

Anne Johnson, *Roman Forts of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD in Britain and the German Provinces*. Adam & Charles Black, London 1983. 368 pages, 213 figures.

This publication is intended as a review of Roman permanent fortifications from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD in Britain and the German provinces. All types of temporary camps or permanent fortifications of the 4th and 5th centuries are left out. Although the definition of the terms 'fort' and 'fortress' is formulated in a somewhat awkward paragraph (p. 2), both auxiliary and legionary camps are considered. The geographical indications 'British' and 'German' seem to be used in the modern sense, since the review includes not only the Roman provinces *Germania Inferior* and *Superior*, but also *Raetia*. The way of using these adjectives is not very careful: although the Netherlands and parts of Belgium and Switzerland belong to the Germanic language group, they are not part of Germany in a geographical sense.

The review is based on the selected data of approximately 450 known forts. In general, this selection is very acceptable, although others would be as good as this one. The chapters on the defences, the internal buildings and the development of the plan of the fortifications constitute the main part of the book. Smaller chapters deal with the construction of the fort, food and water supply, external structures and finally fort

types and garrisons. Civil settlements as *vici* and *canabae legionis* are excluded from the external structures around the fortifications. Most of these chapters give a useful and more or less concise picture of the current state of knowledge, supported by a great number of well drawn illustrations. The bibliography with its general part and the part which follows the grouping of the chapters is very helpful and balanced. It is not very useful to give a summary here of the contents of the various chapters. Likewise it is impossible to go into a critical assessment of all details. However, some remarks have to be made. It is surprising, that the small, but interesting group of 'Uferkastelle' such as Cologne-Alteburg, Haltern-Hofstatt and Velsen I has not been discussed or even mentioned. The hierarchical and functional interpretation of the internal buildings is based on their groundplan and location within the fort; the finds are not considered. This partly reflects the current method of interpretation in many excavation reports and partly the restrictions apparently imposed on this book. The chapter on the development of the fort plan is very lengthy, has a descriptive character and repeats much information given earlier in the book. If it was intended to illuminate the development, it could have been much shorter and consequently the line of reasoning would have been much clearer. If it had to serve as the basic survey of forts and their chronology from which the data for the subjects of the other chapters were derived, it should have been one of the first instead of the last chapters. In the selection of sites and relevant literature one discovers sometimes quite unexpectedly that important information is missing. Why is the legionary fortress at Nijmegen, which is one of the best excavated in Germania Inferior and Superior, almost completely neglected? Is it because it gives no essential information for this review or because it is only partly published?

Finally some critical remarks on details. Note nr. 37 on page 330 shows that the author failed to mention the latest survey of the recent work in Nijmegen, published in Dutch and German: *Noviomagus. Auf den Spuren der Römer in Nijmegen* (1979). Is that the reason that on Map 1 (p. 229) the Nijmegen fortress wrongly is indicated as of unknown size? One looks in vain on the same map for the fort at Velsen and on map 2 (p. 237) for the legionary fortress at Vindonissa, where Sasbach (nr. 22) is situated about 20 kilometers too far to the north. The list of Roman names for the forts on map 6 (p. 262) is incomplete, whereas they are completely lacking on maps 4 and 5 (p. 255 and 261). From the perspective of the history of the discipline, one incorrect remark is significant, p. 14: 'Most of the forts excavated in the last century were wholly or partially stone-built, and it was only with the work of such brilliant excavators as J. P. Bushe-Fox at the Claudian supply base of Richborough in Kent in the 1920s and 1930s that a complex of timber buildings was recognized on a large scale for the first time.' The author seems to be completely unaware of the fact, that from 1899 onwards the German archaeologist F. Koepp and others excavated the various forts at Haltern with its mass of timber buildings in an exemplary and innovative way!

The overall impression is that the book gives a useful overview and introduction on the theme. However, the reader must be critical of the details of the specific sites, maps and references.