

LIMES OR STRATEGY? CRITICAL NOTES ON E.N. LUTWAK'S WORK "THE GRAND STRATEGY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE FROM THE FIRST CENTURY A.D. TO THE THIRD"

The work, we are reviewing here (its first edition appeared in 1976 The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, but we have seen only the second edition: 1978) tries to include under this title not only the strategy as such, but the whole military history of the first three centuries of the Roman Empire and even of the later period. As J.F. Gillam points out, the author is a specialist in strategic analyses and contemporary international relations. He wrote his book because „the archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic literature seemed very scanty and the comments upon literary sources did not seem satisfactory, as they used inadequate notions about strategy“. His desire to correct the opinions and the „ignorance“ of specialists in ancient history, the possibility (as the author believes) of direct analogies between the military situation of the Roman Empire and the present one, made him write this book in order to give „the Roman historians what they have not done for themselves“ as J. F. Gillam says.

From the very beginning we'd like to underline that the title seems rather pretentious for the way and level at which the author deals with, what he considers to be, the grand strategy. It is a wellknown fact that military history comprises (for a given space or a well determined period) all the data concerning military art, strategic organisation both for attack and defence, tactical conception and organisation (the number, structure and command of the army), as well as the military events. Even if the researchers in ancient history are not specialists in the military history of the present times, they know an amount of theoretical elements whose definition in itself hasn't changed from antiquity up to the present days. Strategy represents only a part of military art, which includes the superior leadership of a defensive or offensive military action, which determines the main directions of an attack and elaborates the plan of a judicious distribution and use of the forces. Tactics represents another component, indissolubly bound to the first, and it supposes the correct organisation, preparation and leading of a battle, it is the science which aims at determining for a well defined period the line of conduct of a military action. Through its content. E.N.L.'s work, goes beyond the simple frame of strategy, trying to cover the whole military history of the mentioned period in the title.

J. F. Gillam's appreciation about E.N.L.'s contribution to the subject is obviously exaggerated and his affirmation that „to my knowledge no study comparable to his book exists“ puts himself in an awkward posi-

tion. I don't intend, nor do I presume to have identified everything that E.N.L.'s book is lacking or what might be considered the author's mistakes. I am going to underline some aspects concerning: a. the means of information; b. problems dealing with the methods of work, that of presentation; c. some aspects of the author's conception concerning strategy and tactics. While running through the book I found problems that I do not agree with, or I noticed matters upon which our opinions are quite different. In order to discuss all these aspects I would like to review the contents and structure of the book.

The Foreword (pl. IX—X) is signed by J. F. Gillam; the Preface (p. XI—XII) represents an introductory part, where E.N.L. exposes his ideas, the purpose and manner how he looks at the problem; the Introduction (p. 1—6) is the part where E.N.L. tries to put forward his method of work by analogy with modern strategy; Chapter I. The Julio-Claudio System. Client States and Mobile Army from Augustus to Nero (p. 7—50); Chapter II. From Flavians to Severi. Scientific Frontiers and preclusive defence from Vespasian to M. Aurelius (p. 51—126). Chapter III. The defence in depth. The great crises of the third century and the strategies (p. 127—190). Epilogue. The three systems: an evaluation (p. 191—192). Appendix: Power and force; definitions and implications (p. 195—200). Notes (p. 201—232). List of works cited (p. 233—246). Index (p. 247—255) comprising place names and ancient terms, modern place names, names of authors and ancient historical characters.

No doubt that E.N.L. grasped some aspects of the military history of the first three centuries A. D. We may even say that it is the first independent work dealing exclusively with this problem. The fact that the author gathered all (or almost all) the bibliography systematically and followed the evolution of some aspects (chapters) of military history in its chronological evolution, by a method of work of his own, enabled him to establish some interesting features. But in spite of this so-called order, in spite of some proper terms (some of which are quite adequate) the work is incomplete and confuse. This is due to the fact that E.N.L. is not a specialist in military history of the classical age, he doesn't know how to handle archaeological and literary sources and his information on ancient military technics and architecture is very limited and misinterpreted. E.N.L.'s work is bookish in a way showing that he built his theory first and then he made use of the bibliography; he doesn't know all, or almost all the problems of ancient archaeology connected with Roman military history.

1. *Bibliographic information.* The main ideas, conception and the organisation of the defence during the Principate had already been dealt with. And, we should say, very well, as they included all the problems that E.N.L. discusses as a novelty. They are found in the L. Homo's work "*L'Empire Romain*" (Le gouvernement du monde), Paris, 1923. In the chapter „La défense du monde“ p. 143—199: l'armée, p. 180—203 le sistem defensif, the author makes a splendid analysis of the evolution and changes of these two elements during the Principate. This idea was taken again by L. Homo in other works of his: see. L. Homo, *Le Haut Empire* (Histoire romaine, III, in the collection "Histoire générale publié dous la direction de Gustave Glotz". Mentions should be

made of F. Altheim's work "*Le déclin du monde antique*" Paris, 1953, p. 224—263 — défense des frontières; p. 270—311 l'armée, which studies especially the influences of the "barbarians" upon the changes undergone in the Roman defense. None of these voluminous works is cited by E.N.L. Poor is his knowledge about the limes both as a proper military terminology (Th. Mommsen, *Der Begriff des limes*, in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift*, 13, 1894, p. 134—143 = *Historische Schriften*, Berlin, 1908, p. 134; see also footnote 24 for p. 18 where A. Piganiol is cited in Limes 5 Zagreb 1961, p. 119—122 but not understood) and its organisation and structure (road-forts-sites-burgi-walls, etc.). A. Piganiol in the already quoted work (p. 120) says that already during Trajan's reign, the limes meant an oblique way on the boundary and only under Hadrianus with his "divinum praeceptum" the limes changed into an area (parallel with the boundary or following its direction). It would be sufficient to exemplify this only by the plan of forts on p. 164—165, fig. 3.4. The plan of a second century fort. Fig. 3.4.1. is an exemple of the "nesciendi ars". Unfortunately errors of this kind are numerous, we are going to return to them. In this "chapter" of theoretical knowledge, the amount of reference works unknown to E.N.L. is so great that we consider useless to mention them all. For the theoretical part of the problem the paper by J. C. Mann is still a valuable contribution in *ANRW*, II, 1, 1976, p. 508—533) whom E.N.L. discovered later and doesn't agree with. As for us we don't wholly agree with J. C. Mann's ideas, his bibliographical information being also limited. But we should mention important works like: V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Roman frontier in Wales* (second edition revised by M. G. Jarret), Cardiff, 1969; Anne S. Robertson, *A handbook to the Roman Wall between Forth and Clyde and a guide to its surviving remains. The Antonine Wall*, Glasgow, 1979; J. Collingwood Bruce, *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1978; J. E. Booares — C. B. Rüger, *Der Niedergermanische Limes*, Köln, 1974; D. Baatz, *Der Römische Limes. Archäologische Ausflüge zwischen Rhein und Donau*, Berlin, 1975 and others. He says nothing about the monographs on some Roman forts in Britannia (L. Boon, Anne S. Robertson), Germania Inferior (J. E. Haalebos, H. Müller), Germania Superior (D. Baatz, H. Jakobi, H. Schönberger, S. von Schnurbein), Raetia (H. Schönberger, G. Ulbert, N. Walke), Dacia (N. Gudea, I. Pop). These monographs would have shown E.N.L. the evolution of forts during a certain period. The same lack in information is evident for the defence in depth, characteristic for the 4th century, which is very often referred to. No mention is made of the basic works like: R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn des byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Berlin, 1920; E. Anthes, *Spätromische Kastelle und Feststädte in Rhein und Donaugebiet*, in *10 BRGK* 1917, p. 86—165; L. Váradi, *Későrómai hadügyek és társadalmi alapjaik*, Budapest, 1961; B. Stahlknecht, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike. 306—395 n. Chr.*, Bonn, 1969; S. Soproni, *Der Spätromische Limes zwischen Esztergom und Szentendre*, Budapest, 1978.

At a close examination of the bibliography, which forms a separate list at the end of the work, one can see E.N.L.'s predilection for the literature in English (written especially by English people) and the absence

of bibliography in German and the total lack of works concerning the East European part of the Empire (Pannonia, Moesia, Dacia etc.). All these influenced to a great extent his method of work, the presentation and even the historical knowledge, the conception of the author and finally the results of his work.

2. Problems concerning the method of work and presentation

a. The first and most important observation here is concerning the period of time that the author had studied. From the view-point of the history of the Roman Empire the first three centuries constitute the epoch of the Principate. The internal mechanism of this period (the evolution of institutions, the relation between the state — princeps — senat — army) have been much studied. I'd quote here again the work of L. Homo. But the period of the Principate shows characteristics which do not cover the whole third century, because with Diocletianus another period begins in the history of the Roman Empire. The characteristic features of the former period (the Principate) reflected in the military field as well, are not identical with those from the following period, the Dominat. E.N.L. does not make any distinction between these two periods, fact that has negative consequences in the interpretation and division of the imperial strategy.

b. Further his maps are rather approximate; each of them suffering from errors and lack of precise information; his schemas are purely theoretical, which do not rely on the archaeological realities. See D. Baatz. *Der Römische Limes* (whose schemes are presented in details in *Die Römer in Baden Württemberg*, Stuttgart und Aalen, 1975 (herausgegeben von. Ph. Philzinger, D. Plank, B. Cämmerer), p. 360.

c. The author's knowledge in military architecture is not sufficient.

d. The idea of grouping the bibliography in alphabetical order was excellent, but it was not fully achieved. Many of the quoted works are not included in the list, many works enlisted are not used as bibliography.

e. The part played by the navy in the defence is not sufficiently stressed upon, this wouldn't have happened if E.N.L. had used D. Kienast's work *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römische Kaiserzeit*, Bonn 1966.

3. Observations concerning E.N.L.'s conception about strategy and tactics

It is well known that the entire defence of the Empire during the Principate was based on one basic principle: the use of natural boundaries, and to organise the defence of these boundaries in such a way as to make possible a concentration of forces capable to reject any attack or danger at any threatened point. The achievement of this conception was based on the relation: road — fort — signal and watch system — troops organised both parallel to the boundary and in depth. *The instrument or rather the result of this conception was the limes*. The limes means not only the aggregate of military works which aim at marking the boundaries of the state, together with the troops that secured its defence. (G. Forni). This is only the restricted meaning of the notion. The modalities of applying this way of defence were different, and were

determined by the geological features of the boundary, the building resources, the forces of the enemy, etc. The structure and organisation of the limes developed according to the same conception during the Principate in the following way: a. in the first century A.D. it was offensive based on perpendicular roads to the boundaries; b. in the second stage (the end of the first century A.D. and the whole second century) it was linear; c. in the third stage (especially during the third century A.D.) it was definitely established and fortified, but important works for fortification were done only at spots where they were absolutely necessary. We maintain the hypothesis that the limes was rather a watchline than a defence proper. In spite of its former defensive character, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. this had a role of prevention, dealing with the enemy outside of the country's boundaries not letting it inside the country. From a strategical point of view the limes meant the occupation and fortification of some commanding positions along the carefully chosen natural boundaries, the setting of tactical forces along them, the ensurance of their mobility by the built roads. The "cordon system" (L. Homo) of the limes did not mean an absolute standardisation in the organisation and achievement of the defence. If -- as a rule -- the process of fortification influenced the limes as a boundary, and the troops were also concentrated here, this doesn't mean that the application of this general rule was not elastic. An evidence is given by the evolution of the limes in Britannia, where the boundary was pushed northward in three stages, but this did not mean that all garrisons moved northward; some of them remained on the spot, achieving in this way a defence "in depth" (D. Breeze — B. Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall*, Bristol 1978; E. Nash-Williams, *The Roman Frontier in Wales*, Cardiff 1969. The situation is the same in Germania Superior (see H. Schönberger, in *JRS*, 59, 1969, p. 144), Moesia Superior (N. Gudea; S. Dužanić, in *Limes 11 Székesfehérvár* 1976, p. 223—236; 237—248) and Dacia (N. Gudea, in *ANRW*, II, 6, 1977, p. 851—887). The defensive system based on the limes (the defensive conception) resisted until the barbarian attacks on the boundaries were not generalised to such an extent as to disturb the system of troop concentration. In addition to this one may say that the limes system resisted as long as the Roman tactics, which was based especially on infantry, succeeded to bring quickly the military units on the danger area. But this defensive system had two basic drawbacks from the very beginning: a. one concerning the system itself — the lack of defence in the interior and along the boundaries; b. the second concerning the army itself: the lack of manpower and their position in the combat disposition. The emperors kept looking for solution to eliminate these drawbacks either by making changes in the architecture and density of the fortifications, in the road system and in the power of the garrison (L. Homo), or by permanent tactical changes in the army (F. Altheim).

So I don't think that within the period dealt with, three systems could have existed as E.N.L. believes, because during this period the defence conception remained the same, its purpose, remained unchanged only a part of the means for their achievement was modified. Practically

there existed a single system which developed from a simple stage to a more complex one; passing through stages in which only the means and forms of fortifications changed on the one hand, and the characteristics of the troops on the other hand, both in close interdependence.

It has been thought that this traditional defensive scheme was revolutioned by Gallienus. But Gallienus' reforms did not change the conception itself, only the way and means of its achievement, he limited himself only to the reorganisation of the army. But one must not forget that Gallienus applied his reforms to a small area of the Roman Empire (whithout Britannia, Gallia, Hispania and Orient) and the cavalry army created by him (in a central body) was maintained only up to the moment of the reunion of the Empire. This was a momentary, instant solution which did not change the conception about the limes. The fortification of the boundaries on the Danube during his reign and further under the Illyrian emperors (E. Anthes; the first period), the intensive fortification of the boundaries under Diocletianus and the Tetrarchy (E. Anthes; second period) corroborated with the disbandment of the central cavalry army, shows clearly that these are the last moments of the limes, but the defence on the boundaries still holds a very important position. Only Diocletianus and Constantinus particularly, modified this conception. The ancient authors (An. Valesianus, 5, 21; Zosimos, II, 34; I. Lydos, IX, 3) criticized the change of the limes structure made only by Constantinus, as the defence in depth became a practical reality and brought about deep changes in the traditional organisation of the limes. Only at this point one can speak about the existence of the new conception which brought about essential modifications in the military architecture, the destination of forts, the position of the garrisons, the organisation of tactical units, etc.

Inside the evolution of the system based on the limes, the Roman Empire did not abandon any of the old elements inherited from the Republic. It is true that Augustus abolished the client states, but only for the areas considered boundaries of the Roman state. Outside of them, the system of client states went on on a reduced scale, but in the same forms and with the same means (the small Pontic kingdoms, Armenia, Colchida, etc.).

4. For each chapter my observations are the following:

For chapter one: it would have been necessary to make a short persentation of the way the defence was organised during the Republic. In this way the changes made under Augustus would have been more evident. The abolition of client states system and their annexation to the Empire, the turning of the army into a professional one of permanent character, the placement of the legions closer to the boundaries brought about the coming out of the new system (G. Stevenson, in *CAH*, X, 1936, p. 218), the military reform of Augustus (H. D. Mayer, *Die Aussenpolitik des Augustus und die augustäische Dichte*, in *JRS*, 53, 1963, p. 170—176). One must not forget that roughly the boundaries, as settled by Augustus, remained definite and all the other conquests (Britannia, Agri Decumates, Dacia, Volubilis, Mesopotamia etc.) represented mere strategic guarantees for these old boundaries.

I. *The system in outline* (p. 12—20). The sentence "the first system of imperial security was essentially that of the late Republic" is not exact; further, on p. 18, ENL states that the boundaries were not delimited (marked). Then what could be the explanation for the fact that the legions settled on the Rhine during Augustus' reign, for instance, remained definitely in the same place, and they built their camps (see H. von Petrikovits, in *Rheinische Geschichte*, Bonn, 1978, p. 98—99); and under Claudius the system was already complete; it is said that already under Tiberius the boundary on the Rhine got its definite shape. The same things are said for Moesia by B. Gerov (in *Acta Antiqua*, 15, 1—4, 1967, p. 85—105) on the basis of epigraphic finds and literary texts (Florus) and later by A. Mócsy (*Pannonia and Upper Moesia. A history of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire*, London, 1974, p. 43) for Pannonia.

In the same period the construction of roads began along the Danubian limes (T. Pekary, *Untersuchungen zu den römischen Reichsstrassen*, Bonn, 1968, p. 10—12 *viae militares*). It is well known that the road which started at Carnuntum reached the Iron Gates (on the Danube) in the year 34 A.D. (*CIL*, III, 1968 = *ILS*, 2281). On page 19 the statement: "there was no limes in the latter sense of fortified and guarded border" is mistaken. In fact there was such a limes. The evolution of the term (underlined by Th. Mommsen, E. Fabricius, G. Forni) shows that already under Augustus the limes got the sense of a boundary, delimited through fortification works. This does not necessarily mean that we are faced with stone walls, walls, stone walled forts. On the whole the term is unclear for E.N.L., he even tries to avoid it.

I. 2. *The client states* (p. 20—30). The mentioning of the client states system and subsidies must not be considered as remnants of the Republic system. The system was maintained where it was still necessary, but the part played by it was insignificant. I should add that the status of the client states of the Roman Empire underwent slight changes (see R. Klose, *Roms Klientelrandstaaten am Rhein und Donau*, Breslau, 1934).

I. 5. *The strategic deployment of forces* (p. 46—49) refers to a period of 70 years, but the author treats the subject inadequately and he is far from understanding completely the strategic deployment of forces.

II. The characterisation of the period from Severi to Gallienus was not in the view of the author when he presented in the introduction the main features of the period. I think this is a shortcoming. Severus' military reforms, the offensive attempts on several sections of the limes, the great age of military constructions (camps) as well as the military measures taken by the emperors following Severus, are not to be neglected when one speaks about the strategy and tactics of this period.

II. 1. *The system in outline* (p. 55—60). I don't see the use of a long discussion about the „Marschlager“ (p. 55—57) in a period when this does not exist any more. He could (eventually) have spoken here about the foix fort (hiberna) which is archaeologically attested. Anyhow, the data about forts are (as we have shown above) simplistic,

lacking the knowledge about their evolution as components of the strategy. The plan of the camp (Fig. 3.4.1.) is incorrectly reproduced. The *via principalis* is passing behind the *principia*. The camp on Fig. 3.4.1. is also erranecusly drawn and dated. It is a much corrupted drawing of the camp of Drobeta (Romania) with its interior building dating from the II—III centuries A.D. and its walls from the 4th century. It is well known that the "U" shaped towers appeared only in the fourth century A.D. D. Tudor has demonstrated this for the Drobeta fort (see *Drobeta*, București, 1965; *Oltenia romană*, București, 1978, p. 448—450). S. Soproni (in *ArchErt*, 96, 1969, p. 43) has demonstrated the same for the period of Constantinus I in Pannonia. Fig. 3.4.3. is not at all late fourth, but sure the sixth century A.D. Even more, it is similar with the plan of the fortification at Dinogetia (Garvăn; Romania) (see R. Vulpe — I. Barnea, *Din istoria Dobrogei*, București, 1968, p. 503, fig. 2). Of course E.N.L. doesn't indicate where he has borrowed the plans from and what he has considered as a basis for his dating. But as a principle I wonder why E.N.L. had to create artificial forts instead of presenting some well excavated forts from Britannia, Germania Inferior and Superior. On p. 60 he failed to mention Antoninus Pius' wall from Scotland, a wall that belongs to the same family. Mention should have been made of the fact that the building of the wall in Germany had three stages (Domitianus-Taunus; A. Pius-Odenwald; S. Severus-Raetia). The wall (turf and stone) which passes through Dobrogea does not belong to the period which E.N.L. dealt with; it is a later one (see R. Vulpe — I. Barnea, *Din istoria Dobrogei*, București, 1968). On map 21 the wall called "Transalutanus" is not represented (see D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, București, 1978); this wall measures 235 km, it dates from the period between 106—205, but E.N.L. doesn't seem to have heard about it.

II. 2. *Border defense*: the tactical dimension (p. 61—80). On p. 60 the terms (formulae) "closed limes" and "open limes" for the sections with or without wall seem at least useless to me. The walls from Taunus and Odenwald are presented as closed limes, while the dacian, transcarpathian boundary, is open limes. For anybody who had seen two sections of the limes of the Empire, it is obvious that Dacia, even without walls had a more "closed" aspect in the entire transylvanian plateau and gave it more security and it was stronger than the limes in Germania. On p. 66 the exemples taken from the towers on Hadrian's Wall from Britannia are not correct. The statement "watch towers were usually built into the barrier element" is not true. This is rather characteristic for the system in Germania (see D. Batz, *Wachttürme am Limes*, in *Limesmuseum Aalen* (Kleine Schriften), nr. 15, Stuttgart, 1976), for Dacia (see N. Gudea, in *ActaMN*, 8, 1971, p. 507—530) or even for north Africa (J. Baradez, *Fossatum Africae*, Paris, 1949). On p. 67 "troop basing" does not say anything about the fort, the evolution of its architecture, its inner organisation. I should recommend E.N.L. the works by J.E. Bogaers — C.B. Rüger and W.E. Nash-Williams (cited above) where these things can be found. These troops did not serve for patrolling. First of all they were meant (if we take in consideration their military purpose) for necessities imposed by the concentration of the

immobility of the Roman infantry (in comparison with the barbarian cavalry) as they were able to regroup the forces and move quickly. On p. 68 E.N.L. speaks about a berm in Hadrian's Wall in Britain. Here he should have specified the location of the berm. Because for anybody who has seen Hadrian's Wall it is hard to imagine that in front of a wall, over a 100 m deep precipice a berm could have been necessary.

II. 3. *Border defence. The strategic dimension* (p. 80—111). On p. 85 table 2/E.N.L. names two legions in Dacia in the year 23 A.D. It is difficult to believe this as the province of Dacia did not exist by that time. There existed three legions in the year 106 A.D. In Moesia, in the year 23 A.D., there were two legions, but after 106 A.D. in each of the two Moesias there were two and even three legions. There are points which must not be neglected in a work about strategy. To the map 2.4.1 on page 93 I should add that the Raetian Wall was made of stone and not of earth, unlike the rest of the walls. On page 97—98, map 2.5. legio I Italica is placed at Oescus although it had never stationed at Oescus, but in Novae (150 km east); legio V Macedonica stationed between 106—166 A.D. in Troesmis (Moesia Inferior and after that in Potaissa (Dacia Porolissensis). On page: 97 we don't know exactly where Tapae was (it is believed that it corresponds with the Iron Gates of Transylvania, near Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana but surely it was not situated in "the plain beyond Turnu Severin", more than 150 km away! On page 97—98: Dacia's northern boundary is a river frontier with an advanced line of towers in front of the river, in the same way as the south western section (on the Lower Mures. The south-east frontier of Dacia in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. was not the Olt river, but the wall (called "transalutanus") a non river frontier! On page 100 we don't exactly know where he took his information about the withdrawal of the Romans from Banat and Muntenia, or about the fact that "the limes porolissensis formed the outer shield of the entire system of the danubian defence" (p. 102—104). But limes porolissensis was known only as the defence of the large complex from Porolissum (M. Macrea, in *Materiale*, 8, 1962, p. 439) and not as E.N.L. presents it, the entire limes of Dacia intracarpatica. On page 101: at Ratiaria there was not a camp for a legion. On page 100, footnote 123 the calculation taken from J. Szilágyi is mistaken. The length of Dacia's boundaries is 100.000 milia passum (Eutropius, VIII) = 1450 km (1 passus = 1,45 m) not 600 km. On page 102, Fig. 2.6. the dacian conquest; Dacia's map is entirely erroneous at points concerning the military organisation and gravely mutilated as to the direction of its boundaries. From among the 90 known forts (see N. Gudea, in *ANRW*, II, 6, 1977, p. 849—887) E.N.L. mentions only 9!!!; the name of the province appears south of the Danube; the data about the limes are erroneous.

II. 4. *The decline of the client system* p. 111—117. I shouldn't call it "decline". On every area, where it was necessary, outside of the established boundaries, it was maintained. Of course, the system of buffer states was abolished, but the system of subsidies and hostages was maintained (Iaziges, Carpi, Gothi, Costoboci, free Dacians, etc.). We know from Jordanes (*Getica*, XIII, 76) that Vespasianus paid subsidies for the

Dacians and these were still paid under Domitianus. Under Traianus the king of Cimerian Bosphorus receives instructions to give supplies to the Roman army fighting in Parthia (*IGR*, I, 882—883). Under Antoninus Pius the Alans entered the subsidies system; under M. Aurelius he Iazigi and Roxolani; under Commodus the Vandals and the Buri; under Gordianus the Carpi; under Philippus Arabs the Geto-Dacians-Carpianians organised an attack just because their subsidies had not been paid.

II. 5. *The army* (p. 117—125). This chapter does not deal with the army as the title says. The title does not cover the content, nor is about the organisation, deployment or the structure of the army, or changes in tactical and ethnical composition of the troops. This is rather a paragraph or rather a commentary about some military actions during the period. On page 117 footnote 195 E.N.L. retakes the wrong calculation of Dacia's boundaries with the same date. On page 123 he states that the bowmen units were placed only in the areas of wall barrier. I can say that this is an error in Dacia's case: at Tibiscum (numerus palmyreorum tibiscensium; cohors I Sagittariorum) at Porolissum (numerus palmyrenorum porolissensium; cohors I Ituraeorum) at Micia (numerus palmyrenorum; cohors II Commagenorum) all bowmen units were placed in open areas, without a wall.

Chapter III. is liable to most criticism and discussion. First off all because E.N.L. does not respect his proposed chronological limit any more, he goes beyond the time and problems of the 3rd century A.D. The period of Gallienus reforms and that of the Illyrian emperors is not analysed and, as a consequence, the chapter offers surprises from the viewpoint of the solutions.

III. 1. *The system in outline* (p. 130—145). On page 130—131 E.N.L. gives two alternatives for the defence: the defence of the fortified perimeter and defence in depth, which means the same thing. On page 128 I don't believe that the concerted barbarian attacks weakened or endangered the limes. More important seems the fact that the barbarians' attacks became simultaneous and in this way they did not allow the transfer of troops from one battle front to the other. The fact that the perimeter (=limes) was not abandoned is shown by literary and archaeological sources (after the attack against Germania and Raetia Gallienus repaired the fortifications on the limes and the roads as well; it was under his reign too, that Cleodamus and Athenaeus repaired the fortifications along the Lower Danube). There is a great difference between the defence achieved through limes and the defence in depth. The consequences of taking up the latter system could be seen only during the 4th century A.D., when the prosperity of the frontier provinces diminished or ceased. On page 132—134 E.N.L. discusses the late fortifications and their role. The ignorance of E. Anthes and H. Petrikovits' works shows the consequences. There is no stronghold in the third century. Fortifications of this type came into being only during the 4th century A.D. (H. von Petrikovits, in *JRS*, 61, 1971, p. 178; S. Sopronyi, *Der Spätromische Limes zwischen Esztergom und Szentendre*, Budapest, 1978). Both quoted works describe some fortifications of this type E.N.L.'s ideas

or knowledge about the fortifications dating from the period of the Tetrarchy (p. 136) are as wrong as those about the forts from 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. On page 137 E.N.L. states that Decius "campaigned in modern Dobrudja"! This is hard to believe (we know for sure that he was in Moesia Inferior).

III. 2. *The changing threat* (p. 145—154). The statement on p. 153 showing that between 252—256 A.D. in Dacia "came the deluge" and "she was submerged" are exaggerated. It is true that between 245—248 A.D. the defence of southern Dacia (Dacia Malvensis) was broken through in the south-east see D. Tudor, in *Dacoromania*, Freiburg, 1, 1978, p. 38—39) but there is no proof that Dacia Porolissensis and Dacia Apulensis had been affected by this.

III. 3. *The new borders of the Empire* (p. 154—159); E.N.L. "explains the planned retreats" but there are no explanation for their tactical and strategical significance, neither for their consequences. On p. 155 E.N.L. states that after 275 A.D. Dacia was occupied by the barbarians. What barbarians? where does he take this information from?

III. 4. *Walled towns and hard-point defenses* (p. 159—170). The information concerning the beginning of fortification works in the interior under Diocletianus is wrong. These works had started long before the marcomanic wars in the West and after the Costobocian invasion in Moesia Inferior and Dacia. The mobile cavalry army of Gallienus had no fixed garrison headquarters at least they are not known. As a matter of fact Diocletianus had dissolved this cavalry body and scattered the units on the limes. Under Diocletianus's reign *sacer comitatus* had already been a separate corp, a campaign army, but neither his fortifications are known (E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, p. 73, dates this corps only for 297 A.D.). The disbanding of the cavalry corps (army), into minor tactical units, the division of legions, the existence of new battle formations with reduced manpower, were reflected in the military architecture of the Tetrarchy. This is the time when the quadri-burgium type of fort appeared. All new borders were garnished with a great deal of such forts, not only here, but also in Raetia (F. Stähelin, *Der Schweiz in römische Zeit*, Basel, 1948; J. Garbsch, *Der spätrömisch Donau-Ille-Rhein Limes*, Stuttgart, 1970), in Moesia and Dacia Ripensis (N. Gudea, in *Limes 9 Mamaia*, 1972, p. 173—; P. Petrović, in *Limes 11 Székesfehérvár*, 1976, cf. *Limes 12 Stirling*, 1979, III, p. 757—). Such fortifications are archaeologically and epigraphically attested in Africa, Upper Egyptus and Arabia (strata Diocletiana), in Syria. The military architecture of the Tetrarchy is very clear, it has features of its own and differs from that of the previous periods and from the later period as well. The examples given by E.N.L. do not belong to the period of the Tetrarchy: they date from the reign of Constantinus; Pilismarot, from Constantins II; all others date from the late fourth century or there is still a great uncertainty in their dating. E.N.L.'s information is taken from one of R. Laur-Belart's works from 1949! Had he consulted J. Garbsch's work in *Bayerisch Vorgeschichts Blätter* (32, 1—2, 1967, p. 51—82) and the monograph by the same author

"*Der Moosberg bei Murnau*" (Münchener Beiträge zur Vor-und Frühgeschichte, Band 12, München, 1966) he would have found more recent dating and interpretation of the research concerning the fortifications in Germania Superior and Raetia in the Late Roman time. On p. 161 E.N.L. states that "the inadequacy of dating methods makes chronological distinctions difficult". This is true only for himself, because this does not hold good for those who excavate and deal with Roman fortifications. Anyone can make a differentiation between the period of forts of the third century, the reign of Diocletianus, Constantinus and Valentinianus, to say nothing about that of Justinianus.

III. 5. *The border troops* (p. 170—173). The opening sentence of this subchapter is not entirely true. Not on all the sections of the limes the auxiliary troops were dominant. This does not hold good for Germania Inferior, Pannonia Superior and Inferior. It is valid for Britannia, Germania Superior and Dacia. E.N.L. makes a series of mistakes and eludes some well known historical data: the transformation of legions is not presented with clear evidence; the process of disappearance of the auxiliary troops is not tackled; the process of the coming out of the new units and the date of their formation is not clearly explained, he doesn't discuss the reorganisation of the structure of the army and its display.

III. 6. *Provincial forces* (173—183). Here E.N.L. deals in fact with the period of Constantinus I. Diocletianus' military reforms are not included. On the Lower Danube (p. 177) not only the old forts were rebuilt, but there were also newly built ones.

III. 7. *Central field armies* (p. 182—188). The sentence on p. 173 is incorrect. It says: under the Principate all the forces of the army, but for 7.000 men of praetorian guard and urban cohorts, were provincial, in the sense that they were ordinarily deployed for the defence of particular provinces; on p. 183 E.N.L. reconsiders this affirmation and gives another picture. It's also mistaken to support the idea that there were no reservas in the interior. Starting from the idea that the Principate had no campaign army, the author surveys the troops from around the Emperor. But I think at the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. the number of soldiers was about 25.000 not 7.000 as E.N.L. believes (legio II Parthica; equites singulares; praetorian guard; urban cohorts). The scheme illustrating the Gallianus' mobile army forces is wrong E.N.L. did not grasp that this corps had a structure based on the vexillationes system (W. Seston). What remained from this corps in the sacer comitatus of Diocletianus remains an enigma as E.N.L. does not want to reveal. W. Seston states that sacer comitatus was a more enlarged personal guard (see *Historia*, 4, 1955, p. 394—). It would have been good to use H.D.M. Parker's review on E. Nischer (see in *JRS*, 13, 1923, p. 155). One must not forget that since the issue of W. Seston and D. van Berchem's work over 30 years have passed. During this time, research was carried out on certain sections of the border of the Roman Empire, research that partly confirms the suppositions, partly infirms, but its results incline towards Nischer's hypotheses.

III. 8. *Conclusion* (p. 188—190). All discussion concerns the 4th century A.D.

In the *Epilogue* the final considerations about the Iulio-Claudio period do not seem fit and they contradict to a certain extent, the affirmations on pages 49—50. There is a considerable difference between the old defensive system of the Republic and the system inaugurated by Augustus. One can not speak about the defensive system in depth even if it had been conceived and partly in use during the 3rd century A.D.; only later, in the last years of Diocletianus' reign and especially under Constantinus I. (they have a proper defence in depth).

I close here my observations about E.N.L.'s work. As an independent book, which tackles such a complex subject, in spite of all errors imperfections, lack of bibliographic information, means a step forward, it is at least a stimulus for the Roman historians to continue E.N.L.'s work by laying the foundation of a well documented historical study able to solve the problems under discussion. Such an enterprise would have great implications in the military history of the classical Roman period.

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