PROTECTING THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Roman army enjoys an enviable reputation as an instrument of waging war, but as the modern world reminds us, an enduring victory requires far more than simply winning battles. When it came to suppressing counter-insurgencies, or deterring the depredations of bandits, the army frequently deployed small groups of infantry and cavalry based in fortlets. This remarkable installation type has never previously been studied in detail, and shows a new side to the Roman army. Rather than displaying the aggressive uniformity for which the Roman military is famous, individual fortlets were usually bespoke installations tailored to local needs. Examining fortlet use in north-west Europe helps explain the differing designs of the Empire’s most famous artificial frontier systems: Hadrian’s Wall, the Antonine Wall, and the Upper German and Raetian limites. The archaeological evidence is fully integrated with documentary sources, which disclose the gritty reality of life in a Roman fortlet.

Dr Matthew Symonds is the editor of Current World Archaeology magazine and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He has published widely on Roman frontiers.
PROTECTING THE ROMAN EMPIRE

FORTLETS, FRONTIERS, AND THE QUEST FOR POST-CONQUEST SECURITY

MATTHEW SYMONDS

Current World Archaeology
To Malcolm and Linda
for literally everything
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Pennine Way is a good walk for fortlet spotting, as I discovered in the summer between finishing school and starting university. At first I was grateful for the shelter the crumbling defences offered from the elements, but as the miles went by I found myself becoming interested in the way they engaged, or did not, with the terrain. Much to my surprise, those few weeks led to twenty years researching this most overlooked of Roman military fortifications. Over that period a humbling number of people have helped and humoured me, and I would like to express my gratitude to some of them here.

Professors Andrew Poulter and Roger J.A. Wilson guided and inspired in equal measure at the University of Nottingham. My postgraduate studies at Christ Church, University of Oxford, were funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and I was fortunate indeed to be supervised by Professor Andrew Wilson. This book also owes a debt to my thesis examiners: Professors Sir Barry Cunliffe and Bill Hanson. Professor David J. Breeze has provided tireless support and encouragement, and I have also benefited from the wisdom of many in the community of Roman frontier specialists. It is impossible to name everyone, but I am particularly grateful to: Lindsay Allason-Jones, Dr Andrew Birley, Dr Mike Bishop, Professor Jim Crow, Dr Brian Dobson, Paul Franzen, Dr Andrew Gardner, Erik Graafstal, Dr Peter Guest, Professor Ian Haynes, Professor Richard Hingley, Dr Birgitta Hoffmann, Dr Stefanie Hoss, Dr Fraser Hunter, Dr Tatiana Ivleva, Professor Valerie Maxfield, Professor S. Thomas Parker, John Poulter, Dr John Reid, Professor Sebastian Sommer, Dr Sue Stallibrass, Dr Andreas Thiel, Dr Meike Weber, Humphrey Welfare, Tony Wilmott, and Dr David Woolliscroft. Paul Bidwell, Dr Rob Collins, Dr Peter Hill, Dr Nick Hodgson, Dr Becky Jones, and my two referees all made incisive suggestions to improve the text. Lieutenant Colonel Al McCluskey recommended taking a look at modern counterinsurgency literature. A special mention must go to the late Dr Vivien Swan for being the staunchest advocate any young scholar could hope for.

This book could only be completed because Current Publishing granted me a sabbatical from my editorial duties, and I am grateful to Andrew Selkirk, Rob Selkirk, Dr Nadia Durrani, Chris Catling, and Carly Hilts for making that possible. Beatrice Rehl, Edgar Mendez, and Josh Penney at Cambridge
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

University Press helped to shape this book and guided me through the process, while Ian Bull and Dylan Bickerstaffe have helped with illustrations. My family and friends have had their lives disrupted by numerous detours to take in sites. I am eternally grateful to my parents, to whom this book is dedicated, as well as to Lucy Audley-Miller, Paul Austin and Rebecca Jackson, Dr Radia Kesseiri-Austin, Lucy Norman, Dr D. Partlett, Rev. John and Jenny Repath, Sammy Repath, Dr P. Smith, and S. Swift. To those who have followed my fortlet fixation from the start I apologise: as the ancient documents make clear, two decades is longer than anyone should have to spend on outpost duty!

Finally, special thanks to Mark Repath for his resilient good humour while accompanying me to fortlet sites throughout Europe, and to Erin and Tommy for both encouraging and enabling me to pursue a dream.