

MAP OF ROMAN BRITAIN. Second edition. *Southampton: Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom* 1928. 8×6 inches; 16 pages and map. 4s

The first edition of this map, published in 1924, was immediately recognized as a standard work and as one of the best archæological maps ever produced. It was so vastly superior to any previous map of Roman Britain that no one who understood its purpose had anything but praise for it, or felt disposed to demand anything better. There were, of course, disgruntled local antiquaries who fumed over the omission of their pet "Roman roads"; but their complaints were the fruit of misunderstanding. They did not realize the fineness of the mesh through which topographical evidence has to pass if it is to reach the Ordnance Survey's printed sheets. Other critics pointed gloomily to fragments of road shown as leading from nowhere to nowhere, as if they fancied that the Survey's draughtsmen had forgotten to put in the continuations of them; not realizing that the Survey's draughtsmen are not encouraged to draw things out of their heads, and that a road whose course is unknown cannot be plotted on a map. In these ways the first edition set a new standard of accuracy and conscientiousness in English archæological maps.

In the second edition this standard is maintained and even surpassed. Several new pieces of road are inserted, but quite as many have been deleted or marked as doubtful after a further review of the evidence. For that alone, the second edition would have been worth while. But that is the least of its new features. In the first place, the archæological material is overprinted on a new 1/M physical map layered with ten tints for land-heights and eight for sea-depths; a very fine piece of work, of which the Survey might well be proud. Then, an attempt has been made to reconstruct the primeval vegetation-map of the country by laying down symbols for "dense woodland" and "open woodland" based on geological evidence. This was a task of great difficulty, and the results may be open to correction in details; but in the main they are trustworthy, and completely supersede all previous attempts to do the same thing. On this two-fold basis, the new map shows, not only roads and towns and forts as before, but villages, country houses, and even scattered finds, when these are such as to indicate settled occupation. We thus have, what has never been attempted before—though the Victoria County Histories have done it for single counties—a map showing everything that is known about the distribution of the population in the Roman period. Now, for the first time, we can begin to talk about the factors governing that distribution, and estimate the nature and solidity of the economic foundations on which Romano-British civilization was built. But not in this review.

A map of this kind, however, differs in important ways from one showing the modern population or visible features of a country; it is more like the map of an unsurveyed country that is compiled from travellers' observations. A blank may mean that there is nothing there, or it may mean that no one has been to look. A friend of the present reviewer, looking at an archæological map of a remote and mountainous district, was heard to remark that prehistoric man seldom ventured more than a few miles from the nearest railway-station. Here, however, in the admirable letterpress that accompanies the map, the user is warned that certain apparently uninhabited areas are really areas of insufficient exploration.

Where there is so much to praise, it may seem ungracious to enumerate faults; but there are a few. They are chiefly concerned with the use of symbols, and these are mere matters of proof-reading. The symbol for a *colonia* is too much like that for a village, with the result that York might easily be taken for the latter

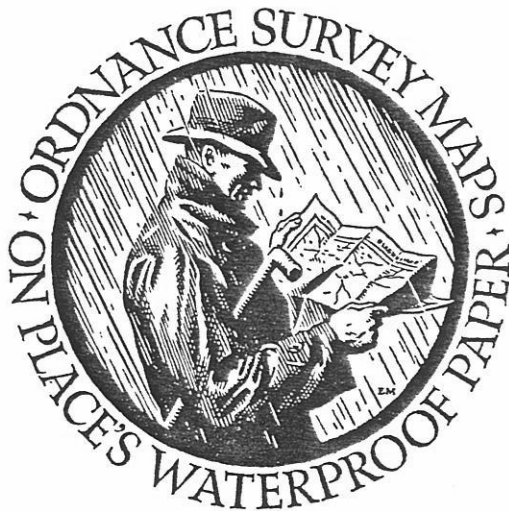
instead of the former; and—more serious—Lincoln, Colchester, and Gloucester appear not as *coloniae* but as simple towns. Corbridge, on the other hand, which is surely a respectable town, appears in the humble rank of “finds indicating permanent settlement.” Certain earthworks in Redesdale, shown as “temporary forts,” ought perhaps to have been marked by the symbol for “large marching camps.” Here and there, again, more information might have been inserted. At Ardoch, both permanent fort and temporary camp are symbolically shown; why not also at Makendon? It is unfortunate that the site at Burgh-by-Sands has been rechristened Burgh Head, which is the name of one end of that village. And it is not easy to see on what principle certain milestones have been inserted, and others, whose place of discovery and original situation are hardly less certain, omitted. But these are trivial blemishes upon a work which, as a whole, it would be difficult to praise too highly. It is absolutely indispensable to every student of early Britain. It will hang in every properly equipped school in the country, and serve as the basis for every lesson in early British history.

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The Geographical Journal, Vol.75, no.6, June 1930, p.566

WATERPROOF MAPS FOR USE IN THE FIELD

The Ordnance Survey are bringing out a series of combined sheets of the 1-inch-to-the-mile map of special districts of England and Wales printed on a paper treated by a new process which renders it waterproof besides being remarkably tough and durable. This is known as Place's Waterproof Paper, and it should be a boon to all those who have to use maps in the open during wet weather; for all who have had experience of this know to what a dreadful condition ordinary paper maps are reduced after they have been handled in the rain. It is claimed that this new paper is not damaged by wet, and a map printed on it, after being run over by a car and covered with mud, when scrubbed with soap and water and ironed, was as good as before. The Middle Thames sheet has been forwarded to this Society, where its waterproof character and durability were thoroughly tested, with a result that the claim made seems quite justified. This sheet includes the valley of the Thames and adjacent country from Richmond to about 3 miles beyond Wallingford. The price, folded for the pocket, is 4s. net.



Design by Ellis Martin used on publicity material and on the covers of maps on "Place's Waterproof". For more on this paper and the maps printed on it, see Tim Nicholson, "Ordnance Survey maps on Place's waterproof paper: some notes", Sheetlines no.14 (December 1985), pp.10-13