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# The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall

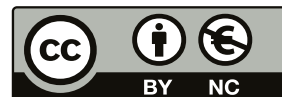
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ISBN: 978-1-908332-00-4 (hardback) • 978-1-908332-24-0 (PDF)

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Keppie, L 2012 *The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall*. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. <https://doi.org/10.9750/9781908332240>

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# Chapter 1

## Introducing the Antonine Wall

This monograph aims to provide a history of the Antonine Wall from the moment the Roman army abandoned it in the later 2nd century AD down to the early years of the 20th century, and to chart developments in our knowledge about it. The cut-off date is 1911, the year in which Dr (later Sir) George Macdonald published the first edition of his magisterial *Roman Wall in Scotland*, which summarised knowledge of the frontier to that date.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of the following pages is the barrier of stone and turf constructed by the Roman army across the narrow waist of Scotland (illus 1, 12), from Bo'ness (Borrowstounness) on the Forth to Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde, a distance of 60km (37 miles). It takes its familiar modern name from the emperor Antoninus Pius, in the opening years of whose reign (AD 138–61) it was constructed.<sup>2</sup>

For the greater part of its length the Wall consisted of a stack of neatly laid turves to an estimated height of some 3m (10 feet), set on a single course of stonework at least 4.3m (14 feet) wide (illus 2–3). At intervals the latter was crossed by stone-capped culverts, to assist drainage. Eastwards from Watling Lodge (Falkirk), the superstructure consisted of earth revetted by clay or turf cheeks.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not there was a breastwork on top, or indeed a duckboard walk for patrols, remains quite uncertain. In front, on the north side of the Wall itself, was a broad Ditch (illus 4–5), up to 12m (40 feet) wide and 3.5m (12 feet) deep, which was cut into the natural sand, gravel, clay or even, on occasion, the living rock. The lips of this ditch were sometimes marked by large stones set at regular intervals.<sup>4</sup> Material dug out of the Ditch was thrown up on its northern side, to create an upcast mound, serving to increase the depth of the Ditch.<sup>5</sup> The flat berm between Wall and Ditch was between 6 and 9m (20 and 30 feet) wide; in places it was provided with regularly set sequences of subrectangular pits, some of them probably containing sharpened, upright wooden stakes, in the manner observed long ago north of the fort at Rough Castle (see illus 93, 99).<sup>6</sup> Behind the Wall ran an east–west road which we now term the

Military Way (illus 6); a branch road split off from it to pass through the Wall heading northwards to Camelon and the forts lying beyond.

Attached to the Wall were a series of forts of which 17 are known and another two proposed. Regiments of Roman auxiliaries, or, in the smaller forts, part-units, were stationed in them. Sometimes detachments of legionaries, outstationed from their permanent fortresses at Chester, York and Caerleon in South Wales, were placed as garrisons, either by themselves or in conjunction with auxiliaries.<sup>7</sup> In addition there were a number, perhaps a regular series, of fortlets attached to the Wall, closely matching in size and spacing the milecastles on the recently completed Hadrian's Wall, and a few minor structures, some equivalent in size though not demonstrably in purpose to the turrets on Hadrian's Wall.<sup>8</sup>

Many forts had fortified annexes, and at Carriden there is testimony to the formal existence of a *vicus*, a civilian community (illus 7),<sup>9</sup> which is likely at some of the other forts too. Field systems and cultivation plots have been revealed by aerial photography at Carriden,<sup>10</sup> by excavation at Westerwood, Croy Hill and Auchendavy,<sup>11</sup> and through fieldwork at Rough Castle.<sup>12</sup>

The Antonine Wall's construction was commemorated on-site by inscribed 'distance slabs' which detailed the contributions made to building it by detachments of the three legions of Britain's Roman garrison, II *Augusta*, VI *Victrix* and XX *Valeria Victrix* (illus 8–9; see also illus 28, 54, 59). So far as we can determine, care was taken to divide up the work equally among the three legions. Remarkably, nearly 20 distance slabs survive out of the 40 or 50 that may once have been erected.<sup>13</sup> Some 20 temporary camps have been identified through aerial survey from the 1940s onwards, adjacent to, and mostly lying behind, the Wall; their distribution suggests most are linked to the building sectors indicated by the distance slabs.<sup>14</sup>

A 4th-century AD biography of Antoninus Pius records Roman successes in Britain at this time, in a single sentence. 'He [the emperor Antoninus]

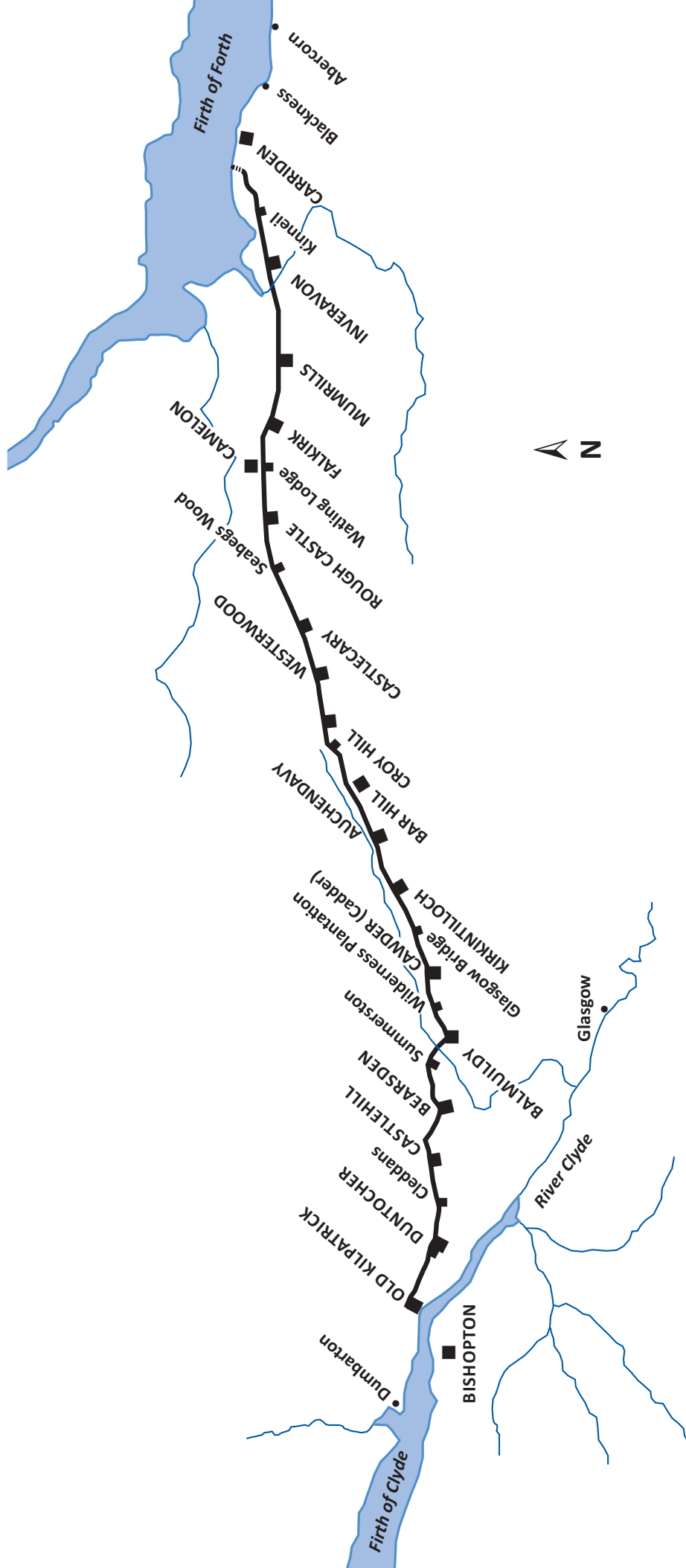
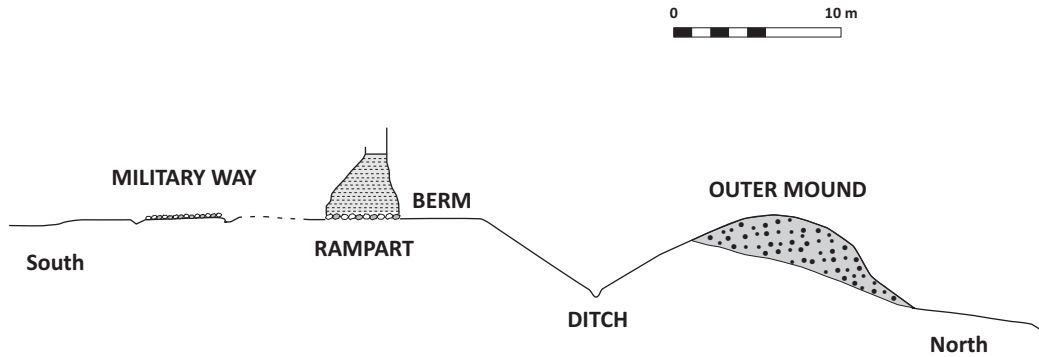


Illustration 1

The Antonine Wall: forts and fortlets (drawn by L. Keppie).

## INTRODUCING THE ANTONINE WALL



*Illustration 2*

The Antonine Wall: section through the military way, rampart, ditch and upcast mound (drawn by L Keppie).

registered a victory over the Britons through Lollius Urbicus his legate, having built another wall, this time of turf, after pushing back the barbarians.<sup>15</sup> We know that Antoninus had taken a salutation as *imperator* (victorious commander), probably to commemorate successes in Britain, by 1 August AD 142.<sup>16</sup> Two

inscriptions from Balmuildy fort on the Wall record building work under Lollius Urbicus, known to have been governor of the province in 139–42,<sup>17</sup> and coins issued at Rome in 142–4 celebrate unlocalised military victory in Britain (illus 10–11); there is no specific reference to the building of a wall.<sup>18</sup>



*Illustration 3*

Section through the Wall at Tentfield Plantation east of Rough Castle, looking north, showing the stone base and the turf superstructure; vertical scale in feet (© Crown copyright. Reproduced by courtesy of Historic Scotland).

THE ANTIQUARIAN REDISCOVERY OF THE ANTONINE WALL



*Illustration 4*  
The Antonine Wall and Ditch in Seabegs Wood, looking west (© L Keppie).



*Illustration 5*  
The Ditch at Watling Lodge, Falkirk, looking west, with the former stable block silhouetted in the Ditch-hollow (© L Keppie).

## INTRODUCING THE ANTONINE WALL



Illustration 6

The Military Way in Seabegs Wood, looking west (© L Keppie).

Modern research has suggested that the forts were built in two phases, the first in AD 142–43 involving just six widely spaced forts, at intervals similar to those on Hadrian's Wall, and the second phase somewhat later, which saw the number of forts tripled, presumably to provide much closer surveillance along its line.<sup>19</sup> Forts were also built in Antoninus' reign throughout much of Southern Scotland and north of the Wall at least as far as Perth, linked by a network of roads. The occupation was essentially military; no towns were established, and we lack any evidence of formal settlement by colonists from Southern Britain, or from farther afield.<sup>20</sup> Inscribed altars and gravestones, and a wealth of small finds and pottery, unearthed especially as a result of organised excavation from the 1890s onwards, bring before us the lifestyle of the garrisons on this remote northern frontier, very far from Rome.

How long the Antonine Wall served as the northern frontier of Roman Britain is not altogether clear, but at many forts there was only a single phase of occupation, and no inscriptions found along its line refer to any emperor later than Antoninus himself

who died in AD 161.<sup>21</sup> Modern opinion prefers to see it abandoned *c* 163, early in the reign of Antoninus' successor, Marcus Aurelius, when the Roman army withdrew to the southern side of the Cheviots.

In AD 208 strong Roman forces, led personally by the emperor Septimius Severus, invaded Scotland from the south and penetrated at least as far as Aberdeenshire. A small number of permanent military installations were constructed and briefly



Illustration 7

Altar to Jupiter dedicated by the villagers (*vikani*) residing at *castellum Veluniate*, Carriden (© National Museums Scotland).

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held, but there is no real evidence that the Antonine Wall or any forts along its line were brought back into use. Severus and his army were soon gone, and the Roman army subsequently settled to the defence of Hadrian's Wall which henceforward was to form the main barrier between that part of the island of Britain which was within the Roman Empire and that part which lay beyond, the latter loosely described by Roman writers as Caledonia.<sup>22</sup> However, Roman artefacts continued to circulate in Scotland, within and beyond the one-time Roman province, and occasional forays by emperors or their legates may subsequently have brought Roman troops once more into the north of Britain.<sup>23</sup>

The contemporary Iron Age population in Central Scotland is harder to document,<sup>24</sup> though we are aware of settlement types which included timber round-houses, souterrains, crannogs and brochs. The environs of Camelon were the site of a sizeable Iron Age community, whose timber roundhouses have been revealed north of, and partly underlying, the north annexe of the Antonine fort there;<sup>25</sup> a fortified native site just to the north, protected by a palisade and multiple ditches, was in use during or between the Roman occupations of the adjacent fort.<sup>26</sup> Crannogs in the Clyde would have been visible from the terminal fort at Old Kilpatrick, and from Roman ships in the estuary.<sup>27</sup> The tribal territory of the Damnonii, believed to have occupied Central Scotland and Stirlingshire at this time, may have been cut in two by the new barrier, which followed a strictly geographical course between Forth and Clyde.

### **The value of the antiquarian record**

We know a lot about the Wall, but our knowledge is not complete and presumably never will be. It is easy

to suppose that the only way of learning more is to undertake further work, whether by excavation or aerial survey, to which can now be added employment of geophysical and other scientific techniques.<sup>28</sup>



*Illustration 8*

Ceremony of purification preceding the campaigns of Lollius Urbicus, as depicted on the right-hand side-panel of the distance slab from Bridgeness, Falkirk (© National Museums Scotland).

However, in any effort to enhance our knowledge of the monument, attention should also be paid to antiquarian reports and descriptions which survive in greater quantity than is often supposed. The ignorance and misunderstandings of these antiquaries are more often highlighted than their invaluable observations on installations which may have disappeared completely,

or been much degraded, since they wrote.<sup>29</sup> Where antiquarian reports have been deployed at all in recent times, it is regularly the few works of synthesis which are cited, rather than the treasure chest of primary sources.

By the time that Hector Boece, Principal of King's College, Aberdeen, was writing his *Scotorum Historiae* in the early years of the 16th century (see p. 28), scholars had become aware, by the rediscovery of



Illustration 9

A tall female figure, perhaps *Britannia*, presenting a laurel wreath to the eagle-standard of the Twentieth Legion held by its bearer, the central scene on a distance slab from Hutcheson Hill, west of Bearsden (© L Keppie, courtesy of The Hunterian, University of Glasgow).

manuscripts of classical authors in the monasteries of continental Europe and, later, through the invention of the printing press, of Caesar's *Gallic War*, Tacitus' *Agricola* and *Annals*, and the *Lives* of emperors in the *Historia Augusta*, including that of Antoninus attributed to 'Capitolinus', in which the Wall is briefly noticed (see p. 1). For the first time the antiquaries



Illustration 10

Coin (*sestertius*) of Antoninus Pius, obverse showing the emperor's profile, minted at Rome AD 143–4 (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow).

discovered the correct historical context of the various walls built in Britain and the place of Scotland in the history of the wider Roman Empire. However, although these literary texts reported that walls had been built in Britain under Hadrian, under Antoninus and under Severus, there long remained, as we shall



Illustration 11

Coin (*sestertius*) of Antoninus Pius (reverse of illis 10), minted at Rome AD 143–4, showing the winged goddess Victory holding a laurel wreath, with the letters *BRITAN* (© The Hunterian, University of Glasgow).



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see, considerable disagreement over where they were located.<sup>30</sup>

The construction of the Antonine Wall was assigned at different times to Agricola in the 1st century, Hadrian in the 2nd, Severus in the early 3rd, Carausius in the late 3rd, Magnus Maximus in the late 4th, and even Honorius in the early 5th (see p. 19).<sup>31</sup> Our fundamental text, a sentence in the *Historia Augusta* biography of Antoninus (see p. 1), is translated nowadays as the emperor ‘built a second wall, this time of turf’.<sup>32</sup> But many antiquaries did not interpret it this way – for them the earliest wall in Britain was the earthen and turf ‘Vallum’ between Tyne and Solway,<sup>33</sup> so that the Antonine Wall was the ‘second turf wall’ built in Britain, prior to the stone wall between Tyne and Solway, which many believed was constructed during the reign of the emperor Severus.<sup>34</sup>

The correct attribution of the Forth–Clyde barrier to Antoninus was first made by William Camden in the 1607 edition of his *Britannia*, after he had become aware of inscribed stones recovered along its line naming that emperor.<sup>35</sup> Camden’s conclusion was not universally accepted. The attribution by the historian George Buchanan in 1582 of the Antonine Wall to the emperor Severus was stubbornly maintained down to the end of the 17th century, until the discovery in 1696–8 of an inscribed stone at Balmuildy naming the governor Lollius Urbicus (see p. 59; illus 43) put the matter entirely beyond doubt.<sup>36</sup> The stone wall from Tyne to Solway was finally attributed conclusively to Hadrian in the early 19th century.<sup>37</sup> The dating of archaeological sites by coins or even by pottery and other finds has been a relatively recent development.

For the most part there was little impulse to dig, for which we should perhaps be thankful. Participation in fieldwork or excavation by university or college students was unheard of, as was any State involvement; until the early 20th century, the Wall and the installations along it lacked any legal protection (see p. 121). Much depended on the goodwill of landowners towards it, when they were even aware of its existence; often their employees continued the process of levelling the rampart and filling up the Ditch hollow in the course of agricultural ‘improvement’. Stonework from the forts and from the Wall’s stone base was a perennial source of building material. In 1743 there was effectively no way of preventing Sir Michael Bruce of Stenhouse from dismantling Arthur’s O’on north of Falkirk; contemporary antiquaries resorted to ‘naming and shaming’ the culprit (see p. 88).

Some antiquaries, puzzling to disentangle reports by Late Roman writers on the various walls built in Britain, believed that there were two lines of defence between Forth and Clyde, one following the southern flank of the River Kelvin and River Carron (ie the Antonine Wall), the other on the northern flank of the valleys in the foothills of the Kilpatrick, Campsie and Kilsyth Hills (see pp. 38, 75). Alexander Gordon in 1726 professed to have identified another barrier running south-west from the Tweed Valley to the Dumfriesshire Esk.<sup>38</sup> Following on the rediscovery of Tacitus’ biography of Agricola, the antiquaries pondered over whether he too had built a wall across the narrow waist of Scotland in the late 1st century, but soon accepted that Tacitus’ narrative implied that he had built a series of forts rather than a continuous barrier.

If there was uncertainty over the date of the visible barrier running across Scotland from Forth to Clyde, there was for even longer a debate over where it began and ended. The Wall was long supposed, on the authority of Bede (see p. 19), to have started near Abercorn on the Forth and to have extended to the vicinity of Dumbarton on the Clyde, a distance of about 70km (45 miles). In more recent times it has been established that it began at or near Bridgeness on the Forth and terminated at Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde, a distance of about 60km (37 miles).<sup>39</sup>

The antiquaries identified as Roman many sites which subsequent research has demonstrated were of prehistoric or medieval date. Similarly they were quick to claim small finds of much earlier periods, such as Bronze Age axes, rapiers and swords, as Roman, the latter being the only historical period with which they were familiar, the knowledge of prehistory being in its infancy, if recognised at all. Many of these scholars were interested indiscriminately in a wide variety of historical, scientific, ethnographic, philological and genealogical studies, of which the Roman episode in Scotland’s past was merely one element and for them by no means the most significant.

Sir Robert Sibbald, writing in 1707, emphasised the primacy of personal observation of the visible remains, in words that could have been written in almost every generation since. ‘The surest way to determine the Controversies about [the Wall], seemeth to me, to be the observing the Vestiges which yet remain of it ... I viewed some part of it my self; so I shall set down the Tract of it, and the Vestiges of it from these fore-mentioned Remarks.’<sup>40</sup> Fieldwork remains important even today in turning up pottery, coins and small finds,

clues to the location of sites hitherto unsuspected. Organised scientific excavation has been underway for more than a century, since sections across the Wall and its Ditch were cut by the Glasgow Archaeological Society in 1890–3 (see p. 123), and large-scale exploration at forts undertaken in 1899–1903 by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (see p. 127).

The early visitors did not, for the most part, travel alone, but with servants, and some had local guides. They generally progressed westwards from Edinburgh to Linlithgow, then via Falkirk, Kilsyth, Kirkintilloch and Cawder to Glasgow.<sup>41</sup> None made any use in their travels, so far as I can determine, of the canals which existed across Central Scotland from 1790, despite the similarity of route. From the 1840s they might travel by train to convenient local stations.

Those who travelled along the Wall and recorded its remains were sometimes members of the landed gentry, or ministers of the Scottish or English churches. Several university professors played leading roles during the 18th century, but none were archaeologists by training or profession. Indeed it is only at the very end of the story that any specialists come on the scene. The committee formed by the Glasgow Archaeological Society in 1891 to investigate its surviving remains (see p. 124) comprised a solicitor, an architect, a landowner who was an amateur geologist, and an estate factor, under the chairmanship of an inspector of schools. Francis Haverfield, Britain's first professional Romano-British archaeologist, who was Camden Professor of Ancient History at Oxford (1907–19), was a classicist by training; archaeology was necessarily only one of his areas of expertise (see p. 124). Sir George Macdonald, the leading authority in the early 20th century, achieved a knighthood as a senior civil servant, not as an archaeologist (see p. 133).<sup>42</sup>

Private collections of artefacts were formed, for example by Sir Robert Sibbald and the Revd Robert Wodrow (see p. 61). Some items unearthed long ago have simply disappeared. In cases where the inscribed and sculptured stones found their way to institutions, these were chiefly Glasgow University, Edinburgh University, and (later) the museum of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.<sup>43</sup> Sir John Clerk of Penicuik acquired inscribed stones and other material for display at Penicuik House near Edinburgh (see p. 69). Much later, Glasgow banker John Buchanan recovered finds made along the Wall for his own collection in Glasgow, when its University was apparently disinterested (see p. 117). We owe a great debt to them all.

The Antonine Wall would have been visible to the antiquaries as a prominent grassy mound, with the very substantial hollow of its Ditch in front. At intervals, rounded or rectangular hillocks marked the various types of installation. Such features would have been much more obvious than they are now. By the time that the story being told here draws to a close, the landscape had been disfigured and in places blackened by industry and the countryside long since changed by agricultural 'improvement'. New communities had sprung up in the wake of coal extraction and iron-smelting. Canals had been built and were in decline, and railways cut across the countryside, with their embankments, viaducts and deep cuttings. A countryside through which the Wall passed all but unhindered had given way to a landscape where it has sometimes struggled to survive.

### **The landscape of the Wall corridor**

The Wall followed the natural land corridor across Central Scotland from the Forth to the Clyde. This was not a straight line – the Wall was positioned on the southern crests of the valleys of the Rivers Carron and Kelvin, so that it enjoyed frequently extensive views northwards to the Kilsyth and Campsie Hills. The west end was overlooked by the adjacent Kilpatrick Hills and towards its east end it looked out across the carse of Falkirk towards the Firth of Forth.<sup>44</sup> The role of Camelton near Falkirk as a north–south staging post in Roman times, as well as a likely port and stores base, is demonstrated by the many temporary camps in its vicinity.<sup>45</sup> The Falkirk area has always been pivotal to communications, as reflected in battles fought hereabouts in 1298 and 1746, and in the canal, railway and road networks. The same east–west route along the valleys of the Carron and the Kelvin was followed in the later 18th century by the Forth & Clyde Canal and in the mid-19th century by the railways.

The Wall was not the earliest man-made archaeological feature in the landscape it traversed. Its Ditch cut through Mesolithic shell-middens at Inveravon above the River Forth, datable to the 7th millennium BC.<sup>46</sup> It overlay Neolithic activity at Mumrills and Bantaskin,<sup>47</sup> Bronze Age burials at Old Kilpatrick<sup>48</sup> and at Bo'ness,<sup>49</sup> passed enigmatic cup-and-ring marked stones at Cochno and Carleith,<sup>50</sup> and cut the defences of an Iron Age hillfort at Castle Hill above Twechar.<sup>51</sup> Contemporary or near contemporary habitation sites were swept away or rendered unusable.<sup>52</sup>

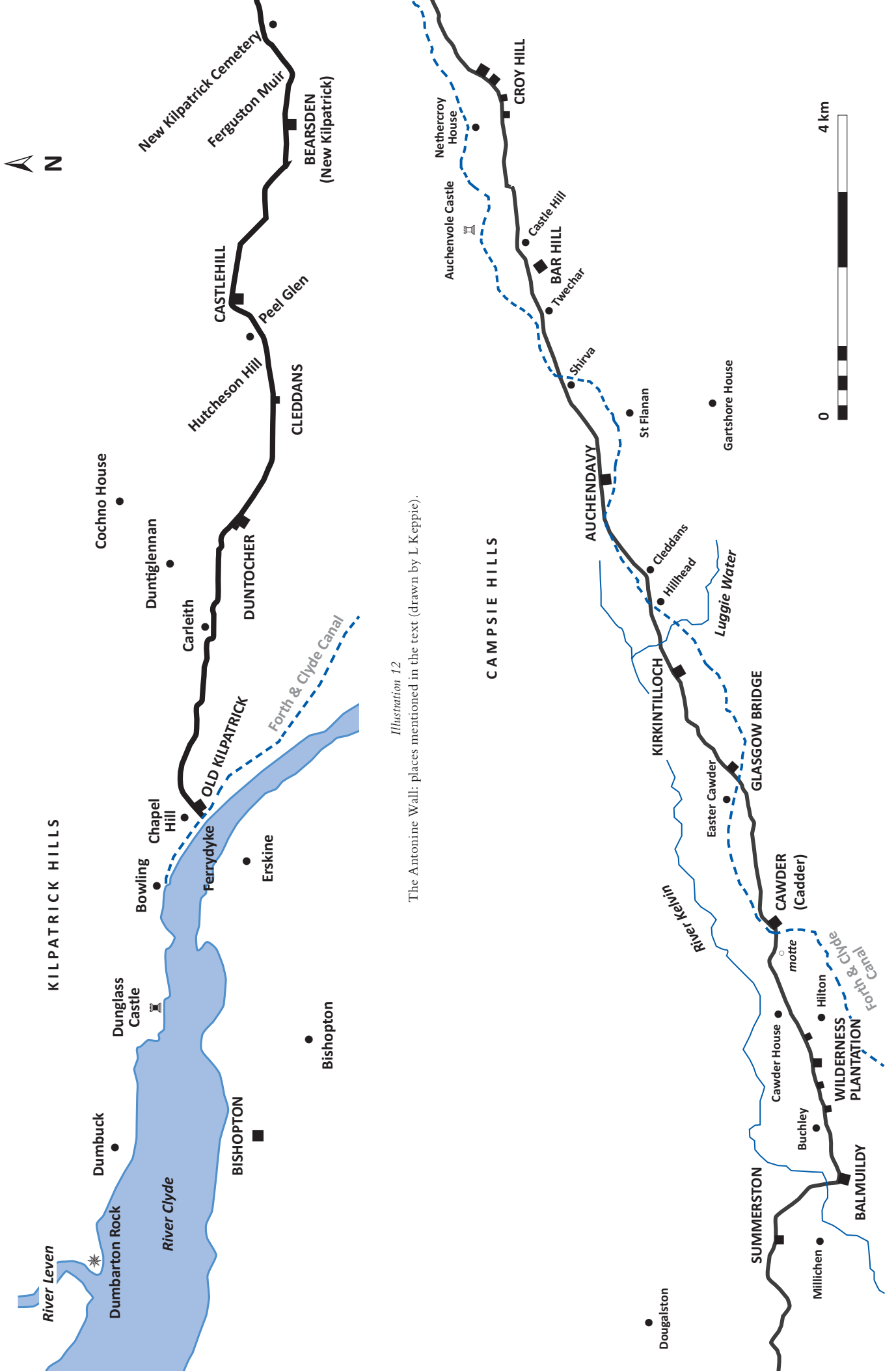


Illustration 12  
The Antonine Wall: places mentioned in the text (drawn by L. Keppie).

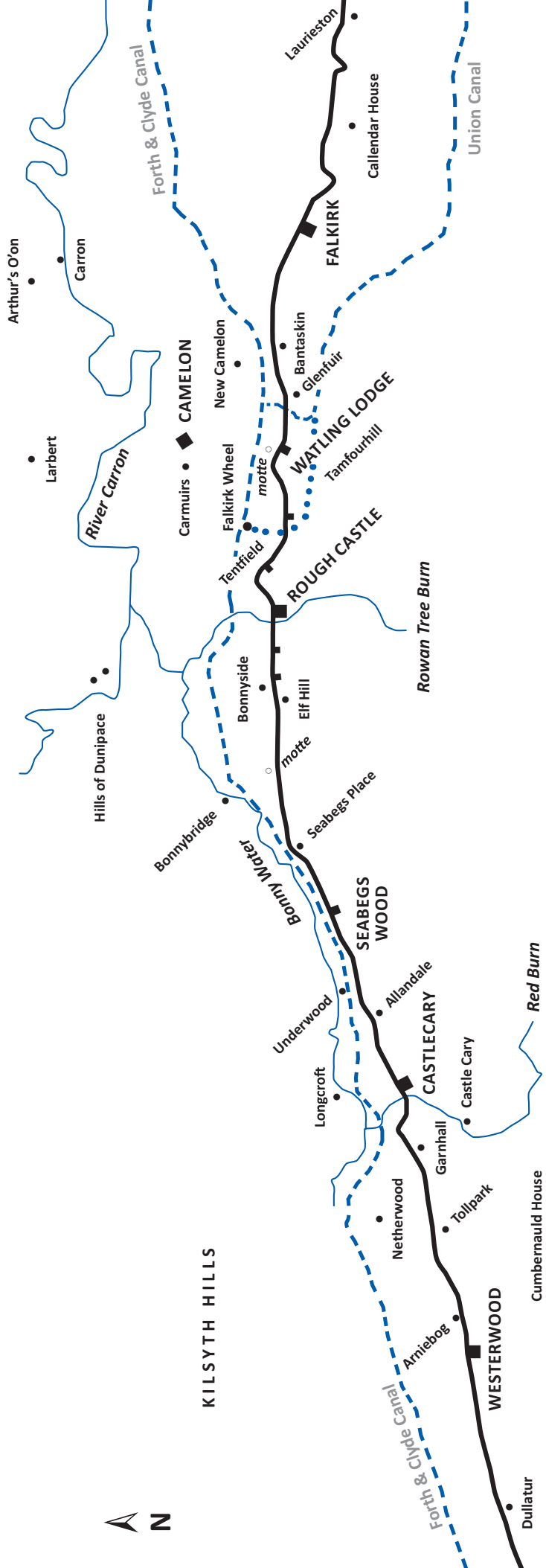
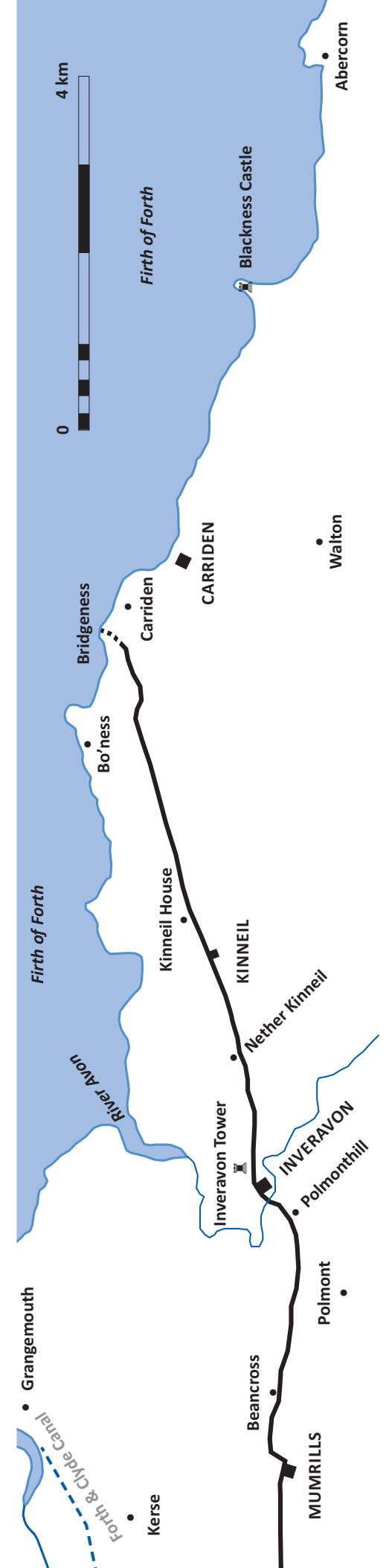


Illustration 12 (continued)  
The Antonine Wall: places mentioned in the text (drawn by L. Keppie).





The Wall in turn was to be built on in the centuries that followed.

The environment of the Wall in Roman times has been closely studied.<sup>53</sup> The countryside was then partly wooded but more often open, long since given over to crops and cultivation, and to pasturing of animals. The low-lying valley-bottoms of the Kelvin and Carron rivers may easily have been marshy and sometimes impassable in Roman times, as they continued to be until comparatively recently;<sup>54</sup> repeated reference is made by antiquaries to the Dullatur Bog below Kilsyth.

Several modern towns and villages sit astride the Wall, a few close to or even on the sites of forts, but in no case can we directly attribute their growth to the former presence of a Roman fort or of a civilian settlement outside its defences. The forts were placed at set intervals on a fixed line for purely military purposes and advantage. With a few exceptions, those on Hadrian's Wall likewise lost their *raison d'être*.

Up to the 20th century, the Wall lay almost entirely in farmland. Successive editions of Ordnance Survey large-scale maps, from the 1860s onwards, chart the expansion of built-up areas, with the creation of commuter suburbs such as Bearsden and Dullatur linked to the railway network, mining communities such as Twechar and Croy, mill-towns such as Duntocher, and industrial premises such as brickworks and limeworks. The Wall featured on these maps as an earthwork, as did the visible forts (illus 13). The OS *Name-Books* compiled in tandem recorded local knowledge about locations along the Wall, often retaining value 150 years later.<sup>55</sup>

### The place-name evidence

The estuaries of Forth and Clyde are named on the 'map' compiled at Alexandria in the mid-2nd century AD by the geographer and astronomer Claudius Ptolemaeus, his name Anglicised as Ptolemy.<sup>56</sup> One or two of his inland place-names could belong on the Forth–Clyde isthmus, but we cannot link them conclusively to known forts. In any case the information was gathered at the time of Agricola's campaigns in the Flavian period of the later 1st century AD, not in the Antonine age. We can also envisage itineraries or route-maps in the hands of military planners, prepared at the time of Agricola's campaigns, and preserved in archives for potential future use.<sup>57</sup> Related to such route-maps is the much later compilation known as the *Ravenna Cosmography*,

datable to the early 8th century AD. The *Cosmography* lists communities 'linked one to the other by a straight track, at a point where Britain is recognised to be at its narrowest from sea to sea', which is very clearly the Forth–Clyde isthmus.<sup>58</sup> They are named in sequence as *Velunia*, *Volitanio*, *Pexa*, *Begesse*, *Colanica*, *Medionemeton*, *Subdobiadon*, *Litana*, *Cibra* and *Credigone*.<sup>59</sup> As many of the Latin place-names in the *Cosmography* are given in the ablative case, the source was perhaps a road map with distances from one place to the next marked on it.

The discovery of an inscribed altar at Carriden in 1956 revealed to a rather surprised archaeological community that this was *Velunia*, the name with which the list began, thus showing that the sequence ran from east to west.<sup>60</sup> No other names can be linked to specific forts, assuming that forts alone are covered by the *Ravenna* listings. Neither *Velunia* nor any others of these place-names survived into the Middle Ages.

With the exception of a few possibly pre-Celtic place-names, the earliest tranche of names attested across the Forth–Clyde isthmus are in the Brythonic (or Cumbric) language of the Britons, current during the Roman occupation and for centuries thereafter.<sup>61</sup> Names such as Caerpentalloch (Kirkintilloch), Penfahel (Kinneil) and Kaer Edyn (Carriden) can be assigned to this period, as well as Alcluith, which is the Gaelic Dùn Breatann, the 'fort of the Britons' (Dumbarton). From the late 9th century Brythonic was supplanted by Gaelic, the language of the Dalriadan Scots as they expanded from their heartland in Argyll. Gaelic was spoken throughout Central Scotland up to the later 12th century, when it began to be supplanted by Old Scots (closely related to Old English).<sup>62</sup> Place-names in all these languages have endured in the Wall corridor. On occasion we can chart the changes in name-forms of the same place over a long period.

The present-day names of several fort-sites, and of other locations along the Wall, reflect their Roman origins, or at least the former presence of some fortification. Some include the word 'castle', in either its Brythonic (Caer) or Gaelic (Cathair) or Old English (Keir) forms. Castlecary fort is named after the nearby Castle Cary (see p. 22), 'the castle at Cary', the latter name concealing a reference to 'caer', so referring back to the Roman fortification.<sup>63</sup> Carriden may be 'the fort on the slope'.<sup>64</sup> The site at Camelon lay on an estate called Carmuir, 'the great fort'.<sup>65</sup> Kirkintilloch, despite its apparent 'kirk' prefix, is in fact Kir-kinn-tilloch, 'the fort at the end of the ridge', a Gaelic adaptation of the Brythonic Caerpentalloch.

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Duntocher is ‘the fort on the causeway’, a name considered to reflect its siting astride the Military Way. Rough Castle is presumably named for the Roman fort there.<sup>66</sup> The name Castlehill west of Bearsden is noticed by Sir Robert Sibbald in 1707, but no medieval castle is known.<sup>67</sup> The castle at Kirkintilloch has long been known as The Peel, the name implying a palisaded enclosure, and perhaps therefore antedating the stone castle on the site.<sup>68</sup>

Other fort names are rooted in the local topography: Camelon (‘the crooked pool’), from the meandering River Carron, Inveravon (‘mouth of the Avon’), Bar Hill (‘top of the hill’), Croy Hill (perhaps ‘hard, firm ground’), Mumrills (‘the rounded or breast-shaped hill’), Cawder (‘the stream’), and Seabegs (‘the little hill’). Balmuildy includes the Gaelic word ‘bal’, a village or settlement; Auchendavy is made up of ‘auchen’, a field, and ‘davaich’, a measure of land. Kilpatrick, now Old Kilpatrick, gets its name from a pre-Reformation church to St Patrick; the Roman fort was lost to agriculture early. New Kilpatrick (now generally known by a much more modern name, Bearsden) acquired its name after a church was built there soon after 1649 to serve the newly created parish of East Kilpatrick.<sup>69</sup> The fort at Westerwood lay within the ‘Great Forest’ of Cumbernauld (see p. 22). The place-name Falkirk, which has been much discussed, is generally understood to mean ‘the speckled church’, evidently from the external decoration or type of stone employed in its fabric;<sup>70</sup> but other interpretations have been advanced.<sup>71</sup>

Along the Wall’s course we find locations whose names reflect its presence as a feature in the landscape. Some include Old Welsh ‘guaul’ (Gaelic ‘fâl’), a palisade or wall.<sup>72</sup> The Wall’s presence as a ‘dyke’ (a Scots word) is reflected in the names Dick’s House, Shirva Dyke, Swine’s Dyke, Castlehill Dyke House, Ferrydyke (see below), and many others.<sup>73</sup> The name Kinneil, attested in Brythonic, Gaelic and Old English forms, is ‘wall’s end’, without any allusion to a fort.<sup>74</sup> Cleddans, a name attested three times along the Wall, means a ‘little ditch’. Other names are geographical without any Roman allusion or remain unexplained.<sup>75</sup>

Many of the place-names around Cumbernauld reflect the extensive woodland thereabouts in the Middle Ages and later (see p. 22). Tamfourhill, to the west of Falkirk, means in Gaelic the ‘knoll of the cropland’, perhaps recalling the motte once placed atop the upcast mound (see p. 21), in the location now known as Watling Lodge, a name given only in 1894 (see p. 122).<sup>76</sup> A study of field-names could yield

evidence of the Wall’s presence, but regrettably few are known.<sup>77</sup>

By contrast, some names are relatively modern. Tentfield Plantation, east of Rough Castle, derives from the tented city associated with the Falkirk Trysts, the cattle market of the 18th century (see p. 94).<sup>78</sup> Ferrydyke at Old Kilpatrick alludes to the ferry-crossing of the Clyde there.<sup>79</sup> The ‘planned village’ of Laurieston took its name from the 18th-century landowner Sir Lawrence Dundas (see p. 93).<sup>80</sup> Factories, bars and streets are nowadays termed ‘Antonine’ or ‘Roman’, and modern house-names can individually reflect the Roman Wall or its forts.

### Notes

- 1 Macdonald 1911; a revised edition was published in 1934. Other important assessments are by Robertson 1960 (and subsequent editions); Hanson and Maxwell 1983a; Breeze 2006a. For surveying of its route see now Poulter 2009.
- 2 In the following pages the Antonine Wall is generally referred to as ‘the Wall’, the adjective ‘Antonine’ added only where some confusion might otherwise arise.
- 3 Macdonald 1925: 281.
- 4 Keppie & Breeze 1981: 238.
- 5 Macdonald 1934: 94.
- 6 Bailey 1995a; Bidwell 2005; Woolliscroft 2008.
- 7 Hanson & Maxwell 1983a; Keppie 2009a.
- 8 Gillam 1975; Hanson & Maxwell 1983a: 93; Hanson & Maxwell 1983b.
- 9 Richmond & Steer 1957; Salway 1965: 161; *RIB* 3503.
- 10 Dunwell 1995.
- 11 Hanson 1979: 20; Keppie 1995; *Britannia* 31 (2000): 383; Sneddon & Murtagh 2009. Scattered evidence of extramural settlement has been found at other forts.
- 12 Máté 1995.
- 13 Keppie 1979; 1998. The distance slabs are themselves not precisely datable within the reign of Antoninus Pius.
- 14 Hanson & Maxwell 1983a: 117; Jones 2005; Jones 2011. Though Macdonald (1911: 23; 1934: 61) discusses the layout of Roman camps generally, none were then known on the Antonine Wall.
- 15 *Nam et Britannos per Lollium Urbicum vicit legatum alio muro caespiticio summotis barbaris ducto (Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Capitolinus, Vit. Ant. Pii 5.4)*. For an alternative English translation of this sentence see p. 8.
- 16 Birley 2005: 137. It was the only salutation he took in the course of his 23-year reign.
- 17 *RIB* 2191, 2192. See also *illus* 43.
- 18 Robertson 1975: 369.
- 19 Gillam 1975; Keppie 2009a.

- 20 Maxwell 1983.
- 21 Hanson & Maxwell 1983: 137; Hodgson 1995.
- 22 Hanson & Maxwell 1983a, 193; Mann 1974. On the *loca* reported by the *Ravenna Cosmography*, sometimes interpreted as ‘meeting places’ of the tribes of northern Britain in the 3rd or 4th centuries AD, see Rivet & Smith 1979: 212.
- 23 Robertson 2000; Hunter 2007.
- 24 Hingley 1992.
- 25 Breeze, Close-Brooks & Ritchie 1976; McCord & Tait 1978; Bailey 2000b; G B Bailey pers comm.
- 26 RCAHMS 1963: 80 no 82; Proudfoot 1978.
- 27 Hale 2000: 538; Hale & Sands 2005.
- 28 Maxwell 1989a; Jones & Sharp 2003; Stephens, Jones & Gater 2008.
- 29 For assessments of antiquarian sources for the Wall, see Macdonald 1911: 36; 1934: 32; Maxwell 1989: 1; Hingley 2010. In relation to Roman Britain more generally, see Todd 2004; Sweet 2005; Hingley 2008.
- 30 For example, Sir Robert Sibbald located Hadrian’s Wall in East Lothian (Sibbald 1706: 120).
- 31 For discussion of the originators of walls in Britain, see especially Camden 1607: 649; Richardson 1627: Book III, p. 7; Robert Gordon of Straloch, in Blaeu 1654: 3 = Blaeu 2006: 43; Burton 1658: 97; Camden 1695: 837; William Nicolson [1699] in Whittaker 2005: 54; Dalrymple 1705: iii, 18; Sibbald 1706: 119–22; Stukeley 1720: 3; Gibson 1722: 1051; Clerk [1724–30] in Clerk 1993: 36; Gordon 1726: 43, 111; Horsley 1732: 98, 116, 158; Maitland 1757: 170; Gough 1789: 211; Roy 1793: 148; and in more recent times Collingwood 1921, Birley 1961: 48; Maxfield 1982; Breeze 1982; Breeze 2007.
- 32 Macdonald 1911, 7; 1934, 8.
- 33 The ‘Vallum’, a flat-bottomed ditch flanked by turf-revetted mounds, ran parallel to the contemporary Hadrian’s Wall on its south side. See Breeze 2006b: 84.
- 34 Dalrymple 1705: 7; Gordon 1726: 49, 86; Horsley 1732: 116; Roy 1793: 149.
- 35 Camden 1607: 698.
- 36 William Nicolson [1699], quoted in Whittaker 2005: 54; Gordon 1726: 63; Horsley 1732: 197 no (*Scotland*) 8.
- 37 Hodgson 1840: 309; Birley 1961: 59; Whitworth 2000: 45. On Severus as a wall-builder see also Hassall 1984: 242; Hornshaw 2000.
- 38 Gordon 1726, 102. Sir John Clerk of Penicuik jocularly entitled it the ‘vallum Gordonianum’ (NRS GD18/5023/4). This is the Catrail, the date and purpose of which remain uncertain (RCAHMS 1956: 479; Brown 1987a: 125 fn 46).
- 39 Macdonald 1925; Bailey & Devereux 1987; Dumville 1994.
- 40 Sibbald 1707: 27.
- 41 Cadder, Bishopbriggs. The spelling Cawder is preferred in the following pages as it is the name-form regularly used by antiquaries.
- 42 Macdonald was Secretary of the Scottish Education Department, 1922–8.
- 43 In the following pages I have chosen to refer to Glasgow College and Edinburgh College, the names by which Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities were long known.
- 44 On post-Roman changes to the shoreline in the valley of the Forth, see Tatton-Brown 1980.
- 45 Crawford 1949: 10; RCAHMS 1963: 107 no 122.
- 46 RCAHMS 1963: 59 no 1.
- 47 RCAHMS 1963: 20.
- 48 Callander 1933; the burials are not mentioned in the report on the excavation of the overlying Roman site (Miller 1928).
- 49 Callander 1924; Bailey & Devereux 1987; Cowie 2001.
- 50 Bruce 1893: 318; Morris 1981: GLW no 29.
- 51 A ring-ditch site at Garnhall, immediately to the south of the Wall, is suggested as a Roman signal-tower of the ‘Gask’ type (Woolliscroft 2008).
- 52 On the impact of the Roman occupations on the contemporary Iron Age tribes, see Hingley 1992; 2004; Hanson 2004.
- 53 Boyd 1984; Whittington & Edwards 1993; Dickson & Dickson 2000; Tipping & Tisdale 2005.
- 54 Gordon 1726: 20; Roy 1793: 152; Galloway 1868.
- 55 Davidson 1986; Linge 2004.
- 56 Rivet & Smith 1979: 138.
- 57 Austin & Rankov 1995: 112.
- 58 *Iterum sunt civitates in ipsa Britannia recto tramite una alteri conexa, ubi et ipsa Britannia plus angustissima de oceano in oceano esse dinoscitur* (Ravenna Cosmography v.31).
- 59 Bates 1898; Feachem 1969; Rivet & Smith 1979: 210; Hanson & Maxwell 1983a: 215; Mann 1992.
- 60 Richmond & Steer 1957. *Medionemeton* (‘The sacred grove in the middle’) might be at or near Bar Hill or Croy Hill; others have seen in the name a reference to Arthur’s O’on.
- 61 Barrow 1983; Taylor 2001.
- 62 Watson 1926; Nicolaisen 1976. Older county-based studies are generally unreliable. See now Taylor 2001; Taylor 2006; Reid 2009.
- 63 Information from Dr Simon Taylor. See also Watson 1926: 370; Reid 2009: 37. The names Chastel Cary, Castelcary, Castilcarry, Castelcaris, Castelcarrey and Castellcarrie are all attested in medieval documents. A steading immediately to the south of the fort bore the name Walls.
- 64 Other interpretations are possible, see Watson 1926: 369; Dumville 1994. The forms Kair Eden and Karreden are recorded in the 12th century. For Kair Eden as a *civitas antiquissima* (‘a very old town’) in a gloss on the text of Gildas (see p. 18), see Dumville 1994: 296.
- 65 Gibb 1903; Reid 2009: 31.
- 66 Nimmo 1817: 10; Reid 2009: 302. The name Castle Hill above Twechar is of no great antiquity. Note Castle-towrie at Mumrills (Maitland 1757: 172).



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- 67 No castle was revealed on the hilltop by a recent geophysical survey (Jones, Huggett & Leslie 2009).
- 68 Neilson 1896a. The glen below Castlehill, Bearsden, is called the Peel Glen.
- 69 McCardel 1949. Earlier it was called Hay Hill (Sibbald 1707: 27).
- 70 Nicolaisen 1969.
- 71 Pont has a place called Cast Kerig Lion, lying below Kinneil, claimed as deriving from the Latin words *castrum legionis* ('The fort of the legion'). See Sibbald 1710a: 18; Mackenzie 1845: 129; Watson 1926: 383; Macdonald 1934: 192 fn 2.
- 72 Bede has Penfahel for Kinneil; Alexander Gordon (1726: 53) mentions Procterfaal east of New Kilpatrick (Bearsden). There are no grounds for supposing that the name Falkirk could mean 'the church on the Wall'.
- 73 Jackson 1953: 227; Reid 2009: 191. 'Wal' in the name Walton near Castlecary and east of Carriden indicates the presence of a well, not a wall.
- 74 None of the known mile-fortlets bears a name reflecting its Roman origins, but the site of one putative fortlet, Carleith, means 'the grey fort'.
- 75 On the name Callendar see Watson 1926: 106; Reid 2009: 62. No convincing etymology has so far been advanced for the name Bearsden, which supplanted New Kilpatrick in the later 19th century.
- 76 Reid 2009: 69, 131. Alternatively the name may allude to the upstanding earthwork of the adjacent mile-fortlet (on which see p. 122). Sibbald uses the names 'stony hill' and 'Stoniefourhill.'
- 77 Field-names occasionally appear on estate plans of the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 78 RCAHMS 1963: 433 no 535; Reid 2009: 313.
- 79 Maitland 1757: 183; Bruce 1893: 30; Macdonald 1911: 154; 1934: 333.
- 80 Allandale east of Castlecary is named after Allan Stein, son of a nearby brickworks owner, who built cottages there for his workers in the early years of the 20th century (Reid 2009: 252).