

LEGIO IX HISPANA

A comprehensive study into the ancient mystery of the disappearance of the Ninth Legion of the Roman Empire

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Abbreviations

AE = *L'Année Épigraphique*, Paris 1888-.

CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.

EDCS = *Epigraphik Datenbank Claus / Slaby*. <https://db.edcs.eu/>.

ILS = H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, 3 Bände, Berlin 1892-1916.

HGV = *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der Griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens*.
<https://aquila.zaw.uni-heidelberg.de/start>.

RIB = *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain – Vol.1* (1965).

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Fig. 1 Collection Valkhof Museum. Bronze horse harness pendant with inscription, from Roman times. [MHV.2015.156]

<https://www.collectiegelderland.nl/museumhetvalkhof/object/17229cac-4394-a714-7991-25edd8bc505d>.

Fig. 2 Catalogo Musei Vaticani. Column fragment, damaged in several places, with a commemorative inscription containing the list of the legions of the Roman army, arranged in geographical order. [MV.7460.0.0]

<https://catalogo.museivaticani.va/index.php/Detail/objects/MV.7460.0.0>.

Introduction

“Sometime about the year 117 A.D., the Ninth Legion, which was stationed at Eburacum where York now stands, marched north to deal with a rising among the Caledonian tribes, and was never heard of again.

During the excavations of Silchester nearly eighteen hundred years later, there was dug up [...] a wingless Roman Eagle [...]. Different people have had different ideas as to how it came to be there, but no one knows, just as no one knows what happened to the Ninth Legion after it marched into the northern mists.”

In 1954 Rosemary Sutcliff wrote this in the foreword of her most successful novel ‘*The Eagle of the Ninth*’, a story about Roman centurion Marcus Flavius Aquila who has to track down the story of his father who had disappeared along with the rest of his legion in the far north of the Roman province *Britannia*.¹ Her story was based on the real mystery of *Legio IX Hispana* who disappeared from history since their last attestation in York in the year 108.² She based the backstory of the Ninth Legion on the ‘Silchester eagle’ – a bronze casting in the shape of an eagle found in Britain which would have featured on the standard of the Ninth Legion according to Sutcliff’s story – and the state of scholarly debates on the history of the legion at the time.³ Rosemary Sutcliff took this historical mystery and made it her own wonderful story which went on to inspire countless other stories featuring the Ninth Legion in popular culture.⁴ During the second half of the 19th century scholars started to question the disappearance of *Legio IX Hispana* in *Britannia* because of newly found source material, but the story of a missing Roman legion in the north of Britain was already firmly embedded in the minds of millions who read the fascinating story of Marcus Flavius Aquila.

The Ninth Legion had already survived a surprise attack by the Caledonian tribes of *Britannia* in 82, when they were attacked in their fort in York at night. The legionaries were saved by cavalry and infantry who rushed to their aid under the command of Gnaeus Julius Agricola, the governor of the province of *Britannia*. It is his biography, written by Tacitus, where we learn this information. In this passage, Tacitus describes *Legio IX Hispana* as *maxime invalidam*, ‘especially weak’, but that they *rediiit animus*, ‘regained their spirit’.⁵ Whether this weakness was still among the ranks later in the legion’s lifespan we do not know, but at some point the legionaries did not ‘regain their spirit’ anymore as on an

¹ Rosemary Sutcliff, *The Eagle of the Ninth* (Oxford 1954).

² All dates in this work refer to the Common Era (CE).

³ See for more information on this famous object: The history of the Silchester Eagle, readingmuseum.org.uk, <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/history-silchester-eagle> (consulted on the 12th of January 2025).

⁴ See for example the movie *The Eagle* (2013) based on Sutcliff’s novel, a *Doctor Who* episode ‘*The Eaters of Light*’ (2017) where the legion is destroyed by an alien, or the book *Lost Legio IX: The Karus Saga* (2017) where the legion is relocated to another planet.

⁵ Tacitus, *Agricola* 26. Translation by author.

inscription put up in Rome in the second half of the second century listing all existing legions the Ninth is not mentioned.⁶ Moreover, a similar list is written down by Cassius Dio some decennia later where *Legio IX Hispana* is also missing.⁷ The question becomes what has happened to the legion to disappear from the records. Was it destroyed, disbanded, did it really get lost in the northern mists like in Sutcliff's story, did it get defeated by revolts of indigenous tribes or in a war with other Romans, or did it actually live longer than the records make us suspect?

The historiography of the story of *Legio IX Hispana* can, in my view, be divided into two larger periods: the period before the excavations in Nijmegen starting in the 1950s and the period that followed the discoveries there, with Sutcliff's novel marking the end of the first period. The historians from the earlier period are almost solely talking about a disappearance in *Britannia*. Already before the twentieth century the fate of the Ninth Legion of the Roman army was regarded a mystery.⁸ The first to address the Ninth was the Scottish antiquarian John Horsley in his *Britannia Romana* published in 1732, in which he mapped the Roman legions that were stationed in Britain. After the last mention of the Ninth Legion in Tacitus' *Agricola* from 82 Horsley could find no further traces, which led him to conclude that it had been destroyed or went missing otherwise.⁹ A hundred years later, in 1838, the Italian antiquarian Bartolomeo Borghesi reiterated the same conclusion, adding that it had probably been replaced by *Legio VI Victrix* after its destruction.¹⁰

When this disappearance would have happened both Horsley and Borghesi did not know, but in 1854 a new clue was discovered in York. A large inscription made by the Ninth Legion as part of a building project was found. The inscription was dedicated to the emperor Trajan and could therefore be securely dated to 108. This led Theodor Mommsen to narrow Borghesi's theory down and suggest that the legion was destroyed soon after 108. He was also the one to come up with and popularise the theory that *Legio IX Hispana* was attacked and defeated in an uprising of a northern tribe, based on passages from Fronto and the emperor Hadrian's biography in the *Historia Augusta*.¹¹ Another German, Wilhelm Weber, agreed with the theory of an uprising, but not with its timing. Based on an analysis by Harold Mattingly of several Hadrianic coins featuring a personification of *Britannia* Weber concluded that the

⁶ *CIL* VI, 3492.

⁷ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 55.23-24.

⁸ This overview of the earlier literature on the Ninth Legion is largely based on Duncan Campbell's article and subsequent monograph: Duncan B. Campbell, 'The Fate of the Ninth. The Curious Disappearance of the VIII Legio Hispana', *Ancient Warfare* 4:5 (2010) 48-53; Duncan B. Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth. The Curious Disappearance of one of Rome's Legions* (2018). The following notes from this overview will contain a reference to the location of Campbell's treatment of the same matter in his monograph.

⁹ John Horsley, *Britannia Romana: or the Roman Antiquities of Britain* (London 1732). Page 28-30 in Campbell (2018).

¹⁰ Bartolomeo Borghesi, *Memoria sopra un'iscrizione del console L. Burbuleius optato Ligariano serbata nel museo reale* (Naples 1838). Page 50-55 in Campbell (2018).

¹¹ Theodor Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte Vol. 5. Die Provinzen von Caesar bis Diocletian* (Berlin 1885). Page 81-88 in Campbell (2018); Fronto, *On the Parthian War* 2; *Historia Augusta*, 1. *Hadrian* 5.

uprising would have taken place in 119.¹² While scholars agreed that *Legio IX Hispana* was destroyed in a northern uprising, the dating remained disputed.¹³

This changed with Emil Ritterling's lemma *Legio* in the Paulys Realencyclopädie in which he noted that an uprising did take place in 119, but that the Ninth could not possibly have been destroyed before 123 based on the prosopography of several *tribunicii laticlavii* – senatorial tribunes in the legion who would later go on to have senatorial careers.¹⁴ However, this was ignored for decades and the status quo remains that there was a British 'war' or uprising in 119 and that *Legio IX Hispana* was destroyed in it. In 1948, however, Eric Birley did follow up on Ritterling and suggested that *Legio VI Victrix* was moved to Britain to either replace the Ninth who were transferred to the East for Trajan's Parthian War or to help build Hadrian's Wall, in which case the Ninth could have been transferred to the East at a later date, likely in connection to the Jewish War (132-136).¹⁵ Subsequently both suggestions from Ritterling and Birley were ignored by Ian Richmond who claimed that the Ninth was defeated multiple times and eventually disbanded by emperor Hadrian when he went to Britain.¹⁶ These theories of revolts or defeats remained leading for scholars until the 1950s and became popularised through Rosemary Sutcliff's novel.

In the following decade however, the mystery was blown wide open once again in 1959 when Dutch archaeologist Jules Bogaers found a fragment of a tile-stamp of the Ninth Legion.¹⁷ Three years later he is reminded of an unpublished *Reibschale* – a mortar; a bowl used for grinding – with the same identification of *Legio IX Hispana* on the edge which had already been found in 1938 at De Holdeurn, the site of a Roman tiles and pottery factory near modern-day Nijmegen.¹⁸ Following these discoveries the debate reignited and several new theories were put forward in the decades that followed. Some historians could not find a suitable reason for defeat or disbandment in the region near Nijmegen, so suggestions for a move of the legion to the eastern part of the Roman Empire also arose.¹⁹ These theories all resulted in three main options for the end of *Legio IX Hispana*:

¹² Wilhelm Weber, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Kaisers Hadrianus* (Leipzig 1907); Harold Mattingly, 'Some historical coins of Hadrian', *Journal of Roman Studies* 15 (1925) 209-222. Both page 103-104 in Campbell (2018).

¹³ In agreement with an uprising or revolt was for example Francis Haverfield, *The Roman Occupation of Britain* (Oxford 1924).

¹⁴ Emil Ritterling, 'Legio', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 12 (Stuttgart 1925). Page 108-110 in Campbell (2018).

¹⁵ Eric Barff Birley, 'Britain after Agricola, and the End of the Ninth Legion', *Durham University Journal* 40 (Durham 1948) 78-83. Page 114-115 in Campbell (2018).

¹⁶ Ian Richmond, *Roman Britain* (Harmondsworth 1955) 47.

¹⁷ *AE* 1977, 541; [Appendix A.1.](#)

¹⁸ J. E. Bogaers, 'Die Besatzungstruppen des Legionslagers von Nijmegen im 2. Jahrhundert nach Christus.', in: *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms. Vorträge des 6. Internationalen Limeskongress in Süddeutschland* ed. J. Heider (Cologne 1967) 54-76; [Appendix A.3.](#)

¹⁹ Lawrence Keppie, 'Legio VIII in Britain: the beginning and the end', *Roman Fortresses and their Legions* ed. R. J. Brewer (2000) 83-100.

1. In *Britannia*. As the first theories suggested, albeit with a potential stopover in Nijmegen.
2. In *Germania Inferior*. The stay in Nijmegen was not a stopover, but the final destination.
3. In the East. Following a need for legions in either the Parthian or the Jewish Wars.

As the twentieth century went on, the second and third options became more favoured, based on both the finds from Nijmegen and more epigraphical sources showing the careers of senatorial officers who were once part of the Ninth Legion. This is visible in later influential overviews on Roman Britain in general.²⁰ In the current century however, the idea of an uprising or a defeat in northern *Britannia* is finding more followers once again because no convincing solutions have been found in Nijmegen or the East, although it must be said that the most vocal support of this theory could be classified as excitingly popular historiography and seem to be influenced by a form of British bias.²¹ Because of the exciting and popular nature of the subject, the sources are often picked and used for sensational purposes, whereas all sources should be analysed equally and with the aim to provide more information or clues instead of sensational suggestions. Furthermore, recent monographs and articles that showcase some of these problems also tend to have a clear hypothesis from the start that they try to work towards, interpreting the sources in a way that is convenient for their favoured conclusion.²² If all sources were analysed and interpreted in the opposite direction, contrary conclusions would be made. Because of the fragmentary, incomplete and poly-interpretable nature of the sources however, there is nothing close to a clear and convincing answer to the mystery of the disappearance of *Legio IX Hispana* (yet).

The myth of the disappearance of the Ninth Legion is still not uncovered and will probably not be in this research either. However, attempts can be made to show the probability of the most likely possibilities and give insight into the historiography of the legion and how the theories came about. This research will be structured in three chapters based on the geographical options for the disappearance of the Ninth Legion. First a possible ending of the legion in *Britannia* will be examined, after which Nijmegen or *Germania Inferior*, concluding with the eastern part of the Roman Empire in chapter three. Each chapter will be divided into three parts:

²⁰ Anthony Richard Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* (Oxford 1981) 219-220: 'IX Hispana was once thought to have been destroyed in Britain early in the reign of Hadrian, but the careers of several of its officers made this theory highly implausible. [...] The permanent departure of IX Hispana from Britain perhaps did not occur for a further ten or eleven years.'; Sheppard Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London 1987) 137-140: 'These finds certainly suggest that the Ninth may have been stationed at Nijmegen for a short time at some period after 108 [...] and perhaps from about 121. Further evidence is needed before more can be said.'; David Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession. Britain in the Roman Empire* (London 2006) 90: 'The 'mystery disappearance' of legio IX in the early second century appears to have been due to its strategic transfer from the province rather than its loss in an unrecorded British catastrophe.'

²¹ Miles Russell, 'What Happened to Britain's Lost Roman Legion?', *BBC History Magazine* 12:5 (2011) 40-46; Simon Elliott, *Roman Britain's Missing Legion: What really happened to IX Hispana?* (Yorkshire 2021).

²² For this type of research methods in practice, see most notably Elliot, *Roman Britain's Missing Legion: What really happened to IX Hispana?* and Nick Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall', *Britannia* 52 (2021) 97-118.

1. The whereabouts of the legion, where mostly archaeological sources will be analysed to provide clues for the location of the Ninth Legion;
2. The military organisation of the legion, where the logistics, practices and traditions regarding legionary transport and other customs will be used to hypothesize several possibilities of movement and activity of *Legio IX Hispana*;
3. The people of the legion, where epigraphical sources and prosopography will be used for analysis.

By looking at the three geographical situations and the sources that belong to these regions, an attempt will be made to answer the research question of how the ‘disappearance’ of *Legio IX Hispana* in the second century can be explained. Even though solving the mystery is very unlikely, pushing the research into a new direction could be a rewarding and achievable goal. Moreover, by looking at the historiography and the sources from a different – i.e. non-British – background an attempt will be made to show the influence of personal prejudices and preferences, and of geographical backgrounds on interpretations and choices that are made regarding the analysis of source material and previous literature. Even though I am aware of my own biases and those of authors from The Netherlands that have written about *Legio IX Hispana* before me, I think it is important that a comprehensive study on the disappearance of the Ninth Legion is carried out by a non-British historian. While trying to remove the eagerness for sensation as much as possible, the influence of biases on writing historiography will also be taken into account.

Britannia

The last literary mention of *Legio IX Hispana* is made by Tacitus in his *Agricola*, where he describes the legionaries surviving a surprise attack at night by combined forces of the Britons around the year 82.²³ After this, the only datable source is the building inscription found in York. As the inscription is dedicated to Trajan and included his years in office, it could be definitively dated to 108.²⁴ During both these years the Ninth Legion was stationed in York, where it was transferred to from Lincoln around 71.²⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, scholars for a long time presumed that the legion was destroyed in *Britannia*, until sources from *Germania Inferior* and prosopographical sources that showed the legion’s possible longer lifespan were introduced in the debate. Recently however, the possibility of the legion’s demise in *Britannia* has been reintroduced.²⁶ In this chapter, two different options for an end of *Legio IX Hispana* in *Britannia* are analysed. Firstly, the age-old tale of destruction by a revolt of northern peoples and secondly a new theory put forward by Simon Elliot where the Ninth is defeated in a battle

²³ Tacitus, *Agricola* 26.

²⁴ *CIL* VII, 241.; [Appendix B.13](#).

²⁵ Jerome H. Farnum, ‘The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions’ (Oxford 2005) 21, 31.

²⁶ Hodgson, ‘The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian’s Wall’.

with other Romans in ‘a Hadrianic war in the provincial capital’.²⁷ Subsequently, the legion’s possible contribution to the construction of Hadrian’s Wall is discussed, and possible similarities with other destroyed or disbanded legions are examined followed by an analysis of all known individuals that served in the Ninth Legion during its later years in *Britannia*. The aim of this chapter is to explain if *Legio IX Hispana* could have met its end in *Britannia* and if so why, when and how.

Whereabouts: War in *Britannia*?

The indigenous Celtic tribes of northern *Britannia* could have been the ones that attacked and destroyed the soldiers of the Ninth Legion, if Fronto and Hadrian’s biography are to be believed. Fronto says that ‘...under the rule of ... Hadrian what a number of soldiers were killed ... by the Britons!’.²⁸ Hadrian’s rule was between the years 117 and 138, which still leaves a large timeframe of where to place an uprising by the tribes from the north of *Britannia*. The contribution from Hadrian’s biography explains that the peoples from the areas of Trajan’s conquests started to revolt around Hadrian’s accession. It said that ‘...the Britons could not be kept under Roman control...’.²⁹ This would mean that this conflict waged in the first years after 117. Even though these authors are mentioned in almost every study of *Legio IX Hispana*, there is actually another very important reference to this conflict that is neglected until now. In the fourteenth satire of Juvenal where he discusses the topic of *avaritia*, the capital vice of greed, he mentions different ways of acquiring wealth. One of the routes one can take is through the ranks of the army, where Juvenal encourages the reader to ‘tear down the huts of the Moors and the forts of the Brigantes’.³⁰ According to an early commentary on the Satires the *Brigantes* were a powerful tribe who occupied most of Britain north of the river Humber, which also includes the *castrum* (fortress) of *Eboracum* (York), where the Ninth Legion was located.³¹ In a much more recent commentary, it is explained that *Brigantia* was a ‘trouble spot’ in the beginning of Hadrian’s rule.³² This would mean that ‘trouble’ in a time when *Legio IX Hispana* was in the north of *Britannia* is very realistic according to our literary sources. There is also one archaeological source that alludes to fighting in the north. On the tombstone of a *centurion* named Titus Annius found at *Vindolanda*, a Roman fort near Hadrian’s Wall, it is said that he was ‘killed in war’ (...*in bell[is] inter[fectus]*...).³³ The existence of a conflict in the north of *Britannia* is therefore almost certain.

But what about the participation of the Ninth Legion in this conflict? The only sources we have are archaeological and mostly epigraphical. As mentioned before, the only precisely dated source is the building inscription with a dedication to emperor Trajan from 108 which marks the presence of the

²⁷ Elliot, *Roman Britain’s Missing Legion: What really happened to IX Hispana?*.

²⁸ Fronto, *On the Parthian War* 2.

²⁹ *Historia Augusta*, 1. *Hadrian* 5.

³⁰ Juvenal, *Satires* 14.

³¹ G. G. Ramsay, *Juvenal and Persius* (London 1940) 278, n. 1.

³² Susanna Morton Braund, *Juvenal and Persius* (London 2004) 472, n. 24.

³³ *RIB* 3364; Hodgson, ‘The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian’s Wall’ 103.

legion at the *castrum* in York. The Ninth had probably been at York for more than thirty years, since it left Lincoln around the year 71.³⁴ In these years the legion was probably active in several campaigns and also engaged in civil duties, which is visible from the large amount of tile-stamps with reference to the legion that were found in and around York.³⁵ These tiles were used for construction projects and *Legio IX Hispana* assisted in or carried out the production of these tiles. The building inscription from 108 is also a testament to these civil duties and is probably linked to the rebuilding of the *castrum* at York from a wooden to a stone building.³⁶ The tile-stamps cannot be used as evidence for anything more than proving the legion's presence in York, as they are very difficult to date. Despite this, it is possible to determine certain things about the length of legions' residencies by looking at the types or phases of production of tile-stamps, known as dies. In this way, *tegulae* expert Peter Warry shows that *Legio IX Hispana* started to produce tiles in York from 90 onwards and continued to do so during its stay at the *castrum* there.³⁷

All tile-stamps that were produced in York feature the writing of *Legio IX Hispana* with the nine written as IX. As is visible in Appendix B however, tile-stamps featuring its name written as VIII occur in a different part of *Britannia* in and in the vicinity of *Luguvalium*, present-day Carlisle. The Ninth Legion was therefore at some time most probably also present in Carlisle. As *Legio IX Hispana* is also the writing that is used throughout this work, one might think that this was their standard way of self-referencing in Roman times as well. On the contrary, it seems to be the other way around as almost all other inscriptions feature the VIII version of the name.³⁸

There are eight inscriptions from *Britannia* that reference the Ninth Legion that are not tile-stamps; five of these are inscriptions on tombstones and three are votive inscriptions on altars. Three of these inscriptions were put up in York and three in Lincoln. This makes it possible to date the inscriptions to the two time periods of occupation of the *castra* to before and after 71 as they were most probably made at the place where the legionaries resided. Vice versa, these inscriptions confirm the presence of *Legio IX Hispana* at these two *castra*. All three inscriptions from Lincoln are quite straightforward funerary inscriptions, naming the deceased, his origin and his service in the Ninth Legion.³⁹ More than confirmation of the Ninth's presence in Lincoln these inscriptions do not provide. It is however interesting to note that all three inscriptions do not use the nickname *Hispana*, where two out of three of the inscriptions from York do. This could suggest that this nickname was achieved around the time of the transfer from Lincoln to York around 71 or shortly after this, which seems to support the theory

³⁴ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 21, 31; assuming that the legion took up residence in York immediately after leaving Lincoln.

³⁵ Keppie, 'Legio VIII in Britain: the beginning and the end' 89; For an overview of all inscriptions found in *Britannia* (as well as *Germania*) see [Appendix B and D](#).

³⁶ *Ibidem* 91.

³⁷ Peter Warry, *Tegulae. Manufacture, typology and use in Roman Britain* (Oxford 2006) 79.

³⁸ See also the chapter on Roman Nijmegen for differences between VIII and IX.

³⁹ *RIB* 254, 256, 260; [Appendix B.14-16](#).

that the usage of *Hispana* started in the legion's time in *Britannia*.⁴⁰ However, this cannot be the case because of an inscription from Aquileia dated somewhere between 10 and 43 already showing *Hispana*.⁴¹

The three inscriptions found in York consist of two tombstones and one altar dedicated to a forest god named *Silvanus*. The altar is dedicated by a *cornicularius*, the head of the clerks in a military unit. The two tombstones are from a *signifer* – a standard-bearer – and a soldier whose inscription was put up by his heirs and freedmen.⁴² Neither of these provide any information on *Legio IX Hispana*'s whereabouts or possible demise. The other two remaining inscriptions are found near the south coast of England, which make them more difficult to date as this was not close to a *castrum* where the legion was stationed. The most convincing assumption is that the inscriptions were put up around the legion's earliest times in *Britannia*, as the south coast was close to the area where the Romans first invaded Britain. Both the very fragmentary tombstone and the less fragmentary, but still incomplete, altar dedicated to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* give little to no new information about *Legio IX Hispana*'s whereabouts.⁴³ These sources all show the presence of *Legio IX Hispana* in (northern) Britain, but do not give any information on a possible disbandment or destruction, or even a struggle at the northern frontier. Apparently the combination of the legion's presence and the few literary references to war in the north of *Britannia* have for a long time convinced historians to assume that defeat in conflict with northern indigenous people led to the Ninth's destruction and disappearance, even though there was no real convincing argument for doing so.

A different solution for the end of *Legio IX Hispana* was posed by Simon Elliot when he proposed that the legion was destroyed in a Hadrianic war in or near *Londinium*.⁴⁴ He based this novel theory on Dominic Perring's work, most notably his article in *Britannia* titled 'London's Hadrianic War?', in which Perring suggests that the large number of human remains found in the remains of the river Walbrook, commonly referred to as the Walbrook skulls, were a result of a Hadrianic war in London. He also ties this to the Hadrianic fire that nearly destroyed the whole city. The fire was thought to have been accidental, but according to Perring could have been part of or caused by a conflict in this period.⁴⁵ This latter theory however has already been debunked by a review of his later monograph stating that 'this argument is highly speculative as, while there is plenty of contemporary evidence of warfare in northern Britain, which prompted the construction of Hadrian's Wall, there is no evidence of

⁴⁰ Jean Krier & Lothar Schwinden, 'Die Merscher Inschrift CIL XIII 4030', *Trierer Zeitschrift* 37 (1974) 123-147, there 139.

⁴¹ Birley, 'The Fate of the Ninth Legion' 71; *CIL* V 911.

⁴² *RIB* 659, 673, 680; Appendix B.12-13, D.111.

⁴³ *RIB* 3042, 3047; Appendix B.17-18.

⁴⁴ Elliott, *Roman Britain's Missing Legion. What really happened to IX Hispana?*, see chapter 4.

⁴⁵ Dominic Perring, 'London's Hadrianic War?', *Britannia* 48 (2017) 37-76; See also his even more recent monograph *London in the Roman World* (Oxford 2022).

conflict in southern Britain that withstands scrutiny'.⁴⁶ On top of that, there have been many different interpretations of the large collection of skulls and all of them remain equally hypothetical and unproven. Because of this, Elliott's theory is called into question as well and together with the fact that there is no further evidence for this war apart from these speculations this theory has to be put aside. Especially when considering the exciting and commercial nature of his book, also noted by Ross Cowan, saying that '... he started with his conclusion already fixed' and that he glosses over evidence that would place the Ninth Legion outside of *Britannia* which '...makes sound commercial sense'.⁴⁷ An interesting suggestion that is made in the book however, that it could also have been a conflict between several Roman parties instead of Roman vs. indigenous, is interesting and will be discussed later.⁴⁸

Military Organisation: Constructing Hadrian's Wall

Conflict in northern Britain prompted the construction of Hadrian's Wall. If *Legio IX Hispana* participated in and survived the first conflicts with the northern peoples, they were surely present in the construction of Hadrian's Wall. It is certain that the three other legions that were present in *Britannia* have been at the Wall: *Legio II Adiutrix*, *Legio VI Victrix (Pia Fidelis)* and *Legio XX Ulpia Victrix*. Inscriptions put up by these three legions on the course of the Wall show their presence and also suggest their contribution to the construction.⁴⁹ Additionally, an abundance of inscriptions at *castra* near the Wall such as at *Vindolanda* or *Coria* – present-day Corbridge – show their presence near the Wall.⁵⁰

Hodgson has argued that the Sixth Legion was not present during the construction phase of Hadrian's Wall, but that all its building dedications are to be dated to a phase of rebuilding around 158.⁵¹ Even though the amount of inscriptions by *Legio VI Victrix* is a lot less than that of the Second and Twentieth Legions, still a significant number of building inscriptions, i.e. non rebuilding, is dedicated by the Sixth Legion. In my opinion at least seven that would suggest building activities, with four more possibilities.⁵² In these seven instances the word *fecit* – ...built this – is written down, albeit abbreviated to *f*, as is common on inscriptions. There are five examples of the word *refecit* – ...rebuilt this – specifically being used in similar inscriptions in the same region (interestingly written differently all five times as *refecit*, *refec*, *refe*, *ref* and *rf*); at least three times by the *Legio VI Victrix* itself but also once

⁴⁶ Bruce Watson, '[Review of:] *London in the Roman World*. By Dominic Perring', *The Antiquaries Journal* 102 (2022) 475-477, there 476; Based on his own article: Bruce Watson, 'The evidence for *Londinium*'s "war" reviewed', *London Archaeologist* 16 (2021) 154-159.

⁴⁷ Ross Cowan, 'History as it Ought to Have Been: The Ninth in the North, Yet Again', *Ancient Warfare* (2021) unpaginated online edition.

⁴⁸ See

⁴⁹ For these three legions having built at Hadrian's Wall see, among many others, for example: *RIB* 1638 for *Legio II Augusta*, *RIB* 1635 for *Legio VI Victrix (Pia Fidelis)* and *RIB* 1852 for *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*.

⁵⁰ For these three legions present at *Vindolanda* and/or Corbridge see for example: *RIB* 1702 for *Legio II Augusta*, *RIB* 1159 for *Legio VI Victrix* and *RIB* 1164 for *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*.

⁵¹ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 101; Hodgson mentions *RIB* 3320, but it is much clearer at *RIB* 1389: '*ref[ecit]*'.

⁵² *RIB* 1438, 1635, 1680, 1934, (1937), 1938, (1939), (1953), 1966, 1967, (1968). Between brackets are possibilities.

by both the *Legio II Augusta* and the *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*.⁵³ This would suggest to me that the Sixth Legion actually did take part in the first phases of construction of Hadrian's Wall, as otherwise all or at least most of its inscriptions would have featured *refecit* instead of *fecit*. The much smaller number of inscriptions could be explained by the later arrival of the Sixth Legion that was transferred from *Germania Inferior* to the *castrum* at York in or around 122, when the construction work for Hadrian's Wall could already have started.⁵⁴ Another explanation, not negating the first one, could be that *Legio VI Victrix* did other work at *castra* just south of the Wall as there are a lot more inscriptions of the Sixth there in contrast to the other legions.⁵⁵

No clear building inscriptions of *Legio IX Hispana* exist near the Wall. There are two inscriptions that show the Roman numeral VIII. The only information on these inscriptions is this number itself which for one that was found at the Wall is most probably referring to the Ninth Roman milecastle where it was found near to.⁵⁶ The other one was found near the *castrum* at Corbridge, but this could just as well be a reference to a Ninth cohort, or something else entirely.⁵⁷ Then there is one more interesting tile-stamp that was rediscovered on photographs and was said to have been found in Corbridge's 'Corstopitum Excavations' and appeared in a subsequent edition in *L'Année Epigraphique*.⁵⁸ However, this appears to have been a misunderstanding of a numeral that belonged to its placement in Francis Haverfield's Carlisle Catalogue for a numeral that referenced a particular archaeological site at Corbridge. This error was pointed out by Hassall and Tomlin, who made a new error themselves by referencing this tile as an already known tile-stamp from Carlisle, even though it is a very different preserved fragment of tile.⁵⁹ The other tile is from the same die, which shows that both were most probably produced in Carlisle by the Ninth Legion.⁶⁰ This shows that none of the sources of *Legio IX Hispana* suggest that its legionaries contributed to the construction of Hadrian's Wall.

Nevertheless, there are at least eight tile-stamps found in or near Carlisle. Carlisle was very close to Hadrian's Wall and the largest *castrum* on the Wall called *Uxelodunum* was constructed at the location of the contemporary district of Carlisle, called Stanwix. One tile-stamp of the Ninth Legion was found there which would indicate its presence at the Wall, or at least at this *castrum*. Two of the other tile-stamps were found at Scalesceugh, which is where the pottery factory would have been located and

⁵³ For *Legio VI Victrix* RIB 1162 (here it is a detachment that put up the inscription), 2027, 1389 (mentioned already above), for *Legio II Augusta*: RIB 2011, for *Legio XX Valeria Victrix* RIB 1204.

⁵⁴ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 20.

⁵⁵ Anthony Richard Birley, 'VI Victrix in Britain', in: *Soldier and Civilian in Roman Yorkshire* ed. R. M. Butler (Leicester 1971) 81-96, there 82-83.

⁵⁶ RIB 1371; [Appendix B.2](#).

⁵⁷ RIB 1197; [Appendix B.1](#).

⁵⁸ M. C. Bishop, 'A "new" tile-stamp from Corbridge and Legionary dispositions on the Tyne-Solway isthmus', *Archaeologica Aeliana* 5:23 (1995) 311-312; *AE* 1995, 1010; [Appendix B.3](#).

⁵⁹ B. C. Burnham, L. J. F. Keppie, A. S. Cleary, M. W. C. Hassall & R. S. O. Tomlin, 'Roman Britain in 1994', *Britannia* 26 (1995) 325-390, there 389.

⁶⁰ RIB 2462.4.ii; [Appendix B.7](#).

all tiles would be produced.⁶¹ The other five tiles were found in Carlisle itself.⁶² Even though eight is a small amount in comparison with the collection of stamps found in York, it still suggests that *Legio IX Hispana* was once stationed at Carlisle. The tile-stamp at Stanwix definitely hints towards the legion's participation in the construction of the *castrum* on the Wall. The small amount of stamps, as said before not only compared to its collection from York but also to the other legions that were present at the Wall, could be explained either by a short stay at this *castrum* or the presence of only a detachment of the legion. This latter option is suggested by Hodgson who uses this, in combination with a detachment going to *Germania Inferior*, to explain the reduced production of tiles in York.⁶³ In my opinion however, this option is far less likely than a short stay at the Wall. Firstly, when a detachment of a legion produces tiling it often uses references to the fact that they are a detachment by writing VEX for *vexillatio*.⁶⁴ Secondly, a short stay can be explained by two different situations: either the legion was lost in the abovementioned conflict with northern peoples, or, more likely, it was transferred altogether to *Germania Inferior* where sources suggest the Ninth Legion's presence.⁶⁵

The evidence of *Legio IX Hispana* near Hadrian's Wall therefore does suggest its presence there, but the scarcity of the material in comparison with the other legions makes it difficult to establish in what way the Ninth was present. The most convincing reconstruction of events would be to assume that somewhere between 108 (the year of the last trace of the legion in York) and 122 (the start of construction of Hadrian's Wall) the legion was transferred to the region of Carlisle. Here they inherited or built the *castrum* of *Uxelodunum* at Stanwix after which they were transferred to the European mainland with *Legio VI Victrix* making the reverse movement.⁶⁶ Lawrence Keppie listed several reasons for the Sixth Legion to be needed in *Britannia* related to the Ninth Legion: necessary strengthening of the army in *Britannia*, avenging a possible defeat of the Ninth or covering the departure of the Ninth. He also explained this as part of a 'global reshuffling of forces' related to Trajan's Parthian Wars in 114-117.⁶⁷ However, as such a reshuffle was something that happened more often, this could also have happened a few years later around 122, maybe even caused by the conflict in the north of *Britannia*. This reshuffle would then perhaps also have happened on a smaller scale with the vexillations of the legions along the Wall in the north of *Britannia*, with all units moving a post to the west and the Sixth Legion taking over

⁶¹ Eric Barff Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion', in: *Soldier and Civilian in Roman Yorkshire* ed. R. M. Butler (Leicester 1971) 71-80, there 76.

⁶² See respectively [Appendix B.10](#), [B.8-9](#) & [B.3-7](#).

⁶³ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 100.

⁶⁴ See for example a building stone by the Twentieth Legion from *Vindolanda: RIB 3354*. Searching for inscriptions that feature both *vexillatio* and *legio* in the database of The Roman Inscriptions of Britain gives 56 examples. The same command in the EDCS database gives 251 inscriptions throughout the entire Roman Empire.

⁶⁵ This is the reconstruction that Eric Birley preferred as well: Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion', 76-77; *Legio IX Hispana's* presence in *Germania Inferior* will be analysed in the chapter on Roman Nijmegen.

⁶⁶ *Legio IX Hispana* and *Legio VI Victrix* trading places is also the preferred reconstruction of Jona Lendering: *Legio VI Victrix*, livius.org, <https://www.livius.org/articles/legion/legio-vi-victrix/> (consulted on the 10th of January 2025).

⁶⁷ Keppie, 'Legio VIII in Britain: the beginning and the end' 93.

the *castrum* at York. Whether *Legio IX Hispana* suffered losses from fighting with northern peoples remains unsure, but it will become clear that it did not lead to its permanent end as the legion left traces in *Germania Inferior*.

People: Burbuleius, Carus and Crispinus

In this chapter the sources which mention a member of *Legio IX Hispana* at the time it was stationed in *Britannia* but were found outside of this province will be analysed. There are a few inscriptions of individuals that served in the Ninth Legion that can be dated before the time of uncertainty, i.e. from 116/117 onwards,⁶⁸ and a few that are too unspecific to give any convincing information about the whereabouts of the legion.⁶⁹ The most important sources however, that will be analysed in depth here, are the honorific inscriptions of three *tribuni laticlavii* of the Ninth Legion – who were most probably each other’s successors – that recite their military careers. By looking at the potential years and locations of their service, more information on the whereabouts of the Ninth Legion can be extracted.

Lucius Burbuleius Optatus Ligarianus is remembered by an inscription put up in Minturno, a town in Latium of which he was *patr(ono) col(oniae)*.⁷⁰ He went through a substantial amount of offices before reaching the apogee of his *cursus honorum* as consul in the year 135.⁷¹ The first three offices of his career were *triumvir capitalis*, overseeing the prisons and executions,⁷² next he served as tribune in *Legio IX Hispana* followed by a function as *quaestor* of the province of Pontus and Bithynia. Based on the circumstances of this third office and by calculation backwards from the year in which he was consul it is possible to estimate that Burbuleius’ most probably served his tribunate in the Ninth Legion in the first years of the emperorship of Hadrian; from 117 onwards.⁷³ When looking at the timeline that was established above we can confidently assume that Burbuleius indeed carried out his service in *Britannia*. Service as *tribunus laticlavius* had a duration of at least one to one and a half years, but it probably often

⁶⁸ *CIL* V, 7159: Marcus Cocceius Severus was thought to have been given citizenship by emperor Nerva because of his *nomen* Cocceius, but this has been rejected and the inscription was dated to around 100. See for discussion: Keppie, ‘*Legio VIII* in Britain: the beginning and the end’ 93, especially n. 124 & Hodgson, ‘The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian’s Wall’ 113, Appendix 1B.

⁶⁹ *ILS* 2656 & 2666b: Tiberius Claudius Vitalis & Lucius Valerius Proclus had very similar careers and were once part of *Legio IX Hispana*. There is however too much uncertainty for these sources to be useful. See for more information: Karl Strobel, ‘Bemerkungen zur Laufbahn des Ti. Claudius Vitalis’, *Tyche* 2 (1987) 203-210; *CIL* XII, 2601: Blandius Latinus was a *centurion* of the Ninth Legion, but nothing more is known.

⁷⁰ *CIL* X, 6006: *L(ucio) Burbuleio L(uci) f(ilio) Quir(ina) | Optato Ligariano | co(n)s(uli) sodal(i) Aug(ustali) leg(ato) Imperat(oris) | Antonini Aug(usti) P(ri) pro pr(aetore) prov(inciae) | Syriae in quo honor(e) decessit legat(o) | eiusdem et divi Hadriani pro pr(aetore) prov(inciae) | Cappad(ociae) cur(atori) oper(um) locor(um)q(ue) publ(icorum) praef(ecto) | aerar(i) Saturn(i) proco(n)s(uli) Sicil(iae) logiste | Syriae legat(o) leg(ionis) XVI Fl(aviae) Firm(ae) cur(atori) rei p(ublicae) | Narbon(ensium) item Anconitanor(um) item | Tarracin(ensium) curat(ori) viar(um) Clodiae Cassiae | Ciminae pr(aetori) aed(ili) pl(ebis) q̄(uaestori) Ponti et Bithyn(iae) | trib(uno) laticl(avi) leg(ionis) IX Hispan(ae) IIIvir(o) kapit(ali) | patr(ono) col(oniae) | Rasinia Pietas nutr(ix) filiar(um) eius | s(ua) p(ecunia) p(osuit) l(oco) d(ato) d(ecurionum) d(ecreto)*.

⁷¹ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 271-2.

⁷² Loretana de Libero, ‘Tresviri. Tresviri capitales’, *Brill’s New Pauly Online* (Leiden 2006).

⁷³ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 272.

lasted for two or three years.⁷⁴ That means that Burbuleius is more likely to have started his service in the Ninth Legion around 119 or 120, or that there was one more tribune between him and our next case.

Lucius Aemilius Carus was honoured on an inscription that was put up for him in Rome by his best friend.⁷⁵ It is certain that Carus – whose name is spelled Karus on only this inscription – was consul in March 144.⁷⁶ Before this he also completed an extensive career in which he was *tribunus laticlavus* in *Legio IX Hispana*, but also in *Legio VIII Augusta*. The similarity of his career with that of Marcus Pontius Laelianus Larcus Sabinus could suggest the years of Carus' service in the Ninth Legion.⁷⁷ This Laelianus served as tribune in *Legio VI Victrix* which can be dated to around 122, because it is mentioned on his inscription that he was transferred to *Britannia* with the Sixth Legion, which we know occurred in 122.⁷⁸ Laelianus was consul a year later than Carus in 145.⁷⁹ Laelianus and Carus held the same offices in the same order in different locations, except for Laelianus' extra services such as *ab actis* of the Senate, *curator civitatis* of a Gallic town and several imperial assemblies. Carus having served twice as tribune in two different legions evens this out a bit, but Laelianus' path to consulship might have lasted a little longer. Hence it would make sense to place Carus' service in *Legio IX Hispana* somewhere around 122 or 123 as well. This is of course a very interesting date, because it places his service around the time of uncertainty for the Ninth Legion. Could Carus have experienced the destruction or disbandment of the legion? Carus also served as tribune in *Legio VIII Augusta* and as his career is inscribed completely in order, it makes sense to assume that he was transferred from the Ninth to the eighth. Perhaps Carus was transferred because *Legio IX Hispana* ceased to exist during his time? It was actually not uncommon to serve in multiple legions as *tribunus laticlavus*, which makes this reconstruction not necessarily probable.⁸⁰ In my opinion, a much more convincing reconstruction would be to let Carus transfer to the *castrum* at Nijmegen with the Ninth Legion. This theory is supported by the location of Carus' next legion: *Legio VIII Augusta* was from 90 onwards stationed at *Argentoratum*,

⁷⁴ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 9, suggesting two to three years of service based on convenience of governing.

⁷⁵ *CIL* VI, 1333: *L(ucio) Aemilio L(uci) f(ilio) Cam(ilia) Karo co(n)[s(uli) | leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciae Cappadociae | leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) censitori provinciae Lugdunensis | leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciae Arabiae | curatori viae Flaminiae, leg(ato) leg(ionis) XXX U(lpiae) V(ictricis) | praet(ori), trib(uno) pleb(is), quaest(ori) Aug(usti) | trib(uno) militum leg(ionis) VIII Aug(ustae) | trib(uno) militum leg(ionis) VIII Hispanae | Xviro stlitib(us) iudic(andis) | sodali Flaviali, XVviro s(acris) f(aciundis) | C(aius) Iulius Erucianus Crispus praef(ectus) | alae primae Ulpiae Dacorum | amico optimo.*

⁷⁶ *AE* 2014, 1675; this was already suspected by Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 275; but was confirmed because of military diplomas by Werner Eck & Andreas Pangerl in: 'Eine Konstitution des Antoninus Pius für die Auxilien in Syrien aus dem Jahr 144', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 188 (2014) 255-260 and in: 'Eine zweite Kopie der Konstitution für die Truppen Syriens vom 19. März 144 und ein Diplom für die equites singulares vom selben Datum', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 193 (2015) 253-60.

⁷⁷ *CIL* VI, 1497, 1549.

⁷⁸ *CIL* XVI, 69; The dating of the transfer of the Sixth Legion from *Germania Inferior* to *Britannia* is based on the career of Aulus Platorius Nepos, who became governor of Britain in 122 and brought the VI Victrix with him; Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 25 and 45.

⁷⁹ Werner Eck, 'Die Fasti consulares der Regierungszeit des Antoninus Pius. Eine Bestandsaufnahme seit Géza Alföldys Konsulat und Senatorenstand', in: *Studia Epigraphica in Memoriam Geza Alföldy* eds. W. Eck, B. Fehér & P. Kovács (Bonn 2013) 69-90, there 74.

⁸⁰ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 8-10.

contemporary Strasbourg.⁸¹ Even though it was not necessary to transfer between locations that were close together, it does make for an easy transfer. The Ninth Legion's existence after 122 is also supported by an inscription of Carus' successor.

This was most probably Lucius Novius Crispinus Martialis Saturninus.⁸² He was consul in the year 150, or slightly before or after this.⁸³ Crispinus' had a fairly straightforward career en route to his consulship and because of our knowledge of other *iuridici Asturiae et Gallaeciae* – legal officers of the Roman province in the northwestern part of the Iberian Peninsula – Crispinus has had to have held this post earlier than expected in the later years of Hadrian's reign. This means his *praetorship* must have been carried out around 135, but at least no later.⁸⁴ With only a term as *tribunus plebis* and *quaestor* before this, it would be logical to assume that he served as *tribunus laticlavus* in *Legio IX Hispana* somewhere in the 120's.⁸⁵ Even though it is unknown how long Crispinus served as people's tribune and *quaestor*, it is more convincing to date his time in the Ninth Legion somewhere in the latter half of the 120's, especially when recognising the time of Lucius Aemilius Carus in the legion to be estimated from 122/123 until 124/125.⁸⁶ The careers of the three tribunes of *Legio IX Hispana* therefore do suggest that the legion was still in existence until at least around the year 125. The chances of the legion perishing in *Britannia* are therefore very slim, as the conflict with the northern peoples was said to have taken place in the first years of Hadrian's reign and in 125 he was halfway through his reign already.

The prosopographical analyses of the epigraphical sources also shows that the careers are literally set in stone, but that does not mean that we know the years of each term of service exactly. This leaves room for interpretation and in my opinion the reconstructions as mentioned above are the most convincing. Hodgson on the other hand interpretes these sources in a way that allows him to place the time of tribunate in *Legio IX Hispana* as early as possible, to allow for a demise in *Britannia*.⁸⁷ As others have previously argued against this as well, Hodgson's theory seems unlikely, however it is still a possibility.⁸⁸ In the next two chapters the sources from the European mainland in *Germania Inferior* and

⁸¹ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 21.

⁸² CIL VIII, 2747: *L(ucio) Novio Crispino | Martiali Saturnino | co(n)s(uli) desig(nato) leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) | provinciae Africae proco(n)s(uli) Galliae | Narbonensis leg(ato) Aug(usti) leg(ionis) I Italicae | leg(ato) Aug(usti) iuridico Asturiae et Gallaeciae | praetori trib(uno) pleb(is) quaestori pro praet(ore) | provinciae Macedoniae trib(uno) mil(itum) | leg(ionis) VIII Hisp(anicae) IIIviro viarum | curandarum seviro eq(uitum) Romanorum | veterani leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae) | qui militare coeperunt Glabrione | et Torquato item Asiatico II et Aquilino co(n)s(ulibus)*.

⁸³ AE 1930, 40; Eck, 'Die Fasti consulares der Regierungszeit des Antoninus Pius. Eine Bestandsaufnahme seit Géza Alföldys Konsulat und Senatorenstand' 82.

⁸⁴ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 277.

⁸⁵ The office succeeding Crispinus' tribunate in the Ninth Legion was *quaestor pro praetore* of the province of *Macedonia*, which could suggest a movement of the Ninth towards the east. This will be analysed in the last chapter concerning the possibility of the disappearance of the legion in the east of the empire.

⁸⁶ Again, contrary to Hodgson, who stretches Crispinus' career to place his service as tribune in the Ninth Legion earlier so as to be able to have him in *Britannia* in this time.

⁸⁷ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall'.

⁸⁸ Eric Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion' 78: 'there is sufficient epigraphic evidence [...] to indicate that the Ninth Legion was still in existence well after A.D. 120', and non to support the old conjecture that it was destroyed

the eastern parts of the empire will be analysed to provide more clues to the disappearance of the Ninth Legion.

Germania Inferior

The dating of *Legio IX Hispana*'s occupation of the *castrum* of *Noviomagus*, present-day Nijmegen in the east of The Netherlands, is still unclear, however it can be assumed that the legion was present there. From 71 until 103 or 104 *Legio X Gemina* was stationed in Nijmegen, which is attested by an abundance of archaeological sources. Its departure in the first years of the second century is most probably related to the start of the Second Dacian War.⁸⁹ This absence of the Tenth Legion had to be filled with new garrisons. At some point in the second century this was *Legio IX Hispana*, based on the sources presented first by Bogaers: two fragments of tile-stamps and an inscription on the rim of a grinding bowl, and later by Sijpesteijn: a pendant from a horse harness.⁹⁰ As others have pointed out, inscriptions from the region of Aachen and Luxembourg both also show the presence of the Ninth Legion deeper in *Germania Inferior*.⁹¹ This chapter will discuss where and when *Legio IX Hispana* resided near Nijmegen, whether the full legion was present or only a detachment, and what the careers of the officers that were honoured deeper in *Germania Inferior* can show. By determining this, the Ninth's chapter in *Noviomagus* will be mapped out and it will be made clear how this fits in with its history in *Britannia*.

Whereabouts: Stationed at Noviomagus?

The abovementioned sources from the vicinity of Nijmegen are all very difficult if not impossible to date. We know that the *castrum* was occupied by *Legio X Gemina* until somewhere around 103 or 104, but after this its occupation becomes much more complex. Traces of several legions have been found that make the question more difficult: *Legio IX Hispana*, *Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix*, *Legio VI Victrix (Pia Fidelis)* and *Legio XXII Primigenia*. Jan Kees Haalebos argued that the finds of these last two legions are so insignificant that it is highly probable that they were both never fully or as part of a detachment present in Nijmegen.⁹² They were stationed in *Colonia Ulpia Traiana (Xanten, castra Vetera)* from 102-122 and 70-102 respectively and probably had a lot of interactions with nearby Nijmegen.⁹³ Of the Thirtieth Legion however, more than fifty tile-stamps have been found in Nijmegen. This means that the legion must have been there, whether it was the entire legion or a detachment.⁹⁴ Around 122, *Legio XXX*

in a British war'; Anthony Richard Birley, *The Roman Government of Britain* (Oxford 2005) 228: 'IX Hispana was once thought to have been destroyed in Britain early in the reign of Hadrian, but the careers of several of its officers made this hardly plausible.', repeated from his *The Fasti of Roman Britain* from 1981.

⁸⁹ Jan Kees Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen Vereniging Gelre* 91 (2000) 9-36, there 18-20.

⁹⁰ Bogaers, 'Die Besatzungstruppen des Legionslagers von Nijmegen im 2. Jahrh. Nach Christus.'; Pieter Johannes Sijpesteijn, 'Die Legio Nona Hispana in Nimwegen', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 111 (1997) 281-282.

⁹¹ Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 21.

⁹² Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 24.

⁹³ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions 20 & 25*.

⁹⁴ Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 24.

Ulpia Victrix took over the occupation of Xanten, as this position was vacated by *Legio VI Victrix* to be stationed in *Britannia*.⁹⁵

In the years before or in the first years of their occupation of Xanten, the Thirtieth Legion oversaw the *castrum* of Nijmegen. In this short time reparational construction projects were carried out which we can see by the large number of tile-stamps.⁹⁶ All these tile-stamps are of the same type from the factory at De Holdeurn, meaning that they only issued one batch, even though a lot of different types from this factory are known.⁹⁷ From this we can conclude that *Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix* was only at Nijmegen for a short time somewhere around 122, because we know that it was in *Pannonia Superior* until 121 or 122.⁹⁸ This means we have a timeframe from around 104 until 121 where the occupation of Nijmegen is unclear. It is also suggested that after this no full legion was stationed there anymore based on the relatively small amount of finds from the second century compared to the first, but this might already be the case from when *Legio X Gemina* left around 104.⁹⁹

The question then remains where in this timeframe *Legio IX Hispana* fits in. We have seen that the Ninth was present in York in 108.¹⁰⁰ This means that there are three options left for the Ninth Legion to have been in Nijmegen: either between 104 and 108, between 108 and 121 or after 121. This last option has been proposed by some, suggesting that the Ninth only arrived in Nijmegen after *Legio VI Victrix* went to *Britannia*, with *Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix* taking over Xanten and leaving Nijmegen to *Legio IX Hispana*.¹⁰¹ This is also what Bogaers proposes, adding that the Ninth must have had severe losses after fighting in the north of *Britannia*.¹⁰² Eric Birley suggests that the Ninth was replaced by the Sixth, but first helped to build a new fortress near Carlisle before departing to *Germania Inferior* around 126. This was partly based on the writing of the inscriptions found in Nijmegen.¹⁰³

On both the tile-stamps and the inscription on the grinding bowl the name of the legion is written as LEG VIII HISP, which in *Britannia* only occurs on a small fraction of tile-stamps, namely the ones produced at a pottery factory in Scalesceugh, a town in the vicinity of Carlisle.¹⁰⁴ These stamps are in contrast with the ones that were produced in York, where the legion's name is written as LEG IX HISP.¹⁰⁵ Based on this difference, the timeline suggested by Birley would seem to make sense, even though his dating of a departure from Britain in 126 might be quite late. If we look at all types of inscriptions in

⁹⁵ See note 78.

⁹⁶ *CIL* XIII, 12399.

⁹⁷ Vincent van der Veen, 'Chronology and spatial distribution of terra sigillata potters' stamps and coins within the Nijmegen *castra* and *canabae*', *Germania* 98 (2020) 63-95, there 72-74.

⁹⁸ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 25 & 45.

⁹⁹ Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 30.

¹⁰⁰ *CIL* VII, 241; [Appendix B.13](#).

¹⁰¹ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 45, 'briefly before disappearing'.

¹⁰² Bogaers, 'Die Besatzungstruppen des Legionslagers von Nijmegen im 2. Jahrhundert nach Christus.' 74.

¹⁰³ Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion' 76-77.

¹⁰⁴ [Appendix B.4-10](#).

¹⁰⁵ [Appendix D](#).

Britannia and *Germania Inferior* featuring the Ninth Legion however, it is possible to map both versions of its name.¹⁰⁶ From this it becomes clear that even though the IX inscription greatly exceeds the VIII type in numbers, all these IX inscriptions are from York, with only one of them not being a tile-stamp. All other inscriptions, from the tile-stamps from Carlisle and Nijmegen to the famous building inscription dedicated to Trajan from York, feature the VIII version of the name. Even though it is often stated that the inscriptions from Nijmegen were exceptions, it is actually the tile-stamps from York that are the exception. As there is no further pattern or trend visible between the two different types, this information does not provide any clues on a possible chronological or geographical split between the two types and looks to be entirely random. Therefore I would suggest that we should be careful to base any conclusions on these differences and question the ones that were already made.¹⁰⁷



Fig. 1

In this discussion I omitted one exception to the exception: the earlier mentioned horse harness pendant found in Ewijk, a town near Nijmegen [Fig. 1].¹⁰⁸ This is the only known inscription featuring the IX version of the name that is not produced and/or found in York. Several suggestions about this object have been made. It was assumed that it was brought from *Britannia* and lost near Nijmegen.¹⁰⁹ However, as this could not be proved, it was determined that it probably belonged to a veteran because it was found in the same place where now a Roman villa is suspected.¹¹⁰ In addition, it is possible that a veteran had this pendant made in York and kept it until his arrival in Nijmegen. This would mean he

¹⁰⁶ See the [Appendix](#) for an overview of all the inscriptions from *Britannia* and *Germania Inferior* showing the distribution of ‘VIII’ and ‘IX’ inscriptions between the provinces of *Germania (Inferior)* and *Britannia*.

¹⁰⁷ Such as the earlier mentioned Bogaers and Eric Birley.

¹⁰⁸ Sijpesteijn, ‘Die Legio Nona Hispana in Nimwegen’; [Appendix C.1.](#)

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem* 282.

¹¹⁰ Haalebos, ‘Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen’ 23-24; Willem J. H. Willems & Harry van Enkevort, ‘*Vlpiā Noviomagus*. Roman Nijmegen. The Batavian Capital at the Imperial Frontier’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series 73* (2009) 152.

had to keep it for a maximum of fourteen years from the last attestation at York in 108 until the first possible year in Nijmegen that was previously established to be 122. This seems possible. However, the only conclusive information the pendant provides concerning the history of *Legio IX Hispana* is that it strengthens the theory of the legion's presence in *Germania Inferior*.

If we accept that *Legio IX Hispana* left *Britannia* and arrived in Nijmegen after 121, it was likely related to *Legio VI Victrix* moving to *Britannia*. Additional conclusions about this however, are all massively speculative. What about the Ninth being in Nijmegen between 104 and 108 or between 108 and 121? For this we might have to look at the *Vexillatio Britannica*.

Military Organisation: the *Vexillatio Britannica*

A few times before, detachments of legions have been mentioned as a way of occupying a *castrum*. These detachments were used often in the Roman imperial army and were called *vexillationes*. A *vexillatio* normally consisted of either one or two thousand men, originating from one or several different legions, and could exist for as long as was deemed necessary. Apart from providing support in wars or occupying vulnerable positions, they could also perform all kinds of civil duties.¹¹¹ In Nijmegen more than hundred tile-stamps with the inscription *VEX BRIT* were found which were determined to belong to a *vexillatio Britannica*.¹¹² These tile-stamps are an example of one of these civil duties, as this means that the army carried out building projects in the region. In this case they controlled the pottery factory at De Holdeurn. As said before, these tile-stamps are difficult or impossible to date which means that apart from indicating the presence of a *vexillatio Britannica* in Nijmegen, the tiles do not give us any clues concerning the timeline of occupation of the *castrum*.

Because of the relatively large amount of tile-stamps of the *vexillatio Britannica* found in Nijmegen compared to all other legions but *Legio X Gemina* – to whom c. 90% of all the tile-stamps found in the region of Nijmegen belong – it can be suggested that the vexillation also spent a relatively long period of time there. Haalebos has denied theories of the stamps coming from the same time as the Tenth Legions' occupation, and places its presence after 104.¹¹³ This would suggest that the *castrum* in Nijmegen was occupied by the vexillation between 104 and c. 120, when there was no full legion present there. There is no conclusive evidence of who were part of the *vexillatio Britannica* and during which years exactly it was present in Nijmegen. We also do not know for certain that soldiers from *Legio IX Hispana* were part of the *vexillatio Britannica* that is attested, even though this is often assumed or implied. Such assumptions would provide a relatively easy reconstruction of the timeline of the Ninth Legion. In this case it could be possible that the tile-stamps, the inscription on the grinding bowl and the horse harness pendant were created in or brought to Nijmegen by members of the Ninth Legion who

¹¹¹ Helmuth Schneider, 'Vexillatio', *Brill's New Pauly Online* (Leiden 2006).

¹¹² Bogaers, 'Die Besatzungstruppen des Legionslagers von Nijmegen im 2. Jahrhundert nach Christus.' 64-68.

¹¹³ Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 28.

were serving in the *vexillatio Britannica*. This way the Ninth Legion could have never been in *Germania Inferior* in complete force and this would make the theory of a destruction or disbandment of the Ninth in *Britannia* possible again.¹¹⁴ However, because of the multiple sources that have been found in the region of Nijmegen that make it very likely that the entire legion would have been present, it seems right to assume the Ninth was there itself. Especially because of that the fact that the LEG VIII HISP tile-stamps occur next to the stamps of the *vexillatio Britannica*, it seems to be that these were produced by the legion itself and not by their members serving in the vexillation. More evidence suggesting the presence of the entire legion in *Germania Inferior* is provided by two epigraphic sources from deeper in the province.

People: Macer and the Equestrian

Two inscriptions, one from the region of Aachen and one from Mersch in Luxembourg, give information about two individuals who served in *Legio IX Hispana*. Near Aachen – which was a spa in Roman times called *Acquae Granni* – a votive inscription dedicated to Apollo by Lucius Latinius Macer was found.¹¹⁵ This inscription raises several questions about its relation to *Legio IX Hispana*, but could also provide a lot of information about the history of the legion. The inscription reads:

L(ucius) Latinius L(uci) f(ilius) Publilia / Macer Ver(ona) p(rimus) p(ilus)
leg(ionis) VIII Hispanae / praef(ectus) castr(orum) pro se et suis / Apollini
/ v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

Lucius Latinius Macer, son of Lucius, from the tribus Publilia from Verona,
primus pilus of the Ninth Legion Hispana and praefectus castrorum, for
himself and his kin, paid a vow to Apollo willingly and deservedly¹¹⁶

In this inscription Lucius Latinius Macer describes himself as *primus pilus* of the Ninth Legion and as camp prefect. These offices were amongst the highest within a legion, with the *primus pilus* being the first centurion, commanding the first century of the first cohort and the camp prefect being the third in rank and often the most experienced member of the entire legion; officially overseeing logistics of the camp, but in practice often exercising command as experienced consultant for the *legatus* and *tribunus laticlavus*, the highest officers of the legion. The camp prefect was always a former *primus pilus*, which is also visible in Lucius Latinius Macer's inscription.¹¹⁷ The reason for the inscription and its location have been interpreted as a visit to the spa of *Acquae Granni*, which was apparently a standard visit for

¹¹⁴ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 115; after Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 28.

¹¹⁵ *AE* 1968, 323; [Appendix A.4](#).

¹¹⁶ Translation by author.

¹¹⁷ Pat Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Oxford 2007) 129-130.

(officers of) the legions that were settled in the northern parts of *Germania Inferior*.¹¹⁸ Here Lucius Latinius Macer will have put up this dedication to Apollo.

A *praefectus castrorum* had to have always been commanding an entire legion, which would contradict the theory of him leading only a vexillation.¹¹⁹ This would mean that the entire *Legio IX Hispana* had to have been present in *Germania Inferior*, which would infer that the reconstruction of events as mentioned above is not a possibility anymore. Several other solutions have been put forward by others to try and build a situation where it was still only the *vexillatio Britannica* that brought members of the Ninth to *Germania Inferior*, such as that the dedication was put up to celebrate Lucius Latinius Macer's promotion or that he did not yet accept his new position which meant that he was in command of the vexillation as still a *primus pilus*, or that he was already retired when making the altar.¹²⁰ These doubts are all reasonable, but do not seem necessarily convincing enough to assume that Lucius Latinius Macer was not commanding the complete Ninth Legion. Perhaps another inscription found even deeper into the European mainland could provide more context as to the theory of the entire legion being present in *Germania Inferior*.

In what nowadays is the Luxembourgish canton of Mersch, situated in the Roman province of *Gallia Belgica*, another inscription was found of an unnamed priest who was once also a military tribune for the Ninth Legion:¹²¹

[—] / flam[en] Augu[sti] / flamen Leni M[art]is quinq[ue]n[na]lis /
 praef[ectus] cohort[is] [II His]panor[um] eq[ui]tatae / tribunus militu[m]
 le[g]ionis VIII Hi[spanae] / praefect[us] e[quitum] alae Augustae /
 Vocon[tiorum] —]

[...]priest of Augustus, priest of Lenus Mars, prefect of the second cavalry
 cohort Hispanorum, military tribune of the Ninth Legion Hispana, prefect of
 cavalry unit Augusta of the Voconti[...]¹²²

Where the first inscription was handed down still completely intact, this inscription only survived partly and in two large fragments. For this reason we do not know the name of the person whose career has been recounted on the two remaining slabs. All that is left is a list of religious and military functions that the unknown *eques* has held. We can confidently assume that he was a member of the equestrian order

¹¹⁸ Herbert Nesselhauf & Harald von Petrikovits, 'Ein Weihaltar für Apollo aus Aachen-Burtscheid', *Bonner Jahrbücher* 167 (1967) 268-279, there 270.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem 271; Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion' 74-75; Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 21; Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth* 128.

¹²⁰ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 99; Haalebos, 'Romeinse Troepen in Nijmegen' 22.

¹²¹ *CIL* XIII, 4030; [Appendix A.5.](#)

¹²² Translation by author.

because his career mirrors the traditional equestrian military career known as the *tres militiae*.¹²³ He served his *militia secunda* as military tribune for *Legio IX Hispana*. When his military career was completed, he settled in the lands of the *Treveri* in *Gallia Belgica* and took up religious posts there as a *flamen* (a priest) for *Lenus Mars* – a local variation of the Roman god Mars – and for the deified emperor Augustus. The inscription was likely part of a bigger monument commemorating the life of the important and exemplary individual.¹²⁴

So what does this inscription tell us about the timeline of *Legio IX Hispana*? At first thought, one would think that as this inscription is most probably put up at either the burial place of the unnamed individual or the place where he held the last office, we cannot elicit information about his whereabouts when serving in the Ninth Legion. However, when looking at the combination of the last two offices of his *tres militiae* can reconstruct where and when he served in which role. The order of the offices is presumably listed anti-chronologically as the most important function is held latest in careers and often named first on inscriptions. The order of the *tres militiae* however is in chronological order on the inscription, as it is written down as a fixed set. The possibility of the inscription being put up during the legion's transfer en route to *Britannia* in the year 43 is therefore very unlikely because the *tres militiae* only existed in this order from a time after emperor Claudius whose reign started in 41 and especially since the Flavian age.¹²⁵

The unknown *eques' militia tertia* was served in the *Ala Augusta Vocontiorum*, which we know from inscriptions was once present in Xanten, Altkalkar and Hemmen, three places in *Germania Inferior* along the Rhine near Xanten and Nijmegen.¹²⁶ This cavalry unit is also mentioned on a military diploma which can be securely dated to the year 122, where it is mentioned as being in *Britannia*.¹²⁷ Krier and Schwinden argued that our *eques* fulfilled both his tribunate in *Legio IX Hispana* and his *militia tertia* in *Germania Inferior* and therefore place his *tres militiae* somewhere between 108 and 122. They based this on the theory that movement between provinces upon promotion was far less for *equites* than it was for *centurions* and the sequence of completing two or three of the military posts in *Germania Inferior* occurs more often than a transfer between *Britannia* and *Germania Inferior*.¹²⁸ However, Geza Alföldy proposed earlier that both his *militia prima* and *secunda* were carried out in *Britannia* and also suggested that the *militia tertia* could have been served there as well.¹²⁹ However, as was established previously, *Legio IX Hispana* was most probably transferred to *Germania Inferior* in 122 at the earliest. This would

¹²³ One would first be prefect of a cohort, secondly military tribune of a legion and thirdly prefect of a cavalry. Werner Eck, 'Tres Militiae', *Brill's New Pauly Online* (Leiden 2006).

¹²⁴ Krier & Schwinden, 'Die Merscher Inschrift CIL XIII 4030'.

¹²⁵ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions 21*; Hubert Devijver, 'Some Observations on Greek Terminology for the *Militiae Equestres* in the Literary, Epigraphical and Papyrological Sources', in: *The Equestrian Officers of the Roman Imperial Army* (Amsterdam 1989) 56-72, there 57.

¹²⁶ CIL XIII, 8655, 8671, 8805.

¹²⁷ CIL XVI, 69.

¹²⁸ Krier & Schwinden, 'Die Merscher Inschrift CIL XIII 4030' 139-142.

¹²⁹ Geza Alföldy, *Die Hilfstruppen der römischen Provinz Germania Inferior* (Düsseldorf 1968) 42, 116, 119, 122.

suggest that the unnamed *eques* did serve his tribunate in the Ninth Legion in *Britannia* and perhaps transferred to the *Ala Augusta Vocontiorum* around the time the unit was mentioned on the military diploma and when *Legio IX Hispana* was transferred to *Germania Inferior*.

Even though this last individual does not seem to have served in the Ninth Legion when it was in *Germania Inferior*, the evidence that is found in the province is convincing enough to suggest that the legion was once present in its entirety. The sources found in Nijmegen make us assume that they were indeed stationed at the *castrum* in Nijmegen, from where Lucius Latinius Macer made a visit to the baths in *Acquae Granni*. Concerning the dating of the Ninth Legion's presence in Nijmegen it is clear that it is at least after 104, but for more concise dating after that it seems that there is no convincing evidence available. Because of the building inscription from 108 in York the chances are great that the legion was in Nijmegen later than this year. The most plausible theory, as also established in the first chapter, would be that *Legio IX Hispana* arrived in Nijmegen as part of a transfer in relation to the Sixth and the Twentieth Legions either immediately from 121 or a little later after having been in Carlisle.

When it is established that the Ninth Legion was in fact present in Nijmegen, it is also interesting to analyse a possible ending there. Even though there is no major conflict in the region at this time, the legion could have been disbanded here. The reconstruction that is most probable for this to have happened, is if the Ninth had already been injured when it got transferred from *Britannia*. An ending in Nijmegen has not yet been considered, but, as will be presented in the following chapter, reasons for disbandment have seldom to do with defeat or destruction and are always an administrative decision. Perhaps the lack of conflict in *Germania Inferior* is an even better reason to disband a severely diminished legion. The horse harness pendant belonging to a veteran would also fit into this reconstruction very well, as he could have retired together with the legion. However, there are still other possibilities of destruction or disbandment in different places in the Roman Empire, especially in the eastern parts of the empire, which will be examined in the next chapter.

The East

A third possible location for the Ninth Legion to have been destroyed can be found in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire. This theory was first suggested by Eric Birley in 1948, who expanded on this in his later works.¹³⁰ The Ninth Legion would have been supporting Sextus Julius Severus when he was transferred from governor of *Britannia* to suppress the Jewish Revolt in Judaea around 132.¹³¹ Following this suggestion, more studies into the Ninth Legion have featured the option of a move to the east, but it has not yet been studied extensively in recent times. According to Keppie: 'either the legion was destroyed in Britain (...) or it was transferred out of Britain, so that the problem of what happened to it,

¹³⁰ Birley, 'Britain after Agricola, and the end of the Ninth Legion' (1948); Birley, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion' (1971).

¹³¹ *Ibidem* (1948) 28.

and when it ceased to be, is not strictly relevant to the student of Roman Britain'.¹³² This shows once again that British scholars prefer to keep 'their' legion's demise in *Britannia*, or, when this does not seem to be the case, it is not interesting enough for further research. The last to make an end of the legion in the east the focal point of his research was Menachem Mor, who, building on Werner Eck's analysis of a newly found military diploma from 161, suggested that the legion could have been destroyed in a battle at Elegeia in northeastern Turkey in 161, even though admitting that 'there is no way of confirming or rejecting this line of thought'.¹³³ This chapter will feature an analysis of the *terminus ante quem* of the legion's existence, reshuffling patterns of legions throughout the empire, other examples of destroyed or disbanded legions and the prosopographical sources of the Ninth related to the east. In combining this information, an attempt will be made to explain why, when and how *Legio IX Hispana* could have met its end in the east.

Whereabouts: Judaea or Parthia?

This column [Fig. 2], of which two existed but one is now lost, lists all existing Roman legions based on their geographical location at the time.¹³⁴ For example, the first three legions mentioned on the top left are the three legions stationed in *Britannia*: *Legio II Augusta*, *VI Victrix* and *XX Valeria Victrix*.¹³⁵ *Legio IX Hispana* is not only missing from this part of the list, but it is mentioned nowhere on the entire column. From this it is concluded that the Ninth Legion was not in existence anymore when this column was inscribed.¹³⁶ The question then becomes when this inscription was created. When looking at the list of legions it is noticeable that not all legions are geographically in the correct places. The legions third and second from below on the right column, *II* and *III Italica*, are not in the correct spot as are the *I*, *II* and *III Parthica* legions that all feature on the bottom. These legions were created by the emperors Marcus Aurelius around 165 and Septimius Severus around 197 respectively and were all stationed in different locations than were they should be according to the inscription. Based on this it is suspected that these legions were added to the inscription at the time of their instalment, with the three Severan legions creating an eleventh row under the previous three columns of ten rows of legions each.¹³⁷ The two *Italica* legions installed by Marcus Aurelius make the ten rows complete in spots that could previously have been taken by two other legions. Most probably *Legio IX Hispana* was one of these which would make the *terminus ante quem* of the legion's existence around the year 165.¹³⁸ These

¹³² Keppie, 'Legio VIII in Britain: the beginning and the end' 92.

¹³³ Menachem Mor, 'Two Legions: The Same Fate? (The Disappearance of the Legions IX Hispana and XXII Deiotariana)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 62 (1986) 267-278, there 267-269; Werner Eck, 'Zum Ende der Legio IX Hispana', *Chiron* 2 (1972) 459-462.

¹³⁴ *CIL* VI, 3492.

¹³⁵ See for the locations of all the legions the entry in *CIL*; *ILS* 2288.

¹³⁶ Keppie, 'Legio VIII in Britain: the beginning and the end' 93.

¹³⁷ Pierre Cosme, 'Les légions romaines sur le Forum: recherches sur la Colonnnette Mafféienne', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 106:1 (1994) 167-196, there 172-173.

¹³⁸ The other legion is most probably *Legio XXII Deiotariana*. See for an analysis of this also Mor, 'Two Legions: The Same Fate? (The Disappearance of the Legions IX Hispana and XXII Deiotariana)'.

assumptions are also confirmed by Cassius Dio who does not mention the Ninth Legion in his list and explains that Marcus Aurelius created the *II* and *III Italica*.¹³⁹

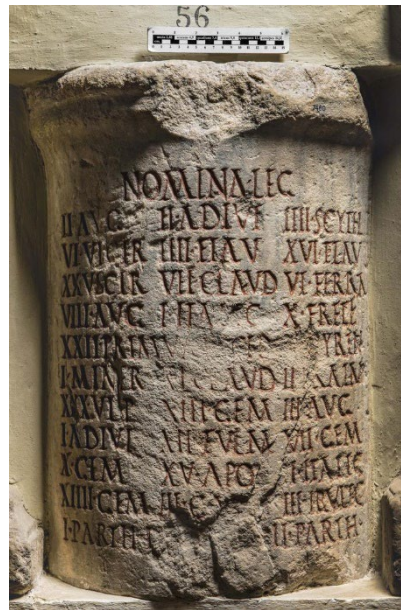


Fig. 2

Following this, a possible ending of *Legio IX Hispana* in the east of the empire has to have happened somewhere between the middle of the 120s and 165. If this ending was in the form of a destruction, the two most likely situations for this to have happened are the Third Roman-Jewish War of 132-136, also called the Bar Kokhba Revolt, and the Roman-Parthian War of 161-166. The first option was first suggested by Birley who did not elaborate on this further besides sketching the situation of Sextus Julius Severus taking the legion with him on his reappointment from Britain to Judaea.¹⁴⁰ Julius Severus was known to be the best general of his time and was quickly reassigned to suppress the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132 after only having been governor of *Britannia* from around 130 onwards.¹⁴¹ However, as is established in the chapters above, the chances that the Ninth Legion was present in *Britannia* together with Julius Severus are very slim. Julius Severus could have picked the legion up on the way to the east, but this is not something that happened regularly and with no sources directly describing *Legio IX Hispana*'s involvement in the Revolt this seems to be a big stretch. Moreover, this suggestion was already downplayed by Mor who, after newly found sources showed that Julius Severus did not arrive in Judaea until 134 when the uprising was already suppressed enough to be able to defeat a complete Roman legion.

The other option of destruction, the Roman-Parthian War of 161-166, is the only situation where a possibility for the end of a legion is specifically described. At or near Elegeia, a town situated around the border of the Roman provinces of Cappadocia and Armenia in the northeastern part of modern-day

¹³⁹ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 55.23-24.

¹⁴⁰ Birley, 'Britain after Agricola, and the end of the Ninth Legion' 28.

¹⁴¹ Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 44.13; Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 106-109.

Turkey, Vologaesius IV, the king of Parthia, destroyed ‘the whole force, leaders and all’ of an entire Roman legion that was under the command of Marcus Sedatius Severianus.¹⁴² This is the only clear definitive mention of a legion being completely destroyed that fits into the timeframe of *Legio IX Hispana* that was established up till now. The problem with this ending is that a very long period between the last attestation of the Ninth Legion has to be bridged as there is no clear archaeological evidence of the legion’s presence in the eastern part of the empire.

When looking at reshuffling of legions throughout the empire, it becomes clear that this was only done before or after times of significant unrest somewhere along the frontiers of the empire. An evident example of this are Trajan’s Dacian Wars that waged from circa 101-106. To aid in this war several legions were displaced from Pannonia to Dacia and this in turn caused legions from the Rhine to move to Pannonia. Subsequently, the *castra* that were abandoned in *Germania* were then occupied by different legions such as *Legio VI Victrix* that was retracted from the Dacian Wars to *Germania Inferior*, presumably to recover. In the aftermath of the Dacian Wars around 106 no less than eight legions transferred from one *castrum* to another, with some establishing new *castra* in Dacia. As is clear here, it seems to have been standard practice to transfer a legion to a neighbouring province or even the same province, which consequences would in turn move a neighbouring legion of the first legion to its old *castrum* and so on and so forth. Moving one legion all the way from one side of the empire to another without connection to other transfers of garrisons looks to have been very uncommon.¹⁴³ It is this standard practice of ‘a shunting of garrisons’ that Keppie describes as the explanation of *Legio IX Hispana*’s transfer from *Britannia* to Nijmegen.¹⁴⁴ However, he relates this to either the abovementioned Dacian Wars or the Trajan’s Parthian campaign of 114-117 even though it is unlikely that the Ninth Legion left *Britannia* before 122 when construction of Hadrian’s Wall begun, as was established above. After this, no shunting of legions was carried on a large enough scale to explain a move of *Legio IX Hispana* to the eastern parts of the empire.¹⁴⁵ If this did happen, it had to have been a rare case. Even though the ending in Elegeia seems to be the perfect solution, it is difficult to find a reason for the Ninth Legion to have been in those parts of the empire by looking only at global movements of legions.

Military Organisation: Disbanded Legions

If *Legio IX Hispana* actually was destroyed at Elegeia (or *Britannia*, for that matter), why was it not reinstated as often happened with defeated legions? The Ninth Legion itself experienced this before when it was destroyed in the Boudican Revolt of 61 when the entire legion apart from the cavalry was wiped out. It did not get disbanded after this, but was supplemented by other troops and continued to

¹⁴² Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 71.2.

¹⁴³ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 8-9 and 34-41, the latter pages are an overview of ‘Global Legionary Movements’.

¹⁴⁴ Keppie, ‘*Legio VIII* in Britain: the beginning and the end’ 94.

¹⁴⁵ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 39.

exist.¹⁴⁶ At some point however, the Ninth did not get reinstated and was permanently disbanded and its Roman numeral was never used again. Even when legions were destroyed, it was always ‘an administrative decision whether a legion that had failed was rebuilt or disbanded.’¹⁴⁷ Then what happened that caused *Legio IX Hispana* to be permanently disbanded?

Other examples of legions being permanently disbanded could perhaps provide information to the circumstances of this happening to a legion. From the beginning of the Roman Empire until c. 200 there are twelve legions that were disbanded, including *Legio IX Hispana*.¹⁴⁸ One of these was *I Macriana Liberatrix*, which only existed for a very short period to aid in the rebellion against the emperor Nero prior to the Year of the Four Emperors in 69. It was disbanded by Galba, reinstated by Vitellius and finally disbanded permanently by the emperor Vespasian.¹⁴⁹ Disbandment of a legion after it had been fighting on the wrong side of a conflict between two Roman sides does happen more often, especially related to the events of the Year of the Four Emperors and the Batavian Revolt that followed it. The legions *I Germanica*, *IV Macedonica*, *V Alaudae*, *XV Primigenia* and *XVI Gallica* were all forced to surrender and were disbanded. Once Vespasian was emperor and the Batavian Revolt was put down, he renamed *XVI Gallica* and *IV Macedonica* who were stationed in Mainz to *XVI Flavia Firma* and *IV Flavia Felix*, presumably to let them start again with a clean slate and diminish the memory of its demise. *I Germania* was merged with the former Seventh Legion that was under command of Galba to become *VII Gemina*.¹⁵⁰ The other two legions, *V Alaudae* and *XV Primigenia* were never reinstated.¹⁵¹ Disbandment due to rebellious actions against fellow Romans was something that did occur in the Roman Empire, but apart from these instances related to the Year of the Four Emperors it does not seem to have happened. This also makes Elliott’s theory of the Ninth Legion being disbanded due to a war with other Romans in London highly improbable.¹⁵² Even though a significant amount of the disbanded legions was disbanded due to this reason, it is very unlikely that this is applicable to *Legio IX Hispana* as all these disbandments were related to the same events.

However, there are also examples of legions being permanently retired after being defeated in war. In the year 9 three legions under the command of Publius Quinctilius Varus, the governor of *Germania* at that time, were annihilated by Arminius in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and were never reinstated. The numerals XVII, XVIII and XIX were also never used again for different legions.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Tacitus, *Annales* 14.32, 38; Keppie, ‘*Legio VIII* in Britain: the beginning and the end’ 85; Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 66-67.

¹⁴⁷ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 116.

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem 94.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem 15.

¹⁵⁰ *Gemina* is used to describe a ‘twin legion’, a legion that was made up of two former legions merged into one, as mentioned by Southern, *The Roman Army. A Social and Institutional History* 98.

¹⁵¹ See for more information on the lifespan and disbandment of these legions in: Yann le Bohec & Catherine Wolff, *Les Légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire: Actes du Congrès de Lyon* (Paris 2000); or on Livius.org.

¹⁵² Elliot, *Roman Britain’s Missing Legion: What really happened to IX Hispana?*, see chapter 4.

¹⁵³ Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* 98.

The standards of the legions were only recovered years later. Even though this is an example of disbandment after destruction, it is important to note that this destruction is the only one on this scale that occurred during the first centuries of the Roman Empire. Therefore it seems logical to assume that this loss made a significant impact, which is reflected in the disbandment of the legions. Whether the retirement of its numerals was as a form of damnation or praise is unknown, but it does seem to have been some sort of statement in a situation of defeat that had no equal.

Then there are three disbanded legions left, one of which is *Legio IX Hispana*. The endings of the other two legions are both also more mysterious than the ones discussed above. Firstly there is *Legio XXI Rapax* which could have been a subject of both disbandment through destruction and through rebellion. It had been on the wrong side of civil war twice in its history when it sided with Vitellius during the Year of the Four Emperors and later with Lucius Antonius Saturninus when he rebelled against the emperor Domitian in 89. Following this, the legion was transferred from *Germania* to *Pannonia*. Several theories are put forward regarding its disbandment; most often it is assumed that it was destroyed by a tribe on the frontier of *Pannonia* in 92, but it has also been argued that this is too early, based on evidence of its existence after this date, and that it was destroyed in the Dacian Wars ten years later.¹⁵⁴ In addition, it might have been a subject of *damnatio memoriae* because of the two rebellions which would suggest a combination of disbandment through both destruction and rebellion.¹⁵⁵ The last legion that was disbanded is the only one that can rival the mystery of the Ninth Legion: *Legio XXII Deiotariana*. The Twenty-Second Legion had been at Nicopolis in Egypt, near Alexandria, when it was last attested in 119. This legion is normally assumed to have been the one that was destroyed in the Bar Kokhba Revolt of 132-136, but, just as for *Legio IX Hispana*, there is no evidence for this. Mor mentions a possibility of the twenty-second being destroyed in riots in Alexandria, but regards this as just as unlikely.¹⁵⁶

This means that all Roman legions that were disbanded could be classified in three categories: disbanded after destruction, disbanded after rebellion or unknown disbandment. The first two categories can then technically be reduced to two events: the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest and rebellion related to the Year of the Four Emperors. Even though more is known about *Legio XXI Rapax*, it can be classified together with *Legio XXII Deiotariana* and *Legio IX Hispana*. However, the stories of these three legions are too distinct to make any kind of comparisons. The only important takeaways from this are that this means that *Legio IX Hispana* has to be seen as its own independent issue and that when

¹⁵⁴ G. L. Cheesman, 'The Date of the Disappearance of Legio XXI. Rapax', *The Classical Review* 23:5 (1909) 155; L. Rossi, 'Legio XXI Rapax... atque Infidelis?', in: *Les Légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire: Actes du Congrès de Lyon* eds. Y. le Bohec & C. Wolff (Paris 2000) 491-498.

¹⁵⁵ Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* 117-118.

¹⁵⁶ Mor, 'Two Legions: The Same Fate? (The Disappearance of the Legions IX Hispana and XXII Deiotariana)' 269-278.

deciding on its fate it should be remembered that disbandment is always a conscious political decision, and, apart from one situation, almost never as a result of a heavy defeat.

People: Asclepiades, Numisius and Florentinus

Ancient literature cannot provide information on the whereabouts of *Legio IX Hispana* after its time in Nijmegen and no clear archaeological sources created by the Ninth Legion in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire have been found (yet). The only sources that could provide a link with a possible end in the east are connected to three individuals who once served in the Ninth Legion.

The first inscription is a funerary inscription for one Aelius Asclepiades.¹⁵⁷ It describes that he was from Cilicia, a province in Asia Minor, that he was 42 years old when he died, and that he served for eight years in the Ninth Legion. Based on his *nomen* Aelius, it has been supposed that he was granted citizenship by the emperor Hadrian, as his freedmen would receive this name. If this was the case, it would mean that *Legio IX Hispana* did not disappear until at least 125, because Hadrian's reign began in 117 and Asclepiades served for eight years. However, Hadrian's freedmen would also receive his *praenomen* Publius which is missing from this inscription.¹⁵⁸ This, together with the fact that the inscription has been lost for a long time which means there is no way of analysing the features of the inscription, makes it very difficult to date it. Therefore it is also too unreliable in providing information on the whereabouts of the Ninth Legion. Based on the location where this inscription was discovered, in Naples, it is also suspected that Asclepiades had been a member of the *Classis Misensis*, the fleet of Misenum, that had its harbour in the Bay of Naples. Different members of the fleet were transferred to legions around 133, which was most probably related to the Bar Kokhba Revolt.¹⁵⁹ This could also have been the case for Asclepiades transferring to the Ninth Legion. This was then used as a reason for the Ninth Legion to have been active in the eastern parts of the empire.¹⁶⁰ However, there is no convincing argument for this, as Keppie also concluded earlier, and in combination with the improbable theory of Asclepiades having been a freedman of Hadrian it seems wise to not overanalyse this inscription.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, because dating of the inscription based on its stylistic features is impossible due to it being lost, this inscription could very well have been from a much earlier time, especially when considering that the legion's nickname *Hispana* is not mentioned.

The second individual that will be discussed is the one who could possibly stretch the lifespan of *Legio IX Hispana* the longest. Quintus Camurius Numisius Iunior is mentioned on three inscriptions

¹⁵⁷ CIL X, 1769: *D(is) M(anibus) / Aelius Asc/lepiades nati(one) / [C]il(ix) mil(es) leg(ionis) IX / vix(it) ann(os) XXXXII / mil(itavit) ann(os) VIII / Aelia Seleria / b(ene) m(erentibus) f(ecit)*.

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence Keppie, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion: a problem for the Eastern provinces?', in: *Legions and Veterans: Roman Army Papers 1971-2000* (Stuttgart 2000) 173-181, there 177; Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 114-115.

¹⁵⁹ See examples in Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth* 130, n. 288.

¹⁶⁰ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 222, n. 27; Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 114.

¹⁶¹ Keppie, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion: a problem for the Eastern provinces?' 177.

found in Attidium, a small Roman town in the middle of the Italian Peninsula between contemporary Perugia and Ancona.¹⁶² One of these inscriptions features a reference to his tribunate in the Ninth Legion. This was no case of particular interest at first, but when in 1972 Werner Eck discussed a newly found military diploma from February 161 it became clear that Numisius Iunior had been consul in that year. This would place his tribunate in *Legio IX Hispana* to around 140, or at least after the Bar Kokhba Revolt.¹⁶³ First of all, this suggests a much longer lifespan of the Ninth Legion than around 125 which was previously established, but it also changed the theory of the legion's transfer to the east from a possibility into the favoured option in scholarly debates.¹⁶⁴ Arguing against this however, Keppie introduced his 'solution' by suggesting that Numisius the consul was in fact the son of the tribune of the Ninth Legion. This would make it possible that he served his time in the Ninth even before 120. He based this on the notion of a son being mentioned on the last surviving line of the inscription: et [Iu]nior pa[tri]. Moreover, not many individuals were known from the small town of Attidium where Numisius most probably would have hailed from. On those grounds, one Gaius Camurius Clemens is said to have been the father of Numisius and he was of equestrian origin.¹⁶⁵ Keppie added to this that it is unlikely that the son of an equestrian family would be able to rise to consulship in the first generation.¹⁶⁶ Even though this theory is possible, it has been as a stretch as identifying the consul to be the same person as the tribune of *Legio IX Hispana* would be much simpler.¹⁶⁷ Even Hodgson, apart of stressing the 'element of uncertainty', seems to favour the reconstruction of Numisius Iunior being one and the same person.¹⁶⁸

The last individual to be discussed is Lucius Aninius Sextius Florentinus, who reached his highest office as governor of Arabia and was *legatus legionis* of *Legio IX Hispana* two offices before that.¹⁶⁹ Florentinus is mostly known from his gigantic tomb in Petra, where the inscription was also found. From a papyrus found in the Cave of Letters, situated in modern-day Israel and the West Bank, the governors of Arabia and their time in office are transmitted. This leads to a dating of Florentinus'

¹⁶² CIL XI, 5670: [Q(uinto) C]amur[io - f(ilio) Lem(onia)] / Numisio Iu[niori] / IIIvir(o) a(ere) a(rgento) a(uro) f(lando) f(eriundo), tr[ib(uno) mil(itum)] / leg(ionis) VIII Hi[spanae] / sodali Titiali [Flaviali] / qua[e]st(ori) urb(ano), ae[d(ili) cur(uli)] / pr(aetori), [le]g(ato) Aug(usti) leg(ionis) ---] / et [leg(ionis)] VI Victr(icis) [---] / et [Iu]nior pa[---]. See also: CIL XI 5671, 5672.

¹⁶³ Eck, 'Zum Ende der Legio IX Hispana'.

¹⁶⁴ See for example: Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 254-256; Mor, 'Two Legions: The Same Fate? (The Disappearance of the Legions IX Hispana and XXII Deiotariana)' 267-269; Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth* 134-137.

¹⁶⁵ CIL XI, 5669.

¹⁶⁶ Keppie, 'The fate of the Ninth Legion: a problem for the Eastern provinces?' 177-178.

¹⁶⁷ See especially: Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth* 134-137; but also, Birley, *The Roman Government of Britain* 256.

¹⁶⁸ Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall' 114.

¹⁶⁹ CIL III, 87: L(ucio) Aninio L(uci) f(ilio) Pap(iria) Sextio Florentino IIIviro aur(o) arg(ento) flando trib(uno) milit(um) leg(ionis) I Minerviae quaest(ori) prov(inciae) Achaiae trib(uno) pleb(is) leg(ato) leg(ionis) VIII Hisp(anae) proco(n)sul(i) / pr[ov(inciae)] Narb(onensis) leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) prov(inciae) Arab(iae) patri piis[sim]o ex testamento ipsius.

time as governor somewhere between 126 and 130.¹⁷⁰ Based on this it is estimated that his command of *Legio IX Hispana* could not have ended later than 124, and can be firmly dated to the first years of emperor Hadrian's reign, most probably between circa 121 and 124.¹⁷¹ Even though his tomb is found in Arabia and he served his last post as governor there, there is no connection with the Ninth Legion also having been in this part of the Roman Empire. Even if Florentinus would have made a transfer from the Ninth Legion to Arabia because of its close location to where the Ninth might have been stationed in the east, there was another term as proconsul of Gallia Narbonensis in between, which nullifies this suggestion. The only information this inscription provides, is that it gives more credibility to *Legio IX* was still being in existence until the middle of the 120s.

This is the only real conclusion that can be made based on the sources treated in this chapter. Even though the destruction of a legion at Elegeia in 161 would be the perfect solution to the mystery of the disappearance of *Legio IX Hispana*, there is just no evidence for this whatsoever. Even if the inscription of Numisius Iunior actually proves the legion's existence until around 140, there is still no information on its whereabouts at this time and no clear connection with a possible participation and destruction in the Roman-Parthian War of 161-166. Therefore, in my opinion, a transfer of *Legio IX Hispana* to the eastern parts of the Roman Empire somewhere after leaving *Britannia* and most probably *Germania Inferior*, has to be dismissed; at least until actual evidence of this appears.

Conclusion

In this research I have not necessarily tried to find an answer or a solution to the 'disappearance' of *Legio IX Hispana*, but to show how this disappearance can be explained. Almost no new sources have been found after the last study on the Ninth Legion had been published, so only new interpretations could be made instead of breakthroughs based on new evidence. The attempt to explain the disappearance of the legion was carried out by analysing the three possible situations of disbandment or destruction. This will be summarised in this conclusion shortly, after which I will add my conclusions and opinion on what seems to have been the most probable ending of *Legio IX Hispana*.

The oldest theory regarding the mystery of the Ninth Legion was that it was defeated during an uprising of northern peoples in *Britannia*. This destruction would have taken place somewhere in the early years of the reign of Hadrian; i.e. 117-120. This reconstruction is highly unlikely, as there are several sources showing the existence of the Ninth Legion far beyond these years. The most convincing sources are the honorary inscriptions of three military tribunes that show with some certainty that the legion was still operating until at least 125. The tile-stamps of *Legio IX (VIII) Hispana* found in the vicinity of Carlisle that suggest the legion's presence near Hadrian's Wall, the construction of which started only in 122, strengthen this theory. Because of the relatively small amount of evidence of the

¹⁷⁰ *HGV*, 23496.

¹⁷¹ Birley, *The Fasti of Roman Britain* 237-239.

Ninth Legion near the Wall, a short stay here is presumed. After this, the legion disappears from the records of *Britannia*, which could be explained by either a destruction, or a transfer. As a destruction is more likely earlier than later, in my opinion a transfer is most likely.

This transfer would then have been made to Nijmegen in *Germania Inferior* with *Legio VI Victrix* making the opposite move. In Nijmegen, a small amount of sources have been found which would suggest the presence of the legion. It is suspected that only part of *Legio IX Hispana* took up residency in Nijmegen as part of a detachment, the *vexillatio Britannica*. This vexillation was undoubtedly in Nijmegen, and perhaps members of the Ninth were part of it, but sources found in Nijmegen and deeper into *Germania* referring to the Ninth Legion suggest that the entire legion must have been present at one point. Around 104, when *Legio X Gemina* left Nijmegen, the *vexillatio Britannica*, including members of the Ninth Legion, occupies the *castrum*. After having been at York until at least 108 and probably longer, the bulk of the Ninth moves to Carlisle where it starts or continues building the *castrum Uxelodunum*. Around 121 or 122, the reverse transfer with the Sixth Legion is made and *Legio IX Hispana* reunites with their legionaries that were part of the *vexillatio Britannica*.

When it is established that the Ninth Legion was in Nijmegen around this time, it becomes difficult to find a suitable situation of destruction or disbandment of the legion elsewhere in the Roman Empire. To provide this, a transfer to the east of the empire was suggested where it would have perished in either the Bar Kokhba Revolt of 132-136 or the Roman-Parthian War of 161-166. This first option is quickly dismissed, but also the second option – even though it is the only one that specifically mentions a destroyed legion – seems very far-fetched. There is no evidence whatsoever to suggest *Legio IX Hispana* was once in the east. Therefore its disbandment, whether it was done after a defeat or not, has had to have happened somewhere else.

The popularity of *Legio IX Hispana* and its story in Britain that was talked about in the introduction of this work is something that has been present throughout the historiography of the legion. Due to this, the legion's demise was kept in *Britannia* for too long; knowingly or unknowingly. This was followed by a period of acceptance where the legion was forced by new evidence to be placed outside of Britain, which led to a period of status quo with little new insights because the British had less interest in the lost legion now that they themselves seemed to have lost it. Now, in the last decade, British historians are delving into the mystery once again, remarkably coming up with conflicting conclusions.¹⁷² These only indicate even more what is often said in conclusions on *Legio IX Hispana*: there is not enough information (yet), to provide a convincing reconstruction of events.

¹⁷² Campbell, *The Fate of the Ninth*, who in 2018 carefully decides on the legion's perishing in the east; Hodgson, 'The End of the Ninth Legion, War in Britain and the Building of Hadrian's Wall', who in 2021 advocated that the original reconstruction of defeat in northern Britain is the best solution.

Thus, I will provide an unproven, but in my opinion most likely reconstruction: whether it was just before or during the building of Hadrian's Wall, the Ninth Legion was involved and severely injured by attacks from north of the Wall. It is known that fighting happened there during the first years of Hadrian's reign – his Wall being a testimony to this – and the Ninth must have suffered from these attacks. However, the legion cannot have been disbanded here as a result of this because it was established that the Ninth existed until at least 125. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter three, destruction outright leading to disbandment was something that did not occur apart from one exception. Disbandment was always a conscious administrative decision. Hence, it makes sense to assume that the legion was either too weak and could not have been supplemented, was involved in some kind of rebellious activity or was not necessarily needed anymore in a region that experienced a time of peace. Therefore, in my opinion, it seems most logical that *Legio IX Hispana* was disbanded after a combination of the first and last situations. The legion was weakened in *Britannia* and was therefore swapped with the stronger *Legio VI Victrix*. After arrival in peaceful *Germania Inferior* with only a small fraction of remaining troops, it was decided that it was not necessary to restore *Legio IX Hispana* after which it was disbanded. However, I cannot stress enough that this is an unproven reconstruction of events, which seems most probable to me. The most important conclusion of this research is that for almost forty years no new evidence has come to light that could solve the mystery of the disappearance of *Legio IX Hispana*. Thus it seems fitting to conclude with the same remark that was issued in 1987: 'further evidence is needed before more can be said'.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London 1987) 137-140.

Appendix

Showing the distribution of 'VIII' and 'IX' inscriptions between the provinces of Germania (Inferior) and Britannia.

Appendix A, Inscriptions related to the Ninth Legion found in Germania written as 'VIII'.

VIII <i>Germania</i>	Inscription	Description	Location	Publication
1.	LEG VIII	Fragment of tile-stamp	Nijmegen	Bogaers, 1967; <i>AE</i> 1977, 541.
2.	III HI	Fragment of tile-stamp	Nijmegen	Bogaers, 1967.
3.	G VIII HIS	Edge of grinding bowl	Groesbeek	Bogaers 1967.
4.	LEG VIII HISP	Inscription Lucius Latinius Macer	Aachen	<i>AE</i> 1968, 323
5.	G VIII HI	Inscription unknown <i>eques</i>	Mersch	<i>CIL</i> XIII, 4030
6.	VIII	???? (<i>tituli possessionis</i>)	Forum Hadriani	<i>CIL</i> XIII, 10003, 127.

Appendix B, Inscriptions related to the Ninth Legion found in Britannia written as 'VIII'.

VIII <i>Britannia</i>	Inscription	Description	Location	Publication
1.	VIII	Tile-stamp Hadrian's Wall (probably <i>cohortis</i>)	Corbridge	<i>RIB</i> 1197.
2.	VIII	Building inscription Hadrian's Wall (probably reference to milecastle)	Chapel House	<i>RIB</i> 1371.
3.	G VIII	Tile-stamp Hadrian's Wall	Carlisle (not Corbridge)	<i>AE</i> 1995, 1010; Bishop 1995.
4.	LEG VI	Tile-stamp	Carlisle	<i>RIB</i> 2462.16.i
5.	LEG VI	Tile-stamp	Carlisle	<i>RIB</i> 2462.16.ii
6.	LEG V	Tile-stamp	Carlisle	<i>RIB</i> 2462.3.i
7.	LEG VIII H	Tile-stamp	Carlisle	<i>RIB</i> 2462.4.ii
8.	LEG V	Tile-stamp	Scalesceugh	<i>RIB</i> 2462.2.i
9.	LEG VIII H	Tile-stamp	Scalesceugh	<i>RIB</i> 2462.4.i
10.	LEG VIII H	Tile-stamp	Stanwix	<i>RIB</i> 2462.4.ii
11.	LEG VIII HIS	Inscription on altar to Silvanus by Lucius Celerinius Vitalis	York	<i>RIB</i> 659; <i>AE</i> 2017, 896.
12.	LEG VIII	Inscription on gravestone of Lucius Duccius Rufinus	York	<i>RIB</i> 673; <i>CIL</i> VII, 243.
13.	LEG VIII HI	Building inscription (108)	York	<i>RIB</i> 665; <i>CIL</i> VII, 241.
14.	LEG VIII	Inscription on gravestone Quintus Cornelius	Lincoln	<i>RIB</i> 254; <i>AE</i> 1951, 129.

15.	LEG V	Inscription on gravestone Marcus?	Lincoln	<i>RIB</i> 260; <i>CIL</i> VII, 188.
16.	LEG VIII	Inscription on gravestone Lucius Sempronius Flavinus	Lincoln	<i>RIB</i> 256; <i>CIL</i> VII, 184.
17.	L VIII (?)	Problematic tile-stamp	Leicester	<i>RIB</i> 2462.i.
18.	EG VIII	Fragmentary dedication, altar?	Hayling Island	<i>RIB</i> 3042.
19.	L V	Altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus	Dorchester	<i>RIB</i> 3047.

Appendix C, Inscriptions related to the Ninth Legion found in Germania Inferior written as 'IX'.

IX <i>Germania</i>	Inscription	Description	Location	Publication
1.	LEG HISP IX	Horse harness pendant	Ewijk	<i>AE</i> 1996, 1107; Sijpesteijn, 1997.

Appendix D, Inscriptions related to the Ninth Legion found in Britannia written as 'IX'.

IX <i>Britannia</i>	Inscription	Description	Location	Publication
1.-4.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.5.
5.-7.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.6.
8.-15.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.7.
16.-17.	HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.8.
18.-47.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9.
48.-50.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9A.
51.-52.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9B.
53.-56.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9C.
57.	ISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.10.
58.-61.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.11.
62.-91.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.12.
92.	HISP	Tile-stamps	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.13.
✕	?	<i>Falsum</i> . Not a real Roman inscription	York	<i>RIB</i> 2462.17.
93.	X HISP	Tile-stamp (25 km North-East from York)	Malton	<i>RIB</i> 2462.14.
94.-95.	LE	Tile-stamp (25 km North-East from York)	Malton	<i>RIB</i> 2462.15.
96.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (25 km North-West of York)	Aldbrough	<i>RIB</i> 2462.7.i.
97.-98.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (25 km North-West of York)	Aldbrough	<i>RIB</i> 2462.12.

99.-104.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (30 km South-West of York)	Castleford	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9.
105.	LEG IX HIS	Tile-stamp (30 km South-West of York)	Castleford	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9B.i.
106.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (most probably produced in York)	Old Winteringham	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9A.i.
107.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (most probably produced in York)	Huddersfield	<i>RIB</i> 2462.9C.i.
108.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (most probably produced in York)	Templebrough	<i>RIB</i> 2462.12.iv.
109.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (produced in York)	Lincoln (York)	<i>RIB</i> 2462.8.ii.
110.	LEG IX HISP	Tile-stamp (most probably produced in York)	Hilly Wood	<i>RIB</i> 2462.12.iii.
111.	X HISP	Tombstone of Gaius	York	<i>RIB</i> 680.

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