PROTECTING THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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

MATTHEW SYMONDS

Current World Archaeology

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CONTENTS

List of Figures *page* xi

Acknowledgements xiii

1 INTRODUCTION 1

Outposts of Empire 4

What Is a Fortlet? 5

What Is a Tower? 12

Interpreting Fortlets 16

Bands of Brothers? 23

PART I CONSOLIDATING CONQUEST 33

2 WATERWAYS 35

The Lower Rhine 36

The Raetian Danube 42

The Exmoor Coast 48

Controlling Watercourses in the First and Second Centuries 53

3 HIGHWAYS 55

Germany 57

Wales 58

The Gask Ridge 65

The Pennines 72

Antonine Scotland 77

Controlling Roads in the First and Second Centuries 90

PART 2 BORDER CONTROL 93

4 HADRIAN'S WALL 95
The Build-up to Hadrian's Wall 96
The Stanegate System 98
Constructing Hadrian's Wall 104
The Cumbrian Coast 121
The Purpose of the Hadrianic System 122
The Post-Antonine Frontier 127
Intelligent Design? 131

5 THE ANTONINE WALL 133
The Empire Strikes Back 136
Building the Antonine Wall 137
Designing and Operating the Wall Fortlets 142
The Coastal Cordon 147
Regular Irregularity 149

6 THE UPPER GERMAN AND RAETIAN *LIMITES* 152
A Flexible Format 154
Watching the *Limes* 157
Incremental Exclusion 159
Outpost Use 167
Localism 172
A Mercurial Frontier 173

PART 3 PROVINCIAL COLLAPSE 177

7 LATE HIGHWAYS 181
Desert Deals 182
The Zülpich Nexus 183
The Final Frontier 189
The Fourth-Century Security Situation in Britain 192
Roads to Ruin? 195

8 LATE WATERWAYS 197
The Late Rhine 198
The Yorkshire 'Signal Stations' 203
Stormy Waters 208

9 *IMPERIUM* BY OUTPOST 213
Fortlet Variations 214
Regularity versus Irregularity 220
And in the End... 223
Rome's Small Wars 225

Bibliography 229
Index 247