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# The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall

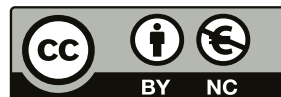
Lawrence Keppie

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## Chapter 3

### Timothy Pont and his maps

The Revd Timothy Pont, who lived from about 1566 until about 1614, when he 'was unhappily surpriz'd by death, to the inestimable Loss of his Countrey',<sup>1</sup> is rightly celebrated for his comprehensive series of detailed maps of Scotland, a feat achieved on limited resources under King James VI in the years between

1583 and 1596.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the maps themselves, Pont prepared accompanying texts, many of which have been recognised in later compilations.<sup>3</sup> Pont, as we shall see, was a pioneer in fieldwork and observation of the surviving remains of the Antonine Wall, but his role remains largely unappreciated.



Illustration 26

Timothy Pont, detail from Sheet 32 ('East Central Lowlands'), showing the line of the Wall (dotted) between Kirkintilloch and Cumbernauld. The Latin caption (centre left) was probably added by Robert Gordon of Straloch c 1640 (© National Library of Scotland, Adv MS 70.2.9, Pont 32; CC-BY).

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The Wall is marked as a dotted line on one of Pont's original maps, sheet 32 (conventionally named 'East Central Lowlands'), which covers a wide swathe of central Scotland from Dumbarton in the west to the River Avon (close to Bo'ness) in the east (illus 26).<sup>4</sup> The route of the Wall is not entirely accurate, especially west and east of Kirkintilloch, and no forts are specifically identified along it, though many familiar fort-names such as Bar Hill, Croy Hill and Westerwood are given a symbol regularly used by Pont to denote 'settlements'. There is a prominent caption which reads *Vestigia valli Romanorum quod videtur Agricolam aut Adrianum primum posuisse* ('Traces of the Romans' rampart which, it seems, Agricola or Hadrian was the first to erect.'). Here we have further testimony to the uncertainty among early antiquaries over who built walls and where. The caption and the dotted line are additions to the map, both almost certainly added in the 1640s by Robert Gordon of Straloch (see p. 40).

Our knowledge of Pont's interest in the Antonine Wall owes much to remarks made more than a century later by Sir Robert Sibbald. 'Mr Timothy Pont was at the most Pains in tracing [the vestiges of the Wall], when he made the Survey of that part of the Country, through which it runs . . . Mr Timothy Pont made his Remarks near a Hundred Years ago,<sup>5</sup> when the Vestiges of it were more remarkable, and in many places the surface of the Ground was not so much altered, as it hath been since by Tillage and building upon it; yet he observeth, that even then, many Stones had been removed, and the inscriptions upon some Stones were outworn by time.'<sup>6</sup> Pont's testimony was recoverable from 'the Papers he left, many of which I have of his own hand-writing, with Draughts of the places, and remarks upon them. And I have also the Copies taken from his papers by [Robert Gordon of] Straloch and his son, in whose hands they were put, to draw the maps out of them. I have the Maps, the Originals done by T. Pont and these which were drawn out of his Papers. So I have the Form of the Wall drawn by him, and his accounts of the Roman Forts and Camps.'<sup>7</sup> We can go some way towards identifying the Pont materials upon which Sibbald based such an appreciative verdict, since his own listing of them includes a surviving text, 'Timothy Pont's notes on the vestiges of Agricola's rampart',<sup>8</sup> and 'Notes on Julius Agricolas wall and upon severall plans from Timothy Pont his papers 3 sheets'.<sup>9</sup>

In his *Historical Inquiries* of 1707 Sibbald alludes to Pont's written work, that he 'observeth likewise, that there were upon the Tract of the Wall beside the

Watch Towers, and the square Forts for Guards, some Royal Forts, capable to lodge a Legion or more, these were placed at competent distances, as the opportunity of the Ground served'.<sup>10</sup> 'Royal Forts' I take here to be equivalent to forts, rather than large temporary camps. Pont thus distinguishes three categories of installation, based on personal inspection.

Pont had, Sibbald writes, drawn the outlines of individual forts. 'Mr Timothy Pont had more Designments of Forts, and thereby it appeareth that the Forts were more discernable in his time, and parts of them more entire, and he seemed to have viewed them more accurately than did those who came after him.'<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately none of these 'Designments' survive, and none were included by Sibbald in any of his published treatises.

Sibbald published a sketch-plan of the constituent elements of the Wall, presumably 'the form of the Wall' mentioned above, which he specifically tells us derived from Pont through the medium of Robert Gordon.<sup>12</sup> It is headed 'the Form of the Wall which divided the Scots and the Picts from the Roman province, which began about Abercorn'. Two versions are known, the first published in Sibbald's contribution to Edmund Gibson's 1695 revision of Camden's *Britannia* (illus 27) and the second in his own *Historical Inquiries* of 1707. His explanatory text reads as follows:<sup>13</sup>

- A.A.A. A ditch of twelve Foot wide before the Wall, towards the Enemies Country.
- B.B. A Wall of squared and cut Stones, two Foot broad; probably higher than the wall to cover the Defendants, and to keep the Earth of the wall from falling into the Ditch.
- C.C. The Wall it self, of ten foot thickness; but how high, not known.
- D.D. A paved way close at the foot of the wall, five foot broad.
- E.E. Watch-towers within a call one of another, where Centinels kept watch day and night.
- F.F. The wall of square stone going through the breadth of the Wall, just against the Towers.
- G.G. A Court of guard, to lodge a sufficient number of soldiers, against all sudden Alarms.
- I.I. The body of the Rampire, with an outer-wall of cut stone, higher than the Rampire, to cover Soldiers.
- K. The void within for the Soldiers Lodgings.

The diagram thus depicts the Ditch (A) 12 feet (3.6m) wide, the rampart itself (B–C) which Pont regards as having a north kerb 2 feet (0.6m) wide and the main

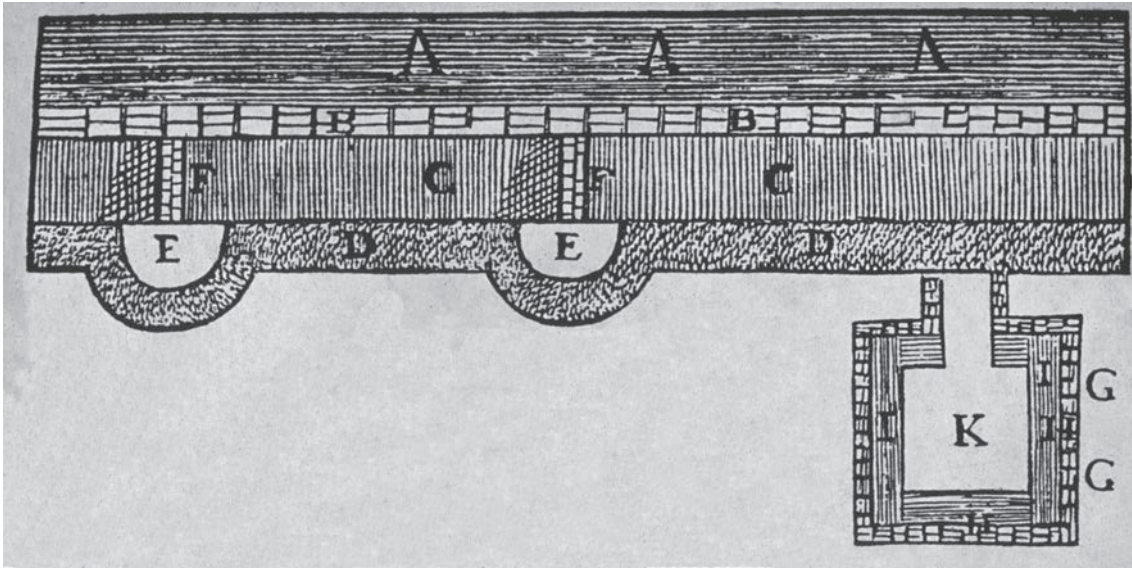


Illustration 27

Timothy Pont's drawing of the constituent parts of the Wall, as published in Edmund Gibson's edition of Camden's *Britannia*, 1695.

body 10 feet (3m) wide, to which we might think to add a further kerb of 2 feet (0.65m) on the south side, to make up the standard width of 14 feet (4.3m). Narrow stone-lined channels (F) run north-south through the wall, which are clearly culverts. Immediately to the south he records a 'paved way' 5 feet (1.65m) broad (D), a feature which has never been confirmed by excavation.<sup>14</sup>

More significant are the ground plans of two types of small installation, firstly 'Watch-towers within a call one of another' (E), semicircular in shape and attached to the back of the rampart, and secondly a square 'Court of Guard' (G). Older authorities were perplexed. William Maitland in 1757 remarked that 'by comparing this pompous account with the three late actual surveys of the Wall and its concomitants,<sup>15</sup> it will appear to consist scarcely of any thing but falsities'.<sup>16</sup> According to George Neilson (see p. 124), the principal author of the Glasgow Archaeological Society's *Antonine Wall Report* (1899), Pont's diagram 'is certainly calculated to convey impressions which are not in any degree confirmed by an inspection of the actual remains'.<sup>17</sup> Sir George Macdonald was rather less dismissive: 'Absurd as that sketch looks in the shape which it finally assumed, it may be that its most curious features are not purely imaginary, but have rather developed naturally out of an initial misapprehension as to the meaning of some of the actual phenomena.'<sup>18</sup>

A century later, after the discovery of various categories of minor installation, in part through the medium of aerial photography, Pont's diagram seems far less fantastic than once it did.<sup>19</sup>

Sibbald provides some imperial measurements in his caption on one version of the diagram and a helpful scale on the other,<sup>20</sup> from which it is tempting to suppose that he is illustrating, first, two closely spaced semicircular 'enclosures', of the type noted on aerial photographs and subsequently plotted by excavation to either side of Wilderness Plantation;<sup>21</sup> and secondly the square platform of what is now known as an 'expansion'. However, the 'Court of Guard', with a gateway to the north, must surely equate to a fortlet. This hierarchy of sites is one that was not appreciated again by modern archaeologists until the second half of the 20th century.

It is startling to find such features already drawn in detail before the close of the 16th century. Was it deliberate excavation or chance clearance of the stone base of the Wall that made these remains visible at such an opportune moment? The sketches cannot have been prepared by Pont on the basis of observation of the upstanding turf-covered remains, but on measurement or pacing out of exposed stonework. Where Pont saw them, or indeed if in a single location, eludes us. Though Sibbald is fulsome in his praise of Pont's attention to the Wall, the latter's maps show no

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Roman sites such as Inchtuthil or Ardoch though a small number of prehistoric and Early Historic sites are depicted.

Most of Pont's writings about the Roman sites he saw are lost to us. One surviving text, in the handwriting of Robert Gordon, is entitled *De Vestigiis Valli Agricolae et postea Adriani* ('On the Traces of the rampart of Agricola and afterwards of Hadrian'), the title reflecting Robert Gordon's dating of it.<sup>22</sup> The Latin text is, I suggest, a version prepared by Gordon for inclusion in Blaeu's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum vel Atlas Novus*, published at Amsterdam in 1654 (see p. 41), which he decided in the end not to use; 'because it consists of barbarian names, and does not allow Latin's natural grace, I have given it in our native tongue'.<sup>23</sup> The version printed in Blaeu's *Theatrum* reads: 'The trace of this fortification beginneth betwix Abircorn and the Queens ferry,<sup>24</sup> besyd the rampier and the ditche, with the rownds stoff<sup>25</sup> all along it and many squar fortifications in form of a Roman camp, it went west from Abircorn towards Kinneil, then to Innerewin, at Langtoun a myl be-east Falkirk a fort, at ye Rountree-burnehed a fort, at wester Cowden above Helin's Chapell one, at Croyhill one, at Cailly-bee, that is the Dick wood ovir against the Croyhill, on the top of the Bar-hill a great one, and at Balchastel over against the Bar-hill, at Achindevy, at Kirkintillo, at East Caldar, at Hilltown of Caldar, at Bal-muydie, at Simmerstoun, and ovir Kalvin river, at Carreston, at Achter-minnie, at the Roch-hil ovir agains the Westerwood, at Bakir over agains Castel Cary, at Dunvass.'<sup>26</sup>

Some of the sites mentioned here are well known as Roman forts and fortlets,<sup>27</sup> others are medieval fortifications.<sup>28</sup> In addition Pont lists sites lying to the north across the Kelvin valley on the edges of the Kilsyth Hills, now known to be a mix of Iron Age, medieval and post-medieval settlements.<sup>29</sup> Pont's list finishes with 'Dunvass', to be identified with Dunglass west of Old Kilpatrick. Robert Gordon was aware that the list was incomplete, and supposed that more forts existed west of Summerston as far as Dumbarton; he judged himself too old to travel to see them.<sup>30</sup>

Pont's written notes encompassed other forms of ancient evidence. 'He [Pont] observeth that several Stones bore the Record and Memory of the Work of two legions, beside their *Auxilia* which were employed there and lay in Guard upon this Wall, the one *Legio Secunda Augusta*, the other *legio Vicesima Valens Victrix*'.<sup>31</sup> In the 1770s the Edinburgh bibliophile George Paton (see p. 99) collated the surviving maps, sending details

to his correspondent Richard Gough who observed, presumably on Paton's testimony, that 'Pont took notes of all the Roman coins, inscriptions, and other monuments he met with'.<sup>32</sup>

We might think therefore that Timothy Pont would have an honoured place in the development of our understanding of the Wall and installations along it, but this is not so. Despite Sibbald's eulogies, a complimentary report in 1702 by Bishop Nicolson,<sup>33</sup> and a brief notice by William Stukeley,<sup>34</sup> Pont's contribution was soon forgotten, overshadowed by the major compilations of the 18th century.

### The 17th century: William Camden and his legacy

Early visitors to the line of the Antonine Wall often came in search of inscribed stones which they might set in the context of similar finds farther south in Britain and in continental Europe. Crispin Gericke from Elbing (then in West Prussia, now in Poland) and Servaz Reichel from Silesia (formerly in East Prussia, now in Poland)] were travelling in Scotland soon after 1600. We can reconstruct something of their itinerary (or itineraries, since strictly speaking it cannot be shown that they travelled together), seemingly in the company of others, on an epigraphical Grand Tour encompassing 'France, Britain and Scotland'.<sup>35</sup> Described by the schoolmaster Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby, Westmorland (see below), as 'German noblemen', we otherwise know nothing of Reichel, but Gericke is attested as a lawyer in his home town.<sup>36</sup> They travelled along part at least of the line of the Wall, including to Cawder and Kilsyth, and knew of inscriptions 'at the River Carron', perhaps therefore at Camelon.<sup>37</sup> They also penetrated into the north-east of Scotland, to inspect the distance slab by then immured at Dunnottar Castle, Kincardineshire (see p. 59), about which they must surely have been informed of in advance of such a laborious excursion. This slab recorded the construction of 3,000 paces of the Wall by the Twentieth Legion (illus 28).<sup>38</sup> The travellers found it in the porch or gateway of the Castle, with the lettering gilded (see p. 97). On their southwards journey, of which we know a little more, they recorded inscribed stones at Carlisle, Birdoswald and Penrith. Reichel, with others, visited the schoolmaster Reginald Bainbrigg who had gathered inscribed stones at his house in Appleby.<sup>39</sup> Bainbrigg recorded their visit to him and supplied Camden with a text of the distance slab at Dunnottar, which



Illustration 28

Distance slab of the Twentieth Legion, recording the completion of 3,000 paces of the Wall, as engraved at Glasgow College, 1768. The stone was presented to the College by the 10th Earl Marischal in 1761.

Bainbrigg deduced had been erected to commemorate the construction there by the Twentieth Legion of a wall 3 miles in length ‘for repelling the barbarian nations’, at the time when Agricola on his campaigns had reached the distant regions of Scotland.<sup>40</sup> In the 1607 edition of his *Britannia* Camden correctly assigned the stone to the reign of Antoninus, thanking Reichel for its text.

Gericke and Reichel remain shadowy figures, but were sufficiently part of the European network of scholarly exchange to communicate their discoveries to the foremost continental authorities of the day. Gericke sent texts of three stones from the Wall to Joseph Scaliger at Leiden who published them in his *Thesaurus Temporis Eusebii Pamphili* of 1606,<sup>41</sup> and to Janus Gruter who had been the author of a wide-ranging corpus of inscriptions of the Roman world published in 1602 at Heidelberg.<sup>42</sup> Gruter’s corpus already contained one epigraphic text from Scotland, the altar from Inveresk, communicated by Camden (see p. 39).<sup>43</sup> Thus discoveries made between Forth and Clyde came to the notice of a wider European readership.

### *William Camden*

The foundations for the comprehensive academic study of British antiquity were laid in the later 16th century by William Camden (1551–1623), whose *Britannia* in Latin was published in 1586.<sup>44</sup> The book was reprinted several times soon after and, later again, in 1607 in a larger format.<sup>45</sup> Timothy Pont was aware of an early edition of it.<sup>46</sup> A translation into English by Philemon Holland brought it to the attention of a wider audience,<sup>47</sup> and subsequent, much enlarged editions appeared as late as 1806.<sup>48</sup>

Camden, who had read widely in the Latin literature now available as printed books, adopted a geographical coverage of the island according to the tribal areas mapped out by Ptolemy.<sup>49</sup> He travelled extensively to visit historical sites and view standing remains, and pored over manuscripts, charters and archaeological evidence including inscriptions and coins.<sup>50</sup>

In 1599 he and fellow antiquary Sir Robert Cotton journeyed to Hadrian’s Wall;<sup>51</sup> but Camden never crossed the Border into Scotland, then a separate country, which was at first only briefly surveyed. Camden concluded that Agricola fortified the Forth–Clyde line, and that Severus and later Gallio of Ravenna built barriers between Tyne and Solway, the former of turf and the latter of stone.<sup>52</sup> However by the time of his 1607 edition he knew of five inscribed stones (see p. 57),<sup>53</sup> from which he was able to deduce, correctly, that Antoninus’ wall, built by Lollius Urbicus, ran from Forth to Clyde. Camden’s *Britannia* was to exercise a profound influence over antiquarian studies throughout the 17th century and later.<sup>54</sup> In Scotland the book came to be viewed in the context of the political consequences of the recent unification of the kingdoms.<sup>55</sup>

An antiquary of whom we know little more than his name was David Drummond, surely from the same family as the (later) 4th Earl of Perth, Sir Robert Sibbald’s patron. His papers were known to Robert Gordon of Straloch.<sup>56</sup> David Drummond is referred to frequently as a source by Sibbald; he had ‘traced the wall’ and ‘made remarks on it’.<sup>57</sup>

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### *Sir William Brereton*

In 1636 the Wall was traversed from east to west by Sir William Brereton Bt of Handford, Cheshire, in the course of a visit to Scotland (illus 29). His journal records how, after leaving Edinburgh on 30 June 1636, he and his party of seven journeyed westwards across the isthmus via Linlithgow, Falkirk and Kirkintilloch to Glasgow, which he reached on the evening of 1 July. Brereton has several interesting observations, for example on Cumbernauld Castle, residence of the Earl of Wigton, with its surrounding woodland, and on Glasgow College where he saw the library; there were not as yet any Roman stones preserved in it.<sup>58</sup>



Illustration 29

Sir William Brereton, engraving reproduced from J Ricraft, *England's Champions and Truth's faithfull Patriots*, 1647 (© Glasgow University Library).

Brereton's account of the Wall is brief but informative. 'Here was (about seventeen hundred years since) a great stone and earth wall, called Grahames Wall, leading from Forth, six mile below Leith, over the main land to Dumbarton, which is upon the West Sea; which wall was thirty-two miles long, and gave bounds to the kingdoms of the Scots on the south and Picts on the north; at every mile's end was there erected a tower for the watchmen, and a castle at every two miles' end, wherein was a strong garrison.'<sup>59</sup> This is by far the earliest reference to a regular system of forts and the fortlets at regular intervals between them. The much travelled Brereton, memorably described in a contemporary source as 'a

notable man at a thanksgiving dinner, having terrible long teeth and a prodigious stomach',<sup>60</sup> subsequently rose to prominence in the Parliamentary interest in the English Civil War, and took charge of its forces in Cheshire.<sup>61</sup>

### *The afterlife of the Pont Maps*

After Timothy Pont's death his maps were purchased from his heirs by Sir James Balfour of Denmilne, the historian and Lyon King-of-Arms. Subsequently the judge and cartographer Sir John Scot of Scotstarvet was instrumental in having them sent to Amsterdam for inclusion in Johan Blaeu's comprehensive *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum sive Atlas Novus* (1654), which resulted in their becoming widely known and has in no small way been responsible for Pont's high reputation.<sup>62</sup> Some of the maps were returned to Scotland for further work to be undertaken prior to publication, Blaeu at this time obtaining the help of Robert Gordon of Straloch in Aberdeenshire (1580–1661) and the latter's son the Revd James Gordon (1617–86), Minister of Rothiemay in Banffshire, both geographers of experience and achievement.<sup>63</sup> The original Pont maps appear to have remained thereafter in Scotland and were subsequently passed by James Gordon to Sir Robert Sibbald, to be acquired after the latter's death by the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.<sup>64</sup> They are now held in the National Library of Scotland, which has recently showcased the Pont maps and drawn attention to their international significance.<sup>65</sup> The precise contribution of the Gordons has been variously assessed.<sup>66</sup> Essentially they were sedentary, not field investigators, except in their native north-east. Sir John Scot endeavoured to provide for Blaeu introductory texts to accompany each map. Contributors pressed into service by him included Robert Gordon and David Buchanan (on whom, see p. 42). Other texts were reprinted verbatim from Camden, *faute de mieux*.

Pont's sheet 32 became the basis of one of Robert Gordon's maps, *Sterlinshyr and Lennox*, prepared in the 1640s for despatch to Johan Blaeu at Amsterdam.<sup>67</sup> Unlike Pont's sheet 32, Gordon's map shows the Wall on its correct alignment; close scrutiny reveals that it is depicted there with crenelations. Johan Blaeu split Robert Gordon's map into two parts, publishing them as *Levinia* (Lennox) and *Sterlinensis* (Stirling); on both the Wall appears as a continuous stripe, without crenelations. At the right-hand edge of Blaeu's *Sterlinensis* (illus 30) the Wall ends in full flow at Kinneil (about 2 miles west of its likeliest terminus on the Forth at Bridgeness), but on the adjacent sheet to



Illustration 30

Johan Blaeu, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, 1654. Detail from his map of *Sterlinensis praefectura* (Stirlingshire), showing the course of the Wall between Castlecary and Kinneil, with extensive woodland at Cumbernauld and Callendar (© National Library of Scotland; CC-BY).

the east (*Lothian and Linlithgo*), its course is not shown at all. This is regrettable since, more than 400 years later, we are still uncertain where exactly the Wall terminated on the River Forth.<sup>68</sup>

Robert Gordon's own opinions on the originators of the Wall are very clearly stated in essays which prefaced the maps in Blaeu's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of 1654.<sup>69</sup> His 'Notes on the barriers, walls and ramparts which separate the Scots from the provincials',<sup>70</sup> is from the population of Roman Britain, review, with Camden's *Britannia* as the starting point, the builders of walls in Britain, from Agricola in the later 1st century to Gallio of Ravenna (see p. 28) in the early 5th, in the context of the scholarly debate of the time. Gordon has Latin texts of the tablet of the Second Legion at Cawder House and the distance slab of the Twentieth Legion at Dunnottar Castle, the latter it would seem from personal inspection.<sup>71</sup> But he does not offer any description of the Wall's course. A second essay by Robert Gordon, without the epigraphic testimony, reprises the same historical framework, to which are appended notes taken from Camden.<sup>72</sup> Gordon also penned a short essay with the title 'Notes to the Map of Old Scotland', including a detailed assessment of Ptolemy's *Geography*.<sup>73</sup>

Sibbald had at his disposal two maps of 'the Countrie betwixt the Firth of Clyde and Forth with the tract of the Roman Wall betwixt the two firths', which might to go back ultimately to Pont,<sup>74</sup> as well as 'ye plan of ye Roman Wall done by Stralough'.<sup>75</sup> None survives; however, Sibbald's own map of the Wall (illus 34) presumably drew upon these as well as on Pont's sheet 32.

A longer account, entitled 'The Relation of Grahames Dike with the Forts and Fortifications that are upon it', is based on Pont, but with extra details and exhibiting local knowledge. As it tells us something more about the Wall, it is here given in full.<sup>76</sup> 'Imprimis Grahames Dike begins betwixt the Queens Ferry & Abercorn and goes along West by the Grange & by Kinneil and comes to Innereven in West Lothian, and from Innereven to the Falkirk there is a Town quilk has been of old a great Town called Camelon. And from Camelon the Dike goes directly to the Forrest of Commernald, and there is a great Fort and great building called Castle Kaeny.<sup>77</sup> And from this Fort the Dike goes through the Forrest, till it come to another great fort with a building called the Barhill, where there has been many fine stones with pictures and superscriptions on them, quilk My



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Lord of Kilsyth has to shew.<sup>78</sup> And from the Fort of the Barhill the Dike goes along west to the Peel of Kirkintilloch where has been the special Fort and Castle of all, with a great Building, and great Fousses, with Rampires and all thir Forts with the Buildings, are in the bounds of the E[arl] of Wigtoun in a Barony of land called the Barony of Leinzem [Lenzie] and within the Shirre of Lennox. And from Kirkintilloch this Dike goes along West to the West sea-bank at Dumbarton and there it ends at the entry of the River of Clide, that enters into the sea. But there are no Forts upon the Dike but thir; only there is a great Ditch that goes over the northside of the Dike hard by it, and there is from the beginning of the Dike at the East sea-bank to the West sea-bank some 36 miles; and as the report speaks, that between Castle Kaney & Barhill is some five miles. There was a secret Convoy under the ground that made them acquaint, if there was any treason begun at the first Fort to the next quilk was the Barhill, and from the Barhill the like sound went to the Peel and Castle of Kirkintilloch being other five miles betwixt one sound under the ground. Here is all that I can shew you in this business.' The emphasis here is on central sector, on the lands of the Livingstons of Kilsyth and the Flemings, Earls of Wigton, and the account shows awareness of surviving earthworks. The account is unattributed, but some input from Robert Gordon, David Buchanan and Christopher Irvine (below) could be suspected; there is some overlap in phraseology with Sir Robert Sibbald's treatises.

In 1649 some parish boundaries originally established in the 12th century under King David I were redrawn by the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. The Wall's existence as a visible landmark at that time led to it serving as the southern boundary of the parish of Bo'ness,<sup>79</sup> when Kinneil was subdivided to create the parishes of Bo'ness and Carriden, and as the southern boundary of the parish of Kirkintilloch, when the parish of Lenzie was split into Kirkintilloch and Cumbernauld.<sup>80</sup>

In 1650 Oliver Cromwell was in Scotland, then largely a royalist stronghold, at the head of sizeable army, with a devastating impact on towns and countryside alike. His forces blew up the towerhouse at Kilsyth, a stronghold of the Livingstons.<sup>81</sup> Two Roman inscribed stones built into, or preserved at, the towerhouse were lost (see p. 57).<sup>82</sup>

David Buchanan (c 1595–1652), a relative of George Buchanan, and a writer on philosophical, religious, geographical and historical subjects,<sup>83</sup> had worked with Robert and James Gordon on the preparation

for the publication of Pont maps by Johan Blaeu (see p. 40), contributing some of the Latin geographical and historical texts which accompanied the maps.<sup>84</sup> In his 'New Description of the Prefecture of Stirling' the Wall ran, Buchanan wrote, from near Abercorn to Dunglass, a distance of 36 miles, his measurement itself being more or less correct.<sup>85</sup> In relation to the fort at Bar Hill he noted that 'not long ago in this place were dug up several elegantly carved stones with Roman inscriptions; some of these are preserved by neighbouring noblemen'.<sup>86</sup> This statement offers a useful terminus ante quem of c 1650 for the discovery of the unfortunately unspecified inscriptions. David Buchanan's papers came into the hands of Sir Robert Sibbald,<sup>87</sup> and were known to Bishop Nicolson of Carlisle (see p. 53), but were subsequently lost.<sup>88</sup>

In 1682 Michael Livingston of Pantaskin [Bantaskin], west of Falkirk, published a poem entitled *Patronus redux: or our Protectour is return'd safe again*.<sup>89</sup> It celebrated in 176 stanzas the safe return to Falkirk of his kinsman, Alexander Livingston, 2nd Earl of Callendar, who had travelled to England, 'when Critic *Health* him quickly call'd abroad'.<sup>90</sup> The Earl's home, Callendar Castle, is warmly lauded:

His *Palace*, bord'ring with the common Rode  
Seems hospitably, for its guests to call;  
And, by his pains, repaired alamode,  
Outbraves the Shadow of the *Roman Wall*.<sup>91</sup>

A footnote by the author offers words of explanation, that this was 'The Rampier built by the Emperour Severus betwixt Abercorn and Dumbarton or Alcluith ... The Earl made this Dyke level with the ground, upon which his Palace is built; about 200 and odd paces distant upon the south side of the wall.'

In another stanza we learn that:

He means his Dwelling publickly to shew,  
Removing lets, which might obstruct the eye;  
So Drusus House was built in open view  
That all the City might his life survey.<sup>92</sup>

The implication is that the Earl had comprehensively flattened the Roman earthwork, but demolition was in fact confined to a narrow cut immediately north of the Castle.<sup>93</sup>

### *Christopher Irvine*

The antiquarian activities of the physician Christopher Irvine (c 1620–93), appointed Historiographer Royal for Scotland by King Charles II, are known largely through Sir Robert Sibbald, into whose hands his

papers fell. As Sibbald recalled, ‘the West part of [the Wall] from Dumbarton to Falkirk was accurately traced by Doctor Irvine, who told me he had travelled several times alongst it. The Forts he observed upon the Tract of it, as I found them in his Papers, are these, with the Distances of each set down.’<sup>94</sup>

1. At Dumbarton a great Fort.
2. The Castle half a Mile from it.
3. A Mile thence, at the foot of Dunbuck Hill, a Fort
4. A Mile thence, at Dunglass, a Fort.
5. A Mile thence to Chaple-Hill, above the Town of Kirkpatrick, a Fort.
6. From Kilpatrick Fort over Cressak Water at Duntocher Mill, to Golden Hill, a Mile, where there was a great Fort upon the South-side of that Hill.
7. From thence a large Mile over Cladden Hill and Hucheson Hill, and the Peil Glen, upon Castlehill a Fort.
8. From thence over the Mossfaldhill of Led Carmmock, by the New Kirk of Kilpatrick a Mile, at the Hay Hill a Fort.
9. From thence a Mile over Fergusons Moor, over Bullay Hill, Mutican Hill, to Summerstone, where there was a great Fort.
10. Two Miles from thence, crossing Kelvin River at the Steps of Balmilly,<sup>95</sup> and going through that Town, there was at Balmuidy a great Fort.
11. At Hilltown of Calder there was a Fort.
12. From thence, a Mile to Easter Calder, there was a great Fort.
13. At the Mannor of Calder [Cawder] several Incriptions were found mentioning Antoninus Pius, and the Legio I.I.
14. From Easter Calder over Parkburn there is a Mile to Kirkintillo, at Kirkintillo there was a great Fort.
15. From Kirkintillo, a Mile to Achindavie, where there was a great Fort cross Chizva Burn [Shirva], half a Mile.
16. From thence a large Mile to Barhill, where there was a great Fort, which hath had large Entrenchments, the ruins of Buildings were traced there, and many Stones have been found there with Incriptions, and some with Figures upon them,<sup>96</sup> which are kept at the Houses of the Nobility and Gentry in the Neighbourhood, there is a fresh Spring there and a Fountain, and amongst the Rubbish of the Fort, heret [*sic*] was found a large Iron Shovel of a vast weight, and divers Sepulchres covered with large Stones, were found there upon digging the Ground.<sup>97</sup>
17. From thence a large Mile to the East-side of Croyhill, where there was a great Fort.
18. Along the Dilatyr a long Mile to the Wester-wood, where there was a great Fort.

19. Besouth the Nether-wood, a quarter of a mile, there was a small Fort.
20. From thence a Mile to Castle Cary (near to Comernauld) where there was a great Fort, with much building, and an altar is seen there with an Incription MATRIBUS etc.<sup>98</sup>
21. From thence a Mile to the West end of Seabegwood, where is a fort.
22. From thence a Mile to St Helen’s Chappel to the South-west, about the fourth part of a Mile, there was a great Fort at the East end of Seabegwood.
23. Half a Mile from Seabeg, at the Rowentree Burn-head a great Fort.
24. From that to the Stoniefourhill, a Castle bewest upon the South-side of the Wall, and another at the West-side of the House of Calendar.

These are the Forts upon the Tract of the wall observed by Doctor Irvine . . . Doctor Irvine continueth in his Papers the Tract of the Wall thus.<sup>99</sup> In the Park of Calendar the Wall appeareth closs by the high Way passing the North-side of the Park. From thence it runneth a little way straight East, and then it turns down upon the Northside of the Gallow-Syke, then it runneth streight to the Mumrels, from whence it goeth to the Cadger Bray, and runs down to Milnhill, and from thence runs up the Hill, called The Hill, and from thence it runs down to the Water of Evin, and crosseth there, and goeth up to Innerevin where there hath been a Fort, and the ruins of Buildings remain yet.<sup>100</sup>

Christopher Irvine, who adhered to the view that the Wall was the work of Severus,<sup>101</sup> follows George Buchanan in supposing the the Wall ended on the River Avon. He subdivided the sites he saw into ‘great Forts’, ‘Forts’ and ‘small Forts’, together with a few ‘castles’. The distinction was presumably made on the basis of the impressiveness of the visible remains. Among his ‘Forts’ and ‘great Forts’ are the known fort sites at Duntocher (no 6), Castlehill (no 7), Hay Hill, New Kilpatrick (no 8), Balmuidy (no 10), Auchendavy (no 15), Bar Hill (no 16), Croy Hill (no 17), Westerwood (no 18), Castlecary (no 20), and Rough Castle (no 23). In other cases he has identified as Roman the medieval sites at Cawder (no 12), and Seabegs (no 22), at Kirkintilloch (no 14) and Inveravon. At Old Kilpatrick his ‘fort’ (no 5) is placed on Chapel Hill, west of the actual Roman site, which was only located in 1913. We know of no fort at Summerston (no 9), just a marching camp and a fortlet thereabouts; none seems likely there on grounds of spacing, so that duplication with Balmuidy could be suspected.<sup>102</sup>

## THE ANTIQUARIAN REDISCOVERY OF THE ANTONINE WALL

Irvine's forts at 'the West End of Seabegwood' and at 'Hilltown of Calder' can be equated with the fortlets of Seabegs Wood and Wilderness Plantation, the former located in 1977 by excavation and the latter through aerial photography.<sup>103</sup> Also perhaps to be counted among unlocated fortlets are Irvine's 'castle' at the west side of the House of Callendar' (no 24) and his small fort 'besouth the Nether-wood (no 19).<sup>104</sup> Particularly intriguingly are the sites at Dumbuck (no 3) and Dunglass (no 4) west of Old Kilpatrick, as well as the 'great Fort' at Dumbarton (no 1), evidently west of the Castle.<sup>105</sup>

### Notes

- 1 Nicolson 1702: 25.
- 2 Cash 1901; 1907; Moir & Skelton 1968; Stone 1989; Cunningham 2001; Fleet et al 2011.
- 3 See <http://maps.nls.uk/pont/texts/textessay.html>.
- 4 NLS Adv MS 70.2.9, Pont 32. Keppie 2011 reviews mapping of the Antonine Wall from Pont's time down to the mid-18th century.
- 5 In fact nearer 120 years. Sibbald may have copied out the figure from one of his predecessor antiquaries; cf. Sibbald 1710a: 32.
- 6 Sibbald 1707: 27.
- 7 Sibbald 1710b: 20. Notice that he distinguishes Forts and Camps.
- 8 *Adnotata Timothy Pont de vestigiis valli Agricolaie et postea Adriani* (NLS Adv MS 34.2.8, fol 41), for which see p. 38.
- 9 NLS Adv MS 33.5.15, fol 360.
- 10 Sibbald 1707: 27.
- 11 Sibbald 1707: 27. They are likely to include David Buchanan and Dr Christopher Irvine (below p. 42).
- 12 Sibbald 1707: 27.
- 13 Gibson 1695: 959; Sibbald 1707: 52.
- 14 It may be supposed he is referring to the Military Way; but see p. 78.
- 15 Presumably he means those of Gordon, Horsley and his own, since he claimed to have measured it afresh (1757: 185). General William Roy's survey of 1755 was as yet unpublished.
- 16 Maitland 1757: 185.
- 17 Glasgow Archaeological Society 1899: 36.
- 18 Macdonald 1911: 85; 1934: 74.
- 19 As noted by Steer 1964: 2 fn 7.
- 20 Gibson 1695: 959; Sibbald 1707: 52.
- 21 Hanson & Maxwell 1983b.
- 22 NLS Adv MS 34.2.8, fol 41; see Cunningham 2001: 46 fig 33.
- 23 Blaeu 1654: 4 = Blaeu 2006: 44.
- 24 He thus seems to place the terminus east rather than west of Abercorn.
- 25 The meaning of this phrase is unclear.
- 26 For other versions see Mitchell 1907: 368; Haverfield 1910: 323.
- 27 Rountree-burnehead (Rough Castle), Croy Hill, Bar Hill, Auchendavy and Balmuildy; Hilltown of Calder equates to Wilderness Plantation fortlet. Pont seems (improbably) to omit Westerwood and Castlecary except as reference points. Langtoun is perhaps Mumrills. For Summerstoun see p. 43.
- 28 Wester Cowden equates to Seabegs motte, East Calder to Cawder motte, and at Kirkintilloch he is describing the castle. Sir George Macdonald believed, wrongly in my view, that at Seabegs Irvine was alluding to a Roman fort, a still-missing element in the regular sequence of such sites between Forth and Clyde (1911: 220; 1934: 240).
- 29 Cailly-bee, Balchastel, Carreston, Achter-minnie, Roch-hill and Bakir (Bankier). In the early 18th century Alexander Gordon (1726: 20) interpreted these sites as forts built by Agricola in preparation for a northwards advance.
- 30 Blaeu 1654: 5 = Blaeu 2006: 44.
- 31 Sibbald 1707: 27. Presumably Pont knew of *RIB* 2172, 2173, 2186, 2209.
- 32 Gough 1780: 589 fn.
- 33 Nicolson 1702: 25.
- 34 Stukeley 1720: 8.
- 35 BL MS Cotton Julius F.VI, fol. 351.
- 36 Haverfield 1911: 372; cf Keppie 1998: 5.
- 37 BL MS Cotton Julius F.VI, fol 351. See also p. 57.
- 38 *RIB* 2173; see BL MS Cotton Julius F.VI, fols 295, 311, 351 on which see Haverfield 1911; Keppie 1998: 72 no 1.
- 39 Hepple 1999: 8; Edwards 2001.
- 40 BL MS Cotton Julius F.VI, fol 351. This is despite a clear reference on the stone to Antoninus Pius.
- 41 *RIB* 2172, 2186, 2209; Scaliger 1606: *Animadversiones* p. 175; Keppie 1998: 5.
- 42 Leiden University Library MS Papenbroekianus 6, fol 110r.
- 43 Gruter 1602: p. xxxvii no 12.
- 44 Piggott 1951; Kendrick 1950; Levy 1964; Kunst 1995; Herenden 2007.
- 45 Edwards 1998.
- 46 Stone 1989: 204.
- 47 Holland 1610; 1637.
- 48 Nurse 1993, and see pp. 69 and 99.
- 49 Boon 1987; Rockett 1990.
- 50 Hepple 1999; 2003a; 2003b; 2004.
- 51 Davies 1997; Hepple 1999.
- 52 Camden 1586: 461; 1607: 699.
- 53 *RIB* 2132, 2172, 2173, 2186, 2209.
- 54 Piggott 1951; Wright 1997; Hepple 1999; 2003b.
- 55 Williamson 1979: 126; Griffiths 2003.
- 56 NLS Adv MS 34.2.8, fol 135.

- 57 Sibbald 1707, p. iii.
- 58 Brown 1891: 153 ('the library is a very little room, not twice so large as my old closet').
- 59 Brown 1891: 148.
- 60 As cited in *European Magazine and London Review* 53 (1808): 434.
- 61 Dore 1953.
- 62 Blaeu 1654; Blaeu 2006.
- 63 Stone 1981; Blaeu 2006: 11.
- 64 As Sibbald remarked to Robert Wodrow on 11 November 1711, 'I have all the originall mapps and surveys and descriptions of Mr Pont, the Gordons, and others who have laboured that way, and severall maps never printed' (Maidment 1837: 147 no 13).
- 65 Cunningham 2001; see [www.nls.uk/pont](http://www.nls.uk/pont).
- 66 Mitchell 1907: p. xv; Stone 1989: 5.
- 67 NLS Adv MS 70.2.10, Gordon 50.
- 68 Bailey & Devereux 1987.
- 69 On the scope and significance of Blaeu's work, see the papers gathered in *Scottish Geographical Journal* 121 (2005), 235–320.
- 70 *Adnotata ad praetenturas, muros, valla quae Scotos a provincialibus distinguebant* (NLS Adv MS 34.2.8, fol 40); see Blaeu 1654: 3 = Mitchell 1907: 336 with English translation.
- 71 *RIB* 2173, 2186.
- 72 *Adnotata de praetenturis et muris qui provinciam Romanam a reliqua Britania separabant* (Mitchell 1907: 369 with English translation).
- 73 Blaeu 1654: 7 = Blaeu 2006: 47; Mitchell 1907: 355 (with English translation).
- 74 NLS Adv MS 33.3.16, fol 11. See Sibbald 1707: 28.
- 75 NLS Adv MS 33.5.15, fol 356.
- 76 Mitchell 1908: 124.
- 77 Castlecary.
- 78 If 'My Lord of Kilsyth' is accepted as a chronological indicator, the text as we now have it postdates 1661, when the Livingstons of Kilsyth were erected into the Scottish peerage.
- 79 'From ye kirk of Kynneill in all tyme comeing q' of it was ance ane part. And ordaines and Declaires Grahame's Dyk to bound ye samyn on the south the Sea on ye north Thirlstane on ye east' (Macdonald 1911, 149; 1934, 102).
- 80 'To the eist syd of Martin's bank, and betwixt the same and Morrice bank, southward to Graham's Dyke, and from thence eist along Graham's Dyke to the march of Auchindavie callit the Chapman's Slack' (Watson 1894: 151). East of Bar Hill the east–west Ditch served as the boundary between two estates (Macdonald 1911: 124; 1934: 148). Kilpatrick parish was also split at this time into Old Kilpatrick and New Kilpatrick.
- 81 Livingston 1920: 230.
- 82 *RIB* 2172, 2187.
- 83 Nicolson 1702: 16; Sibbald 1707: Preface, 38.
- 84 'Next to the Gordons, the Father and the son, their friend David Buchanan commeth to be mentioned, who ... wrott severall Latine descriptions of some Shyres' (NLS Adv MS 33.3.16, fol 22; Mitchell 1907: p. xxxvii).
- 85 Blaeu 1654: 72 = Blaeu 2006: 80. There is also a brief notice of the Wall in David Buchanan's *New Description of Lennox* (Blaeu 1654: 66 = Blaeu 2006: 76).
- 86 Presumably at the nearby castles of Auchenvole and Kilsyth.
- 87 Sibbald 1706: 61; 1707, p. iii.
- 88 Nicolson 1702: 16.
- 89 Livingston 1682.
- 90 Livingston 1920: 177, 364, 456.
- 91 Livingston 1682: stanza 133.
- 92 Livingston 1682: stanza 135. The allusion is to the house of Livius Drusus, Tribune of the Plebs at Rome in 91 BC (Plutarch, *Moralia* 800F).
- 93 The cut is also noted by the Anonymous Traveller in 1697 (see p. 52 and Keppie 2006: 180). Much later it was erroneously associated with Queen Victoria's fleeting visit to Callendar in 1842 (see p. 109).
- 94 Sibbald 1707: 28. The numbering here follows Sibbald, but I have excluded some comments which seem likely to be Sibbald's own, including references to material found only after Irvine's death.
- 95 Cf Maitland 1757: 179; Haverfield 1910: 324.
- 96 Here as elsewhere 'figures' means sculptural adornments.
- 97 We might think to assign this lengthy statement to Sibbald himself, though we do not know he ever visited the site; cf Gibson 1695: 959.
- 98 *RIB* 2147/2152; see Irvine 1682: 121; Keppie, in prep. By 'there' Irvine means at Cumbernauld Castle.
- 99 Conceivably this was a separate document in which the route was described in a continuous narrative.
- 100 Irvine must mean the medieval Inveravon Tower, not the small Roman fort identified by excavation in 1969 and 1991 on low ground beside the Avon.
- 101 Irvine 1682: 122.
- 102 Pont too listed a fort there (see p. 38).
- 103 The nearby farmstead of Hilton preserves the name.
- 104 'Netherwood' is perhaps identical to the 'E(aster) Wood' marked thereabouts by Pont.
- 105 No Roman fort is known at Dumbarton, but one has been proposed there as marking the western end of the 'Highland Line' of forts established in the Flavian period (Maxwell 1989b: 94).