

Men and mountains, or geographical determinism and the conquest of Scotland

Pat Southern*

ABSTRACT

This paper re-examines the debate on the extent and duration of the Agricolan campaigns in Scotland and, in particular, the possible extent of Roman activity in the Highlands. It is argued that later historical sources – describing Edwardian, Cromwellian and Hanoverian campaigns in Scotland – are relevant to an understanding of the difficulties which faced Roman strategists in the same mountainous terrain.

INTRODUCTION

The present state of archaeological information about north Britain in the first century suggests that after the conquest and consolidation of northern England and southern Scotland the Roman army skirted the mountains without entering the Highland massif. The map of known forts shows that the most northerly permanent post was at Stracathro, while marching camps attest some sort of temporary presence to the east of the mountains, with the added implication that the Romans were aiming for and may have reached the Moray Firth.

The notion that Agricola's army may have penetrated the Highlands was postulated by Henderson (1984) and Breeze (1990). Henderson suggested that Mons Graupius was fought in the Highlands, while Breeze envisaged that the Roman presence in the Highlands came about either in connection with a reconnaissance exercise, or as a result of the pacification of the country after Mons Graupius, when Agricola progressed slowly and impressively southwards, possibly via Strathspey and Strath Tay. It is worth emphasizing, as Breeze does, that the Roman high command would not be completely daunted by the Highlands, and would be perfectly capable of finding pathways through and perhaps even over the mountains. The Carpathians and the Atlas range may have caused a few heartaches for the Romans, but these mountains did not bring Roman armies to an ignominious, shuddering halt. There is no excuse for claiming excessive difficulty or hostility for the mountains of Scotland.

So far, so good. This paper explores, via comparative evidence, first, the conquest of lowland Scotland up to the Tay; secondly, the heretical possibility that Agricola may have penetrated the Highlands before Mons Graupius; and, thirdly, the possibility that there may have been a Roman presence in the mountains after the battle. Speculation such as this goes beyond established fact, but it has been said that those who refuse to go *beyond* fact rarely get as *far* as fact. The use of comparative evidence may be frowned upon but it can be useful when comparing military activities of the pre-Industrial Age. Until the 18th century the problems of terrain, communications and supply were much the same for any army. The only significant change was the invention of firearms. In many

* Literary and Philosophical Society, 23 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SE

respects, therefore, the difficulties encountered by later armies intent upon invading Scotland, whose activities are much better documented, may have some bearing upon the progress of the Roman army in the first century.

MEN AND MOUNTAINS

The conquest of southern lowland Scotland is more straightforward than that of the north, but to arrive at the Highland line requires careful planning. The geography of Scotland presents the invader with a challenge once he has reached the Tay. William I, precariously in the ascendancy, recognized this challenge when he invaded Scotland in 1072. He met Malcolm Canmore at Abernethy, and came to a political agreement. William was a very long way from his base at York, and his rear was far from secure. He could go no further without endangering his troops on the return journey, perhaps fatally. 'To arrive had been difficult, to stay was impossible' (Ritchie 1954, 38). William's political aims in 1072 were achieved by feudal compromise, allowing him to turn his attention to his more immediate problem, which was that of northern England. Though his intention was perhaps not to conquer and hold all of Scotland, the point is made that an army cannot reasonably march beyond the Tay without first ensuring that the rearward territory is secured, because the southern population can rise and cut communications, and the northern population can descend through the Highland glens and come down behind the army as it advances northwards. Thus Agricola's Forth/Clyde *terminus* of his fourth season, attested in the pages of Tacitus (*Agricola* 23.1), may have had an overriding military purpose rather than a political one.

It is sometimes suggested that Agricola halted to await Imperial instructions (Breeze 1982, 43; Hanson 1987, 107; Frere 1987, 91). He had already held the post of Governor of Britain for three years and possibly expected to be recalled; he established some forts at the end of the third season (*Agricola* 22.1), and if he had been recalled at that point he would have left the province in an orderly state for his successor to be able to pick up the threads and continue the conquest. Whether the early or the late chronology for Agricola's governorship is preferred, the halt at the Forth/Clyde isthmus in the fourth season still falls within the reign of Titus. It was by this Emperor's direct order, or by his assent to Agricola's recommendations, that the fourth season was spent in consolidation. *Legati* were probably allowed to follow their own inclinations to a large extent (Millar 1982, 8), so it is likely that Agricola sent reports to the Emperor, recording his successes and making recommendations for subsequent operations, to which Titus would give his assent. On balance it is more likely that Agricola halted and consolidated for a whole season because he felt it necessary to do so, rather than in obedience to an Imperial directive to cease operations.

If this is correct, it presupposes that the overall Roman plan for the conquest of Scotland was all-embracing and indivisible, and not one of trial and error, stopped by Titus and started again by Domitian. The plan was to conquer the whole country, and as an integral part of this single plan Agricola first secured and consolidated the southern hinterland before advancing northwards. Time and patience, not to mention caution, were necessary. Such prudence can be interpreted either as essential thoroughness or as pedestrian plodding. Essential thoroughness impressed itself very firmly upon other invaders of Scotland. Security of the rearward areas was achieved only by means of subduing the population and leaving behind patrolling garrisons, which remained in the lowlands while the campaign armies operated in the north. The correspondence of Edward I contains repeated instructions to make forays against the lowland Scots, at all times, but especially while the king's army was on campaign. The expenses incurred are carefully listed (Stevenson 1870 vol 2, 329; 336; 339; 448; Bain 1884, xxxii; nos. 1032; 1034; 1036). Under Cromwell, General Monck was appointed in April 1654, and advanced northwards into the Highlands very soon afterwards, but he could take

advantage of four years of repeated campaigning conducted by Cromwell himself and Major-General Lilburne. Even so, despite this progressive weakening of Scottish resistance and strengthening of English control, Monck made strenuous efforts to secure the south before he marched. On his arrival in 1654, Monck found that the most troublesome spot was Galloway, and he asked Captain Howard at Carlisle to secure it by patrolling it. For this he needed one more regiment of horse in addition to the two troops stationed at Dumfries, and he wrote to Cromwell to justify the extra troops because without them 'wee cannott' close uppe the Enemy handsomely, nor secure the countries from rising behind us' (Firth 1899, 103). Once control was established to his satisfaction, Monck felt able to proceed north of the Forth, writing to Cromwell that 'I shall not feare any insureccion behind mee' (Webb 1979, 72).

Both the Cromwellian and Hanoverian garrisons of southern Scotland contained a high proportion of light cavalry (Ashley 1977, 118; *Thurloe State Papers* 4, 472; Firth 1899, 367–9; Albemarle Papers 1902, 201–3; 208–10). This accords well with the suggestion by Maxwell (1990, 71) that the part-mounted units which were probably stationed at forts such as Birrens and Crawford may have been responsible for patrolling the surrounding territory. This is how a country is held down and security is achieved for the occupiers. In a passage which has every indication of personal reminiscence from Agricola himself, Tacitus explains how in the winter following the third season the Romans gave the natives no peace, making forays against them and harassing them so that they could not recuperate and emerge ready for warfare in the spring. Tacitus' description of the arrival at the Tay is not one of benign progress: *vastatis usque ad Taum (aestuario nomen est) nationibus* [visiting destruction on the natives as far as the Tay (which is the name of the estuary)] (*Agricola* 22.1). Tacitus employs the same word, *vastare*, once again in connection with people, not territory, in *Histories* 2.87.2. Furneaux & Anderson (1922, 106) compared this use of the word with Livy's *devastare*. Destruction of the enemy's economic base is the only method whereby scattered native populations can be subdued. In Africa, Q Junius Blaesus kept the native leader Tacfarinas in a continual state of movement, operating all year round from forts planted in enemy territory (*Tacitus Annals* 3.73), and on the Danube Marcus Aurelius harassed the Quadi and Marcomanni in the same way (*Dio* 72.20). The process takes time, and in Britain in the first century the procedure was perfectly valid. The fort building of the third season and the *praesidia* of the fourth can be seen as a progressive and interrelated operation, and the winter harrying of the natives was most probably continued in the fourth season. This is not a penny-plain provincial hack at work, nor a needlessly bloodthirsty martinet. Agricola knew what he was doing. Compared to the track record of Edward I and Cromwell's generals, who required four years and more to get a grip on southern Scotland, Agricola's one-year halt at the Forth/Clyde isthmus seems extraordinarily brief and efficient.

The location of the forts of the third season and the *praesidia* of the fourth cannot be identified with certainty. It might be expected that forts such as Glenlochar, Castledykes, Dalswinton, Milton, possibly Oakwood, and Newstead would be likely candidates for early and continual occupation because of their positions guarding the routes to and from the north. There is some consensus that Newstead was occupied very early in the Flavian period (Ogilvie & Richmond 1967, 230; Hanson & Maxwell 1983, 38; Hanson 1987, 97). It is unlikely that Newstead stood alone.

Further north, the eastern route was always of paramount importance to any invading army. In 1650 Cromwell's army quartered itself around Musselburgh, where it could maintain itself in the face of hostile opposing forces because it could be supplied by sea. Musselburgh was described in 1655 as 'a very opportune place for carryeing out and bringing in of goods, unto or from any shippe that shal be lyeing in the roade' (Hume Brown 1891, 166). After Cromwell had subdued southern Scotland, English headquarters were established at Dalkeith, whence first Major-General Lilburne from 1652 and then Monck from April 1654 directed operations. Even when Edinburgh was in their

hands, the English did not choose to administer from the city itself. Communications with Dalkeith were better and access was less restricted. The implications for the possible role of the Flavian fort at Elginhaugh will be obvious. Comparative evidence illustrates the fact that it was possible to maintain troops as far north as Elginhaugh throughout the winter and, more important, that it was possible to maintain a presence there without any hold on the territory farther north, as a prelude to advancing into and beyond the Highlands.

The *praesidia* are still elusive, despite research and theorizing about them. They will probably always be so, not least because of the enormous changes that have taken place in the landscape since the Roman period. The modern face of Scotland can be deceptive. It is now sometimes difficult to appreciate the strategic significance of some sites because of the alterations wrought over the centuries, especially the last two. Marshes have been drained, land reclaimed, some rivers have changed course, others have been canalized, and yet others have silted up. Bogs and tracts of forest have completely disappeared (Millman 1975, 69). With reference to the Forth/Clyde isthmus, before the massive drainage of the area in the 18th century, the passage to the north was restricted by the cause of the Forth and Flanders Moss. Routes to and from the north ran via Drymen and Aberfoyle in the west, and under the eye of Stirling in the east (Dickinson 1977, 1).

The course of the Antonine Wall has influenced the search for Agricolan sites linking the Forth and Clyde, despite the fact that the criteria governing the choice of fort sites on a linear barrier differ from those governing the site of free-standing forts (Hanson 1981, 56). The spectre of Agricolan *praesidia* underlying Antonine Wall forts has not yet been decisively proven nor convincingly laid to rest, because of the lingering uncertainty over those sites which have yielded multiple Flavian finds. First-century coins, pottery and glass were found at Cadder, Castlecary and Mumrills, so Hanson includes these in his list of possible Agricolan Forth/Clyde sites. Balmuildy and Kirkintilloch are rejected because of the limited nature of Flavian finds and, after archaeological investigation, Croy Hill and Bar Hill are deleted from the list of contenders for the *praesidia* (Hanson, 1987, 108–11). Each time new facts emerge or fresh sites are discovered, new theories are propounded for the exact line of Agricola's forts. The suggested line from Elginhaugh via Camelon and Mollins to Barochan (Hanson 1981, 57–63; 1987, 110–11) seems too far south for effective control of the territory farther north, even though the line does link the Forth to the Clyde. As Maxwell (1984b, 220) points out, to reach the Tay and then to establish a line so far south entails relinquishing a great deal of territory. In order to accommodate the newly discovered fort at Doune, Maxwell proposed a line much farther north, incorporating forts at Drumquhassle, Malling/Menteith and Bochastle. He was also forced to create hypothetical forts to complete this line at Dumbarton and Stirling (1984b, 219–20). There is as yet no incontrovertible evidence for forts at these two sites, so Hanson is sceptical about them (1987, 113).

There is some comparative evidence which favours the Agricolan establishment of a line joining Dumbarton to Stirling, despite the lack of archaeological proof or Roman forts at these two sites. In the territory between them, the fort at Drumquhassle lies a short distance to the south-east of Drymen, which is less than 25 miles (40 km) from Stirling, connected by the present A811 through Buchlyvie and Kippen. Before the drainage schemes of the 18th century made it possible to travel over a much larger tract of land, north/south routes were restricted to the narrow strips of passable terrain close to either Drymen or Stirling. There could be no better sites at which to plant forts to control movement into and out of Roman territory. This line has been described as the natural frontier, in preference to the artificial line taken by the Antonine Wall, the canal, the railway, and the motorway (Dickinson 1977, 1). It is also the line that the Hanoverians chose to garrison. The strategic value of Dumbarton, 'a castell stronge and hard for to obtain' (Tabraham 1986, 78), and Stirling, 'the eye of the Scottish lowlands' (Morton 1931, 83) speak for themselves, but the Hanover-

ians also placed troops at Kippen, Buchlyvie, Balfron, and Drymen (Albemarle Papers 1902, no 155). The numbers of men involved were small; the Romans may have garrisoned in more strength, but with an economy of manpower they could have utilized the Dumbarton/Stirling line to protect areas farther south. The fort at Doune would have been a useful adjunct. Stirling can watch the Forth alone. Doune cannot do this, but it would serve to give advance warning of any movement. Alternatively, Doune would provide a link between the hypothetical Drymen/Buchlyvie/Kippen line and the firmly attested line of towers and forts of the Gask Ridge.

The occupation of the Gask Ridge and the forts at Ardoch, Strageath and Bertha is a contested issue. The fact that there are two Flavian phases at Ardoch and Strageath argues for early occupation, but no archaeological evidence can be made to yield an exact date narrowed down to a specific year of Agricola's campaigns. The analogy with the Antonine occupation demonstrates that the line around Fife was important even when a running barrier had been created, so by extrapolation it is possible to envisage initial occupation of the Gask towers and the accompanying forts as early as the halt on the Forth/Clyde line in Agricola's fourth season. The abandonment of territory south of the Tay, reached in the third season, is then not in question. During Cromwell's campaigns an anonymous memorandum was drawn up stressing the importance of holding or controlling Fife and both sides of the Forth and, in his final letter from Scotland, Cromwell had reached the same conclusion, that it was impossible to get to grips with the Scots unless the army commanded both shores of the Firth of Forth (Douglas 1898, 212). It is possible to argue with Tacitus and his father-in-law at a remove of 2000 years, just as it is possible to argue with modern archaeologists, but one would perhaps hesitate to argue with Cromwell.

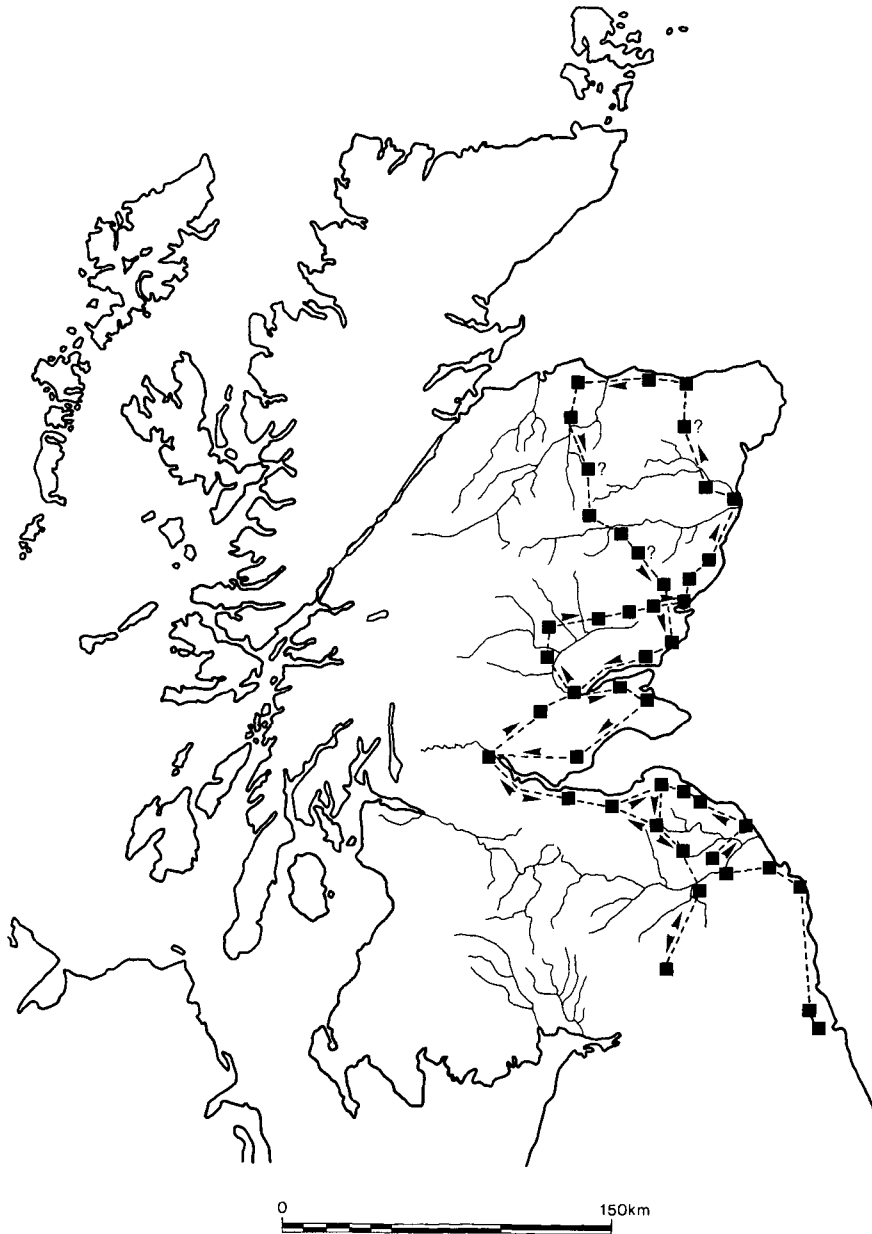
In his fifth, sixth and seventh seasons Agricola advanced, presumably northwards, but during these three years the whereabouts of his army is disputed, most especially in the fifth season. With regard to the latter, Tacitus ends his narrative of the fourth season with a clear reference to the Forth/Clyde isthmus, named in Latin *Clota et Bodotria*. The account of the fifth season opens with the sea-crossing which Agricola led *prima nave* [ie in the first ship] (*Agricola* 24.1). The requirements of Latin grammar indicate that this sea-crossing ought to be in connection with the last named geographical feature of the fourth season, namely the Forth/Clyde isthmus, and that Agricola and his army were operating north of it. The question remains unanswered as to whether the scene of operations was in the east or the west. The theory that Agricola crossed the Forth (Macdonald 1932, 13) cannot be decisively refuted, but the most telling argument against this is that in the description of the opening of the sixth season, Tacitus says that Agricola attacked the tribes beyond the Forth, as though this area had been ignored during the previous year. If the naval expedition was on the west side of Scotland, there is still no evidence at all as to the precise location. Any part of the country from Cheshire to the Western Isles could be indicated, and there have been arguments in favour of most of these areas. The only clue is that Agricola manned with troops the part of the coast which faces Ireland (*Agricola* 24.1), which is only specific for the west, and not precise enough to pinpoint exactly where. According to Tacitus, at the end of the fourth summer, everything south of the Forth/Clyde line was held down by Roman garrisons (*Agricola* 23). The tribes who were dealt with in the fifth season were hitherto unknown (*Agricola* 24). By the process of elimination it seems that the territory north of the Clyde is what is described in Tacitus' narrative. In this area there is no archaeological evidence whatsoever to support combined naval and land operations at any point in Agricola's campaigns, but later occupiers of Scotland found that the west can be held very lightly, provided it is guarded well, and this can be put into effect by means of a few patrols and more importantly the presence of ships to watch the seaways of the isles. Movement can be effectively stopped, as Viscount Dundee reported in 1689. His messengers had not been able to get through to him from the west, 'for there has been two English men-of-war and the Glasgow frigates among the

islands till of late' (Scott 1989, 149). The importance of neutralizing the west was demonstrated very clearly in 1653, when the English attempted to subdue the Royalists in Scotland under Glencairn and Middleton. Lilburne was convinced that 'being without a fleet to search the sea-lochs of the rugged western coast. . . it was impossible for him to subdue the enemy's forces' (Gardiner 1903, vol 3, 92). Lilburne wrote to Cromwell asking for ships which could not be spared while the Dutch war was in progress. As soon as this was over, and both Monck and ships could be sent to Scotland, one of Monck's first acts on taking over was to burn every boat on Loch Lomond and secure the western flank, making movement difficult for the enemy (Monck to Cromwell 21 May 1654; Firth 1899, xviii; 107). It is possible that Agricola's unlocated fifth season was conducted with this in mind, to reconnoitre, certainly, but also to secure his flank before he moved north. Like other invaders of Scotland, he would have recognized the need for naval assistance in this matter, and may have left a few ships to guard the west, as Lilburne and Monck recommended to Cromwell.

It has been pointed out several times that in order to conquer Scotland, it is necessary to subdue and hold the north (Grant 1984, 11; Nicholson 1974, 66). Not only must the Moray Firth be mastered, but in addition control of the Highlands is vital, 'a military truth which Cromwell was the first to realize' (Ritchie 1954, 32). It could be argued that Edward I also realized this military truth, but could not put it into effect, because he lacked a standing army and had rather overspent on castles in Wales. His budget in men and money would not allow him to do more than make annual forays, and then hold a few strongpoints, some of which he lost in the winters following the summer campaigns (Morris 1901, 293; Prestwich 1980, 49). After the 1304 campaign, Edward returned through the mountains (illus 1), just as Breeze suggests that Agricola may have done. But though Edward may have hammered the Scots, he never subdued them entirely, nor did he even wipe out their military power; after all his efforts, year after year, within a short time after his death the Scottish army was strong enough to inflict a serious defeat on the English at Bannockburn. Those armies which successfully conquered Scotland ruthlessly chased and subdued the population of the Highlands and then garrisoned and patrolled the inhospitable valleys. Without this, Scotland is not conquered, and it is worth repeating that a withdrawal of troops in the winter allows the natives to recuperate, thus creating the need for renewed campaigning in the summer. Subjugation of the Highlands and the maintenance of a constant military presence thereafter are of paramount importance. The argument that Agricola and his unknown successor simply bottled up the Highlands but ignored the interior, both during and after the conquest, does not make military sense.

Tribes who inhabit mountainous regions or have access to mountain retreats have no need to risk everything on one battle. For the attacker it is not simply a question of seizing strongpoints, burning crops and destroying bases in the lowlands. The tribes can withdraw into the mountains and wait for the enemy to go away (Verbruggen 1977, 285). Malcolm Canmore knew this, as did other medieval kings. According to Ritchie (1954, 34), Scottish practice 'consisted in keeping out of harm's way till the accumulating difficulties of time and distance, climate and supplies, brought the invaders to a halt, and to thoughts of compromise and a dignified retreat'. It has been said of Scotland that in the end it is the invader, not the defender, who starves (Morris 1901, 294).

In his sixth season, Agricola used the fleet to make quick raids from the coasts; the war was conducted simultaneously by land and sea (*Agricola* 25.1). He probably supplied his army by sea. None of the likely sites for this activity has been traced archaeologically. Likewise it is not known where Agricola was when he advanced in three columns and fought the Britons when they launched a night attack on the camp of the IX Legion. Tacitus says that if the marshes and forests had not covered the retreat of the natives, then that battle would have ended the war (*Agricola* 26.2). But the Britons scattered, ready to fight another day. It required two seasons of marching and fighting to coerce the Britons into uniting and risking a battle.

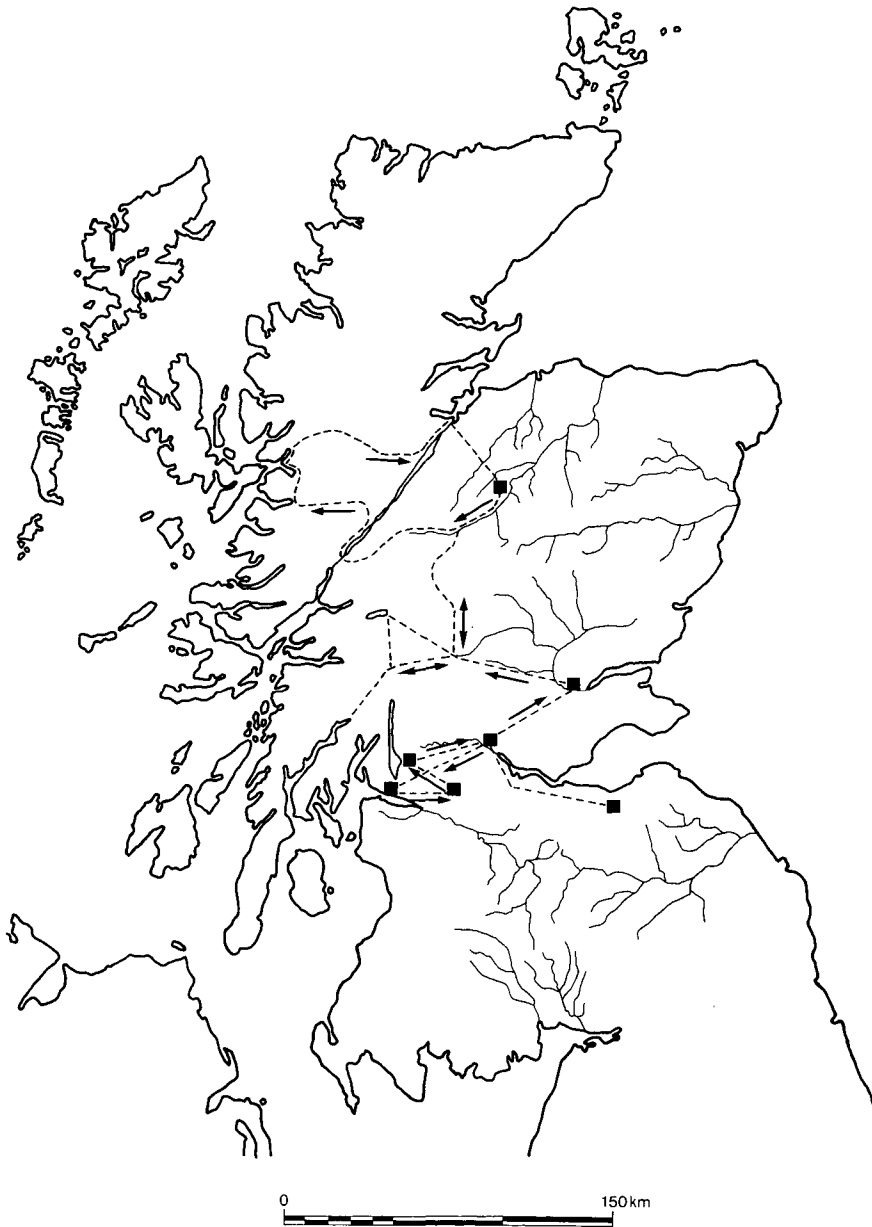


ILLUS 1 Itinerary of Edward I, 1 March to 30 September 1296, showing the halting places on his march up to the Moray Firth skirting the Highland line, and his return through the mountains. Compiled from the 1296 entries in Gough's *Itinerary of King Edward the First* (1900).

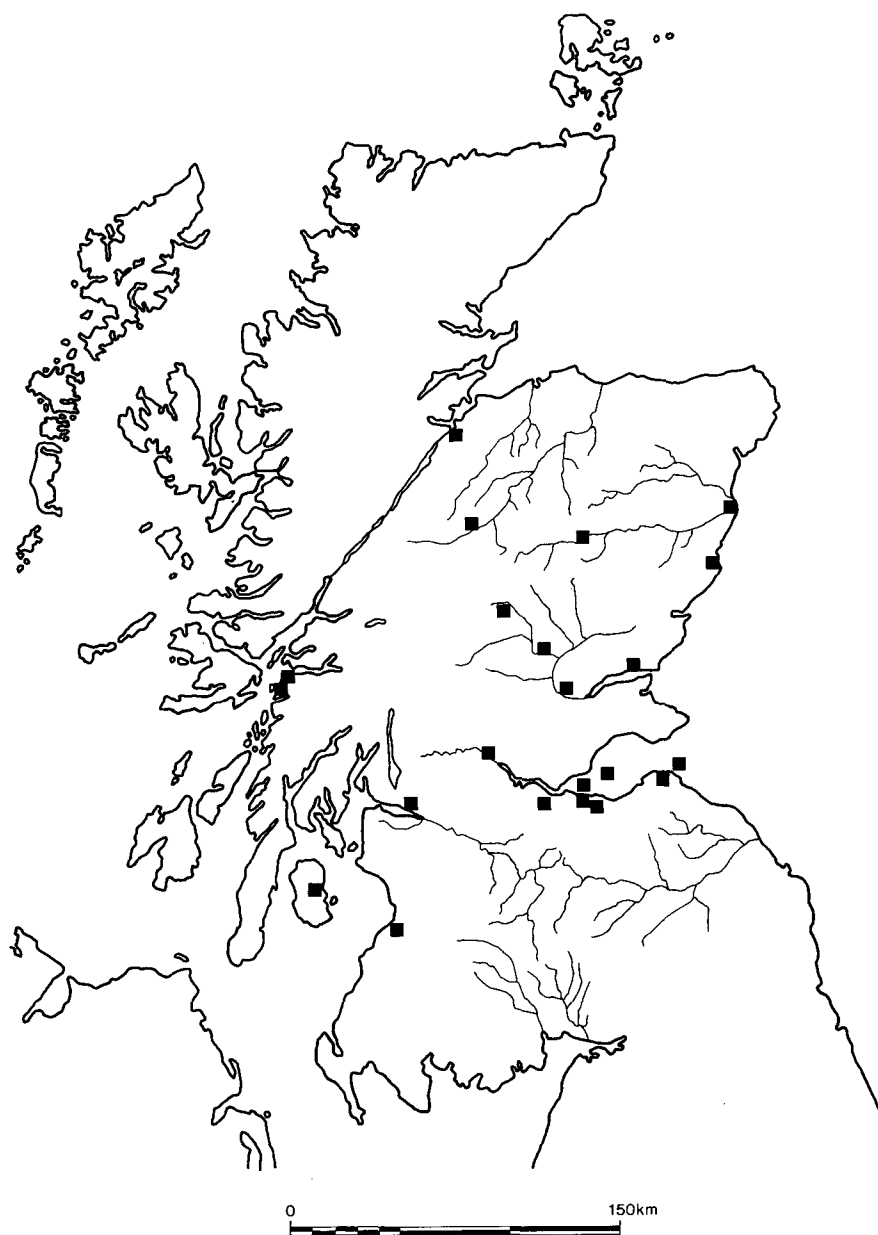
In the sixth and seventh seasons Agricola may have gone into the mountains. Campaigning in the Highlands is not impossible, as General Monck demonstrated (illus 2). The secret of his success was twofold. He had a strategic plan, and he was extremely mobile. His aim was to seal off the Highlands from the surrounding lowland areas to create a ‘virtually impassable line’ between the two (Gardiner 1903, vol 3 106). Compare Tacitus: *summotis velut in aliam insulam hostibus* [as though the enemy were removed to another island] (*Agricola* 23). Monck had to divide his forces between garrison posts and mobile army, but he succeeded in holding ‘a chain of fortresses and strong posts stretching from Inverness through Stirling and Ayr’ while he campaigned (Corbett 1899, 100). He operated in the wildest country, consolidated every step of the way, never moved without flanking parties and a cloud of scouts, chose the camp-sites and placed the pickets himself (Ashley 1977, 119; Corbett 1899, 99). Compare Tacitus once again: ‘[Agricola] gathered his army and was present everywhere on the march, commending discipline and curbing stragglers. He himself chose the camping ground and was the first to explore estuaries and forests’ (*Agricola* 20). This is said of the second season, and all the phrases can be dismissed as *topoi*, but equally there is still an element of energetic expertise, which would be necessary to bring about the final battle.

Leaving aside the debate about the exact location of the famous battle of Mons Graupius, the most remarkable feature about it is not that it was won by the Romans, but that it was fought *at all*. Mons Graupius is such a well-known event, so deeply embedded in the consciousness of scholars, that the search for where it occurred has perhaps subsumed the questions of why and how it occurred. It has been tacitly assumed that in order to conquer Scotland, all that the Romans had to do was demonstrate in strength around the edges of the mountains, possibly destroying food supplies and killing the natives to break up the power blocks of the more fertile and hospitable areas around the Highlands. Sooner or later, the story goes, a major battle was bound to be fought. This strategy may have worked in the long run, but it would probably have been a very long run. It may explain why the final confrontation was delayed for two seasons, or three, if the unlocated fifth season is to be included in the reckoning. But the theory that campaigns were conducted solely in the lowland regions does not take into account either the presence of a population in the mountains, or the peculiarities of Scottish geography and the opportunities for refuge offered by the proximity of the Highland glens.

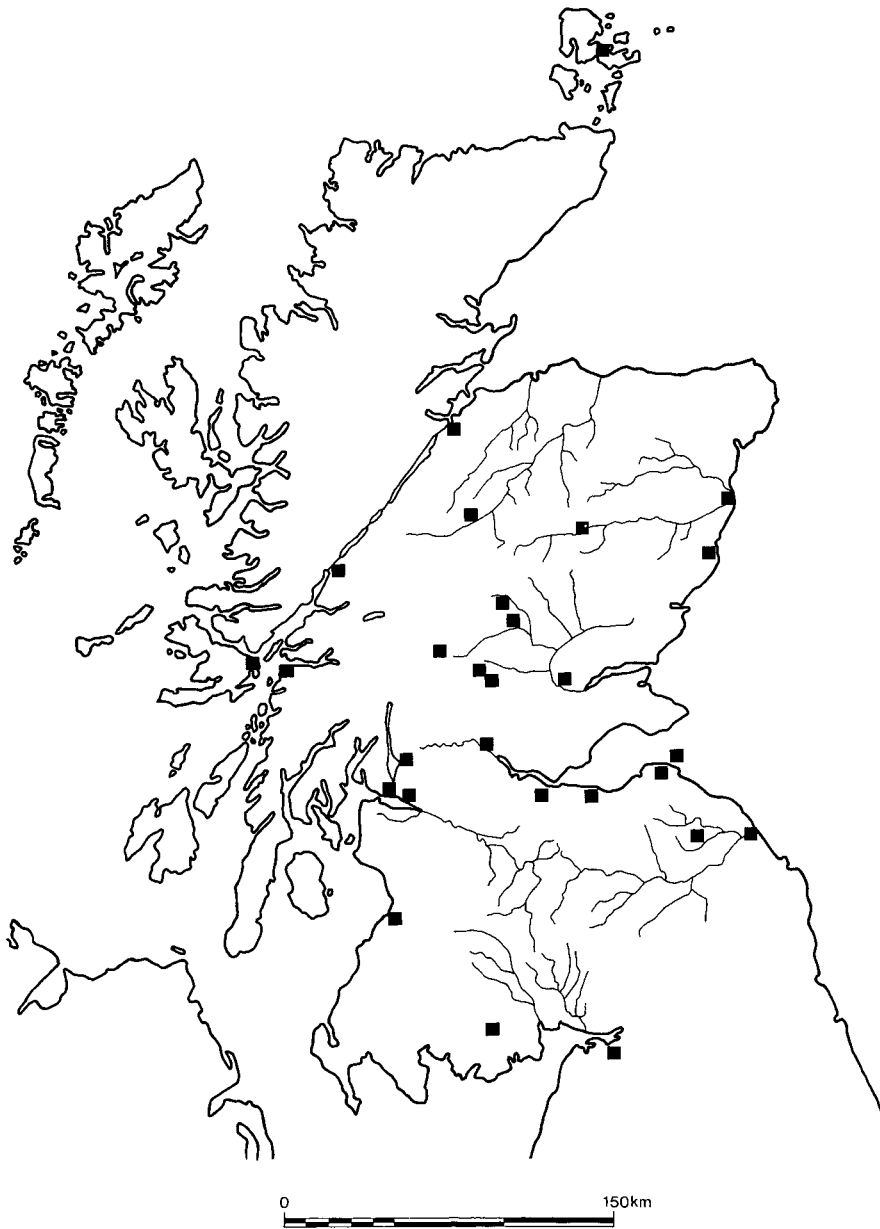
When he began his operations in the Highlands in 1654, Monck burnt settlements which could shelter the enemy, and then proceeded to block up the entrances to and exits from the glens. He was concerned to prevent movement in both directions. He wrote to Cromwell that he intended ‘God willing, next weeke to goe towards Sterling and to draw those forces from Glasgowe uppe to the Passes, where wee shal indeavour by making of little redoubts, and casting into such fords as wee cannott otherwise secure good stores of crowes feet, for the preventing of Horse from going between the Lowlands and Highlands’ (Firth 1899, 93). On the same day Monck wrote virtually the same letter to General Lambert, this time saying that the redoubts and the blocking of the fords by little ‘engines’ would prevent the incursions of the enemy from the Highlands into the lowlands. Having made all his preparations around the edges of the Highlands, he then took his troops into the mountains (Ashley 1977, 118–19). By analogy, the glen-blocking forts of the Flavian period may have been part of Agricola’s strategic plan. Blockade of the Highlands can be interpreted as a necessary measure to help to precipitate a battle. This directly contradicts modern assertions that the Roman objective was to bring about a battle first, and only when the fighting was over, to block the Highlands (St Joseph 1969, 118; Breeze 1981, 20). If, after Mons Graupius, it was still necessary to build forts at the glen mouths, as springboards for further attack, then Scotland was not conquered, and Agricola would know that better than anyone. The function of the glen forts was more likely to be control of



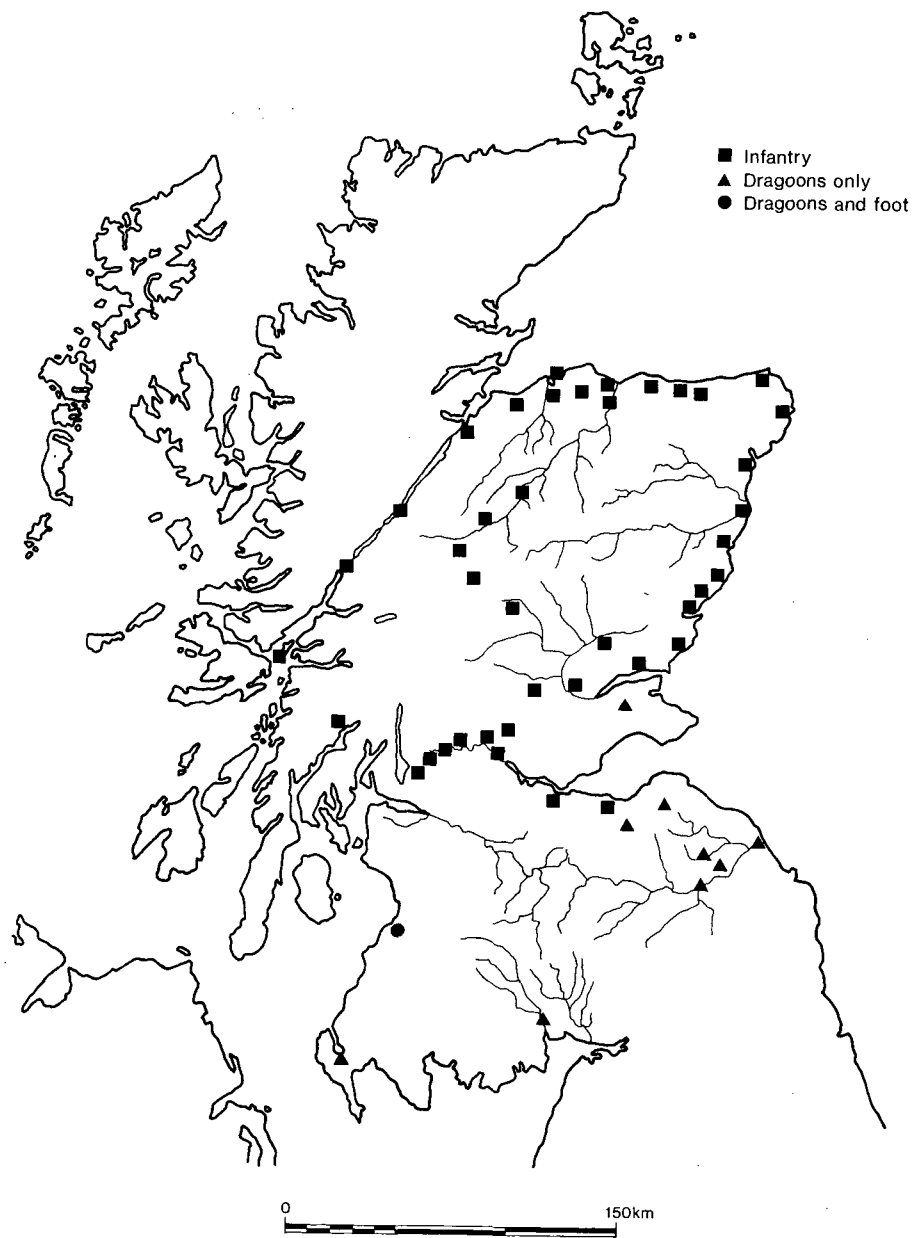
ILLUS 2 Monck's campaign in the Highlands 1654. Before he entered the Highlands Monck secured the Forth/Clyde isthmus, marching from Dalkeith to Stirling, then to Cardross, Buchanan, back to Stirling and then to Perth (from Firth 1899, xxi–xxiii and map).



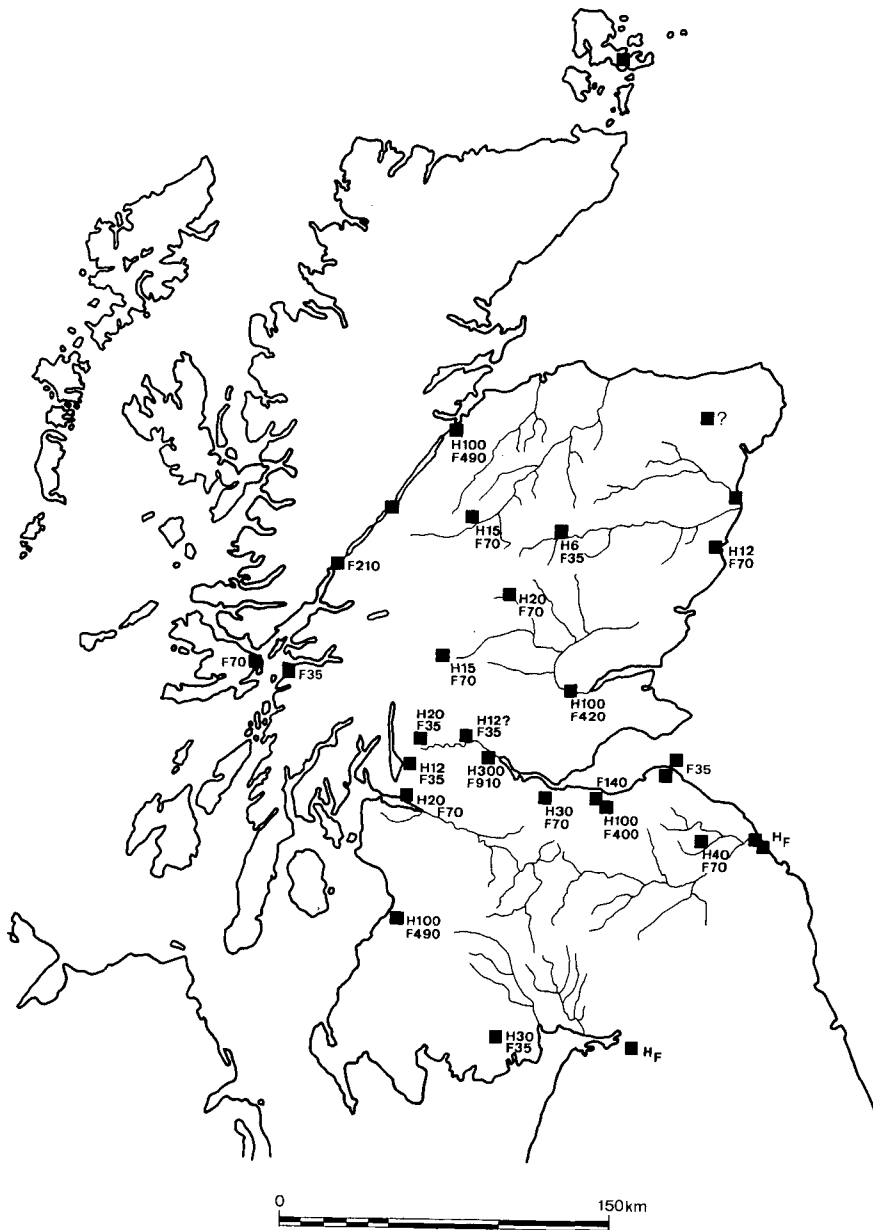
ILLUS 3 Cromwell's garrisons, 1652-1653. Compiled from the list of expenses of the English army 10 January 1652 to 4 April 1653 in Firth 1895, 114-19.



ILLUS 4 'Garrisons who have allowance for fire and candle', 26 July 1657, from the list in *Thurloe State Papers*, VI, 472.



ILLUS 5 Hanoverian garrisons as at 31 August 1746, from information in *The Albemarle Papers*, 1902, 201-3.



ILLUS 6 This map shows a hypothetical state of affairs, which was never put into operation. In September 1657 Monck sent to Cromwell 'A list of horse and foote which are to be left in Scotland'. The map reveals that Monck thought it perfectly feasible to garrison the Highlands, with both cavalry and infantry. (From the list in Firth 1899, 370-1.)

movement, rather than to provide bases for attack, and the same sites that controlled movement before the battle would serve as permanent posts when the country was to be occupied.

The Highlands were probably not devoid of people in the first century (Breeze 1990, 59). In the 18th century the numbers of men mustered from among the Highland clans was approximate to the numbers in the army of the Britons at Mons Graupius. The 30,000 Britons at Mons Graupius are perhaps over-estimated (Hanson 1987, 137–8), but as Ogilvie & Richmond point out (1967, 252), it is unlikely that Tacitus deliberately lied. The Highlands supported such a population in the 18th century, as the document known as *Forbes' Memorial* shows. This is a list of clan chiefs with the names of their principal seats and the numbers of men they could put into the field. The total is 31,930 (Stewart 1825, vol 1 appendix C).

Given that the Highlands could support a sizeable population, it was necessary to control the territory. For the Cromwellian and Hanoverian forces this involved placing garrisons in the mountains (illus 3, 4 & 5). There is, of course, not a shred of evidence that Agricola or his successor may have done the same, but the geographical similarity of the pattern of occupation under Monck and after the battle of Culloden, almost exactly a century apart, is striking. Some common factors emerge. Occupying armies need to establish troops round the edges of the Highlands as far as Inverness. Control of the Great Glen from its northern end is the linchpin and, since the Romans had been able to discern the importance of Caerleon, Chester, and York, it is highly likely that they would appreciate the significance of Inverness. In the Highlands, the headwaters of the Spey, Don and Dee were important to both Cromwellian and Hanoverian forces. When an uneasy peace was established Monck submitted proposals for a reduction in the Scottish garrison, but he was careful to leave troops in bases on the headwaters of the Dee and Spey (illus 6). In this context, three of Ptolemy's place-names may be relevant: Devana, Tuesis and Pinnata Castra should lie respectively on either the Don or the Dee, on the Spey, and on the Moray coast. According to Ptolemy's co-ordinates, these three sites should be about 20 miles (32 km) apart, and also should lie in a straight line. It is natural that modern scholars must try to match Ptolemy's place names to known sites, whether they are camps or forts, and since these known sites are exclusively in the lowland areas around the mountains, all sorts of convoluted arguments are necessary to marry Ptolemy to the archaeological record (Rivet & Smith 1979, 128, 338, 440, 480). The suggested locations for Devana and Tuesis, on the lower reaches of the Dee or the Don, and the Spey, can by no stretch of the imagination be said to lie as little as 20 miles (32 km) apart. If the projected locations are moved upstream, however, this difficulty disappears. On the higher reaches of the Dee, Don and Spey, Braemar, Corgarff and Ruthven were occupied by English troops in the 17th and 18th centuries. Corgarff, on the Don, is about 20 miles (32 km) as the crow flies from Grantown on Spey, which is in turn about 20 miles (32 km) from Inverness, and all three sites can be said to lie in a straight line. There is at least a chance that some Roman sites may one day be discovered near these locations.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been an exercise in probability, based on evidence of the ways in which other armies subdued and controlled Scotland. The Cromwellian and Hanoverian activities are well documented by letters and diaries, and most especially by meticulous financial records. When the outlay of money for payment of troops was necessary, 17th- and 18th-century secretaries were very conscientious, so that for these centuries, locations of garrisons and numbers of men are very well attested. There is nothing so revealing for the first-century conquest, but the possibility that Agricola did march through the Highlands, and that garrisons were placed there, should not be dismissed out of hand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All of the illustrations are by Mr Graeme Stobbs.

REFERENCES

- Albemarle Papers 1902 *The Albemarle Papers: being the Correspondence of William Anne, 2nd Earl of Albemarle, Commander in Chief in Scotland 1746–1747*, ed. C S Terry, Aberdeen: New Spalding Club. 2 vols.
- Ashley, M 1977 *General Monck*. London.
- Bain, J 1884 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland vol II: AD 1272–1307*, Edinburgh.
- Breeze, D 1981 'Agricola the builder', *Scott Archaeol Forum*, 12 (1981), 14–24.
- Breeze, D 1982 *Northern Frontiers of Roman Britain*. London.
- Breeze, D 1990 'Agricola in the Highlands?' *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, 120 (1990), 55–60.
- Corbett, J 1899 *Monk*. London.
- Dickinson, W C 1977 *Scotland from the Earliest Times to 1603*. Oxford. 3rd edn rev A A M Duncan.
- Douglas, W S 1898 *Cromwell's Scotch Campaigns 1650–1651*. London.
- Fenton, A & Stell, S 1984 *Loads and Roads in Scotland and Beyond: Land Transport over 6000 Years*. Edinburgh.
- Firth, C H (ed) 1895 *Scotland and the Commonwealth*. Edinburgh: Scott Hist Soc, vol 18.
- Firth, C H (ed) 1899 *Scotland and the Protectorate*, Edinburgh: Scott Hist Soc, vol 31.
- Frere, S S 1987 *Britannia*. London. 3rd edn.
- Furneaux, H & Anderson J G C 1922 *Cornellii Taciti de Vita Agricola*. Oxford. 2nd edn.
- Gardiner, S W 1903 *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate 1649–1656*. London. 4 vols.
- Gough, H 1900 *Itinerary of King Edward the First Throughout his Reign AD 1272–1307*. London. 2 vols.
- Grant, A 1984 *Independence and Nationhood: Scotland 1306–1469*. London.
- Hanson, W S 1981 'Agricola on the Forth-Clyde Isthmus', *Scott Archaeol Forum*, 12 (1981), 55–68.
- Hanson, W S 1987 *Agricola and the Conquest of the North*. London.
- Hanson, W S & Maxwell, G S 1983 *Rome's North-West Frontier: the Antonine Wall*. Edinburgh.
- Henderson, A A R 1984 'From 83 to 1983: on the trail of Mons Graupius', *The Deeside Field*, 18 (1984), 23–9.
- Hume Brown, P 1891 *Early Travellers in Scotland*. Edinburgh.
- Macdonald, G 1932 *Agricola in Britain*. London.
- Maxwell, G S 1984a 'The evidence from the Roman period', in Fenton & Stell (1984), 22–47.
- Maxwell, G S 1984b 'New frontiers: The Roman fort at Doune and its possible significance', *Britannia*, 15 (1984), 217–23.
- Maxwell, G S 1990 *A Battle Lost: Romans and Caledonians at Mons Graupius*. Edinburgh.
- Millar, F 1982 'Emperors, frontiers and foreign relations', *Britannia*, 13 (1982), 1–23.
- Millman, R M 1975 *The Making of the Scottish Landscape*. London.
- Morris, J E 1901 *The Welsh Wars of Edward I*. Oxford.
- Morton, H V 1931 *In Search of Scotland*. London. 15th edn.
- Nicholson, R 1974 *Scotland: the Later Middle Ages*. London.
- Ogilvie, R M & Richmond, I A 1967 *Cornellii Taciti de Vita Agricola*. Oxford.
- Prestwich, M 1980 *The Three Edwards: War and State in England 1272–1377*. London.
- Ritchie, R L G 1954 *The Normans in Scotland*. Edinburgh.
- Rivet, A L F & Smith, C 1979 *The Place-names of Roman Britain*. London.
- St Joseph, J K 1969 'Air reconnaissance in Britain 1965–1968', *J Rom Stud*, 59 (1969), 104–28.
- Scott, A M 1989 *Bonnie Dundee: John Graham of Claverhouse*. Edinburgh.
- Stevenson, J 1870 *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland 1286–1307*. Edinburgh. 2 vols.
- Stewart, D 1825 *Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland*. Edinburgh. 3rd edn, 2 vols.
- Tabraham, C 1986 *Scottish Castles and Fortifications*. Edinburgh.

- Thurloe State Papers 1742 *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe Esq*, by Thomas Birch. London: Printed for the executors of the late Mr Fletcher Giles.
- Verbruggen, J F 1977 *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe During the Middle Ages from the Eighth Century to 1340*. Amsterdam.
- Webb S S 1979 *The Governors General: the English Army and the Definition of the Empire 1569–1681*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina.