first been thought, though this would make necessary painful rethinking about Corbridge and Hadrian's Wall. Within the next two years it became clear that the ditch from which the group came was not primary but secondary, and that the destruction was that at the end, not of AW I but of AW II. The usual dating of the end of AW II to the early 180s being accepted, this was then the date of deposit of the pottery of all kinds. It was the samian which now seemed to be out of step, but in fact it was unaffected by the new information, for it had been dated by external evidence, and not by context or association. The new information carried the context and dating of the coarse pottery three fifths of the way towards what had appeared to be its morphological date from the start. The stamped mortaria are not as a whole exclusively early-Antonine. The stamp of SARRIUS, from a Hartshill die and on Hartshill fabric, certainly is early-Antonine, but that of BRUSCIUS, dated 140-175 by Mrs. Hartley, could, on site evidence, as easily be mid- to late-Antonine as early- to mid-Antonine, except that the rim forms seem relatively early. Mrs. Hartley gives only a generalised Antonine date for IMIIMITVOBON; he has been dated mid- to late-Antonine,<sup>106</sup> but for no compelling reason, and typologically his work could be earlier. In order not to prejudice any issue, all three potters have been treated as

<sup>106</sup> AA<sup>4</sup> XXVI, 1948; p. 182.

early-Antonine in the count of mortarium makers above; it must however be allowed that there is an element of doubt. One of the three Colchester herring-bone stamps has a closely similar counterpart at the end of Corbridge VC, though the impressions are not identical. The vessel is typologically late; with the stamp it is probably mid- to late-Antonine. This is very little later than Mrs. Hartley implies, for she says that production may not have begun before 160. The other two herring-bone stamps doubtless fall into the same period.

The reason that samian later than 160 is absent from the ditch is that pottery of all kinds of the period corresponding to HW IB is absent from the whole Antonine Wall and vicinity. The absence of the coarse pottery is not noticeable because of the slowness of typological change, and because there are no such precise pointers as stamp dies and decorative styles. By the time of re-occupation in 185, the supply of samian to the whole of northern Britain was drying up. Examples of the work of few potters whose activity may have continued much beyond c. 180 have been found on either Wall. Coarse pottery on the other hand will have begun to reach the site again in 185. The difference in the dating of the two classes of material in the report need have occasioned no surprise.

A decorated fragment of samian assigned to CETTUS, dated 160-195 by Dr. Grace Simpson,<sup>107</sup> and after 170 by Mr. Hartley, was found in a pit in the annexe at Mumrills. This piece cou'd well have reached the site after 185. Activity overlapping the end of HW IB and the beginning of AW II, if these were successive, would fit the distribution of pieces in his style, which have also appeared at Balmuildy, at several sites between the Walls, at two sites on Hadrian's Wall, and at Corbridge, not infrequently, in the deposit of the destruction at the end of VC.

The present position seems to be that the ditch-deposit in Mumrills 2 was quite certainly formed at the end of AW II, and that the date of deposit, and thus of the latest coarse

<sup>107</sup> J. A. Stanfield and Grace Simpson, *Central Gaulish Potters* 1958; p. 247.

pottery, is that of the end of AW II. If this is placed soon after 180 it puts more strain on the coarse pottery than if it is placed measurably later, as indeed it must be if it is accepted that AW II did not begin until 185.

In the last decade of the second century imperial politics cut across the history of the northern frontier. The murder of Commodus was followed shortly by that of Pertinax, in 193. In the resultant power vacuum, the bid for supreme power by the governor of Britain, Clodius Albinus, came late, not apparently before 196.<sup>108</sup> He had been duped with the title of Caesar by Severus, in 193, but in late 196, when he found Severus moving against him, he had insufficient time to gain any substantial hold on the continent. He could not win over the Rhine legions, and indeed only the urban cohort at Lugdunum seems to have joined him.<sup>109</sup> Severus descended on his army near Lugdunum in February 197, and defeated it, Albinus being shortly after killed. But it was not an easy victory. There were great casualties on both sides. A good part of the army of Britain must have been annihilated.

Playing for such high stakes as the imperial throne must have had a great effect in simplifying the issues. Albinus will presumably have made some kind of arrangement for the government and defence of Britain before he crossed to the continent. But he is not likely to have worried excessively over the fate of the northern frontier, for there were only two future possibilities. Either he won the struggle, and became emperor, in which case he would have all the resources of the empire at his command when it came to clearing up any mess he had created by withdrawing troops from Britain. Or he was defeated, in which case it would not be his problem. It is therefore improbable that he left any sizeable garrison on the northern frontier, or anywhere else, and not impossible that he removed virtually the whole of

<sup>108</sup> When Caracalla was proclaimed Caesar.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *CIL* XIII 6800=ILS 419 for the resistance of Trier to Albinus. From the fact that the diploma *CIL* XVI 133 of 192 is the last known evidence for *cohors XIII Urbana* it is deduced that the unit was disbanded by Severus.

the army of Britain. This would have created an excellent opportunity for the people of the north to invade the province, and such an invasion has been postulated, precisely in 197, with consequent destruction which at one time was thought to have reached as far south as Chester and York. The destruction envisaged was a systematic demolition of structures, possible in a complete absence of the garrison.

However, the literary sources make no reference to an invasion at this time. It is true that for this period we have, of contemporary historians, only an epitome of Cassius Dio, while Herodian is a writer of poor quality, with little ability to separate wheat from chaff. Nevertheless, it is interesting that while the epitomator of Dio thought it worthwhile to make mention of the attack which resulted in the campaigns of Ulpus Marcellus in the early years of Commodus, and Herodian claims that it was a barbarian attack which brought Severus to Britain in 208 or 209, neither has a word to say about an invasion in 197, or indeed about any military matters in Britain until well after 200. But although the epitomator of Dio is silent, another work which drew upon him, the *Excerpts on Embassies*, uses Dio to mention, rather enigmatically, something happening in Britain in the period 197/199:<sup>110</sup> "Since the Caledonians did not keep their promises, and made ready to assist the Maeatae, and since at that time Severus was devoting himself to the Parthian War, Lupus was forced to purchase peace from the Maeatae for a great sum, receiving back a few prisoners". Severus embarked on the second Parthian campaign in 197, and it was over by 199.<sup>111</sup> Lupus is clearly Virius Lupus, attested as governor in Britain in 197/8. The "promises" which the Caledonians had made, were presumably made to some Roman authority. They were either those conditions which presumably had been imposed upon them by Ulpus Marcellus, or possibly part of some arrangement which they had made with Clodius Albinus, by which they agreed to keep

<sup>110</sup> Exc. UR 18 (p. 414) = Dio 75, 5, 4.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, 143 with references.



the peace in return for a subsidy, or for benefits to be conferred in the event of Albinus's victory. Since Albinus had lost, they may well have calculated that they could ignore the agreement. As to the Maeatae, we have no information as to what they were doing. Had they also received subsidies, which they now demanded should be resumed, or had they been promised money, which they now demanded should be paid? At the least the Maeatae had taken a stance hostile to Rome, but more than that we cannot say with certainty.

The passage has been interpreted to mean that the Maeatae had in fact broken into the province and had to be paid off to get them to retire beyond the frontier. It is argued that the northern frontier was only very slowly re-established, building being attested under Virius Lupus at Ilkley and Bowes,<sup>112</sup> and under his successor Valerius Pudens at Bainbridge in 205,<sup>113</sup> but the Wall itself only being restored under Alfenus Senecio after 205, with inscriptions at Birdoswald, Chesters and Risingham,<sup>114</sup> as well as at Bowes, Greta Bridge and Bainbridge (and Corbridge, unless the stone is in fact of Valerius Pudens).<sup>115</sup> It is thus envisaged that it took Rome about eight or ten years to re-establish the frontier (about as long as it took to build Hadrian's Wall in the first place).

It is true that the army in the north will have been in no position to take offensive action at least for a short time after Severus's first governor arrived. Its losses at Lugdunum will have had to be made good, no doubt largely by drafts of men from other parts of the empire.<sup>116</sup> But it is difficult to believe that Severus would have permitted a situation to continue in which a re-establishment of the frontier took so long. The man who, although old and ill, prosecuted the campaigns of 209 and 210 with such vigour and determina-

<sup>112</sup> *RIB* 637 and 730.

<sup>113</sup> *JRS* LI, 192 no. 4.

<sup>114</sup> *RIB* 1909, 1462 and 1234.

<sup>115</sup> *RIB* 740, 746, 722 and 1151.

<sup>116</sup> For example *CIL* VIII 2080 (=IL Alg. 3748) and 5180 (=IL Alg. 539) may indicate men transferred from Africa at this time.

tion is hardly likely to have gone off to the Parthian campaign in 197, leaving a situation of such weakness in Britain. There is no evidence that the Parthian situation was so pressing that it had to be dealt with immediately after the defeat of Albinus, but even if it were, the Parthian campaign was over by 199 at the latest, and no pressing problem, military or otherwise, presented itself to Severus in the intervening years, until the British campaigns of 209 and 210. It is difficult to imagine this energetic man allowing his governors to struggle for so long to restore the situation in northern Britain. He would surely have seen to it that the frontier system was fully restored long before the governorship of Alfenus Senecio.

In fact there is no evidence that the frontier was cast into disarray in 197. However, whether or not the province was subdivided in 197, as Herodian claims,<sup>117</sup> it is clear that the northern frontier was still, during Severus's reign as before, considered to require a man of consular rank to control it. The army, once re-organized under Lupus, seems soon to have regained control of the situation, so much so that, by about 207, Severus could contrast the victories being won by his army in Britain with his own lack of success in tracking down a brigand in Italy.<sup>118</sup> But, if we are to believe Herodian, the position soon changed. He claims that a letter from the governor told Severus of a barbarian invasion on such a scale as to require either a great reinforcement of the northern army or an imperial expedition.<sup>119</sup> It may be that this merely represents the official *casus belli*, and it may be argued that, as Dio claims,<sup>120</sup> what Severus really wanted was simply to get Caracalla and Geta away from the flesh-pots of Rome and to instil some discipline into them. Yet this does not seem very probable. Severus was now over 60 and so ill that he had to be carried in a litter throughout the campaigns. It seems necessary to conclude that, in this

<sup>117</sup> III 8, 2. cf. *JRS* LVI 92-107 and *JRS* LVII 61-4.

<sup>118</sup> Dio 76, 10, 6.

<sup>119</sup> III, 14, 1.

<sup>120</sup> 76, 11, 1.

condition, he will not have prosecuted the campaigns so vigorously unless he had a really vital reason for doing so, and the vital reason can be little short of serious trouble with the northern barbarians. Severus will not have delayed long in dealing with them.

It seems reasonable to conclude that an invasion had in fact taken place in 207 or 208, as Herodian states. Further, Dio<sup>121</sup> says that "The Maeatae live close to the Wall which divides the island in two, and the Caledonians beyond them". Since the only evidence which may locate the Maeatae suggests that they lay not far to the north of the Antonine Wall, Dio is presumably to be taken to imply that the Wall formed the frontier line at the time of these campaigns. If barbarian forces had broken in in 207 or 208, it was presumably the Antonine Wall that they crossed. It may be suggested that this is the date of the destruction which marks the end of Period II on the Antonine Wall.

Invaders breaking into a garrisoned province are unlikely to have attempted a detailed investment of Roman forts. They are more likely to have made straight for those sites which could be easily captured and which promised most booty. The depot-town at Corbridge will have fallen into this category, and we can date the destruction known there at this period, to the invasion attested by Herodian. The destruction at Halton Chesters probably belongs to the same invasion. It may not have been fully garrisoned when the frontier lay on the Antonine Wall, but it will have lain clear in the path of any raider approaching Corbridge. The supposed Period III on the Antonine Wall might then mark merely clearing-up operations, whether or not prolonged further occupation was envisaged: whatever may have been planned will certainly have been abandoned when Caracalla and Geta retired to the Hadrianic line after the death of Severus.

Fourth century sources credit Severus with the construction of a Wall in Britain. The *Historia Augusta Life of*

<sup>121</sup> 76, 12, 1.

Severus repeats the phraseology of Aurelius Victor, *muro per transversam insulam ducto, utrimque ad finem Oceani munivit*.<sup>122</sup> The different formulation of Eutropius, *utque receptas provincias omni securitate muniret, vallum per XXXII milia passuum a mari ad mare deduxit* reappears with little alteration of the wording (but with corruption of the numeral) in the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Orosius, Jerome and Cassiodorus.<sup>123</sup> But both traditions credit Severus with wall-building *after*, not *before*, campaigning. Either Severus is wrongly credited with any wall-building, or rebuilding, at all, or, it might be claimed, the reference is merely to the postulated third period on the Antonine Wall. It is true that neither Dio in epitome nor Herodian refer to wall-building, but this may not be very significant, since they were intent on describing aggressive campaigns, and wall-building would have little place in that kind of story.

But it may well be that in fact no extensive reconstruction on either Wall was undertaken by Severus. The restoration of Hadrian's Wall which marks the beginning of Hadrian's Wall Period II should probably be referred to as Caracallan rather than as Severan. For the evidence of work at Birdoswald, Chesters and Risingham is no proof that Hadrian's Wall was rebuilt under Alfenus Senecio. The work at Chesters and Risingham involved the procurator Oclatinus Adventus. On the face of it the procurator has no place on a military building inscription, and indeed the situation is without parallel on any frontier. But Oclatinus Adventus had been *frumentarius*, and had become *princeps peregrinorum*,<sup>124</sup> that is head of the imperial intelligence service. It is not fanciful to see him operating alongside Alfenus Senecio, as the personal representative of the emperor, in the counter-measures to the growing hostility to the north of the frontier and in the preparations for the campaigns of the emperor himself.

<sup>122</sup> Aur. Victor, *de Caesaribus* 20, 18; SHA Severus XVIII, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Eutropius VIII, 19; *Epitome de Caesaribus* 20, 4; Orosius VII, 17; Chronicles of Jerome and Cassiodorus, s.a. A.D. 207.

<sup>124</sup> Dio 78, 14, 1-3.