

The Antonine Wall

Papers in honour of
Professor Lawrence Keppie

edited by

David J. Breeze and William S. Hanson



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Cover illustrations

Front: The Distance Stone of the Twentieth Legion from Hutcheson Hill (*RIB* III 3507) found in 1969 lying face down in a shallow pit immediately to the south of the Wall (copyright Hunterian, University of Glasgow). **Back:** Restored half-life-sized statue of the Roman god Mars from the annexe of the fort at Balmuildy (*CSIR* 129) (copyright Hunterian, University of Glasgow).

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Lawrence at Westerwood. Photo the late Margaret J. Robb

Dedicated to the memory of Margaret Robb (1952-2017)

Contents

List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Contributors	x
Abbreviations	xv
1. Lawrence Keppie: an appreciation	1
David J. Breeze and William S. Hanson	
2. The Antonine Wall: the current state of knowledge	9
William S. Hanson and David J. Breeze	
3. The Landscape at the time of construction of the Antonine Wall	37
Mairi H. Davies	
4. The Impact of the Antonine Wall on Iron Age Society	47
Lesley Macinnes	
5. Pre-Antonine coins from the Antonine Wall	61
Richard J. Brickstock	
6. Planning the Antonine wall: an archaeometric reassessment of installation spacing	67
Nick Hannon, Lyn Wilson, Darrell J. Rohl	
7. The curious incident of the structure at Bar Hill and its implications	86
Rebecca H. Jones	
8. Monuments on the margins of Empire: the Antonine Wall sculptures	96
Louisa Campbell	
9. Building an image: soldiers' labour and the Antonine Wall Distance Slabs	110
Iain M. Ferris	
10. New perspectives on the structure of the Antonine Wall	121
Tanja Romankiewicz, Karen Milek, Chris Beckett, Ben Russell and J. Riley Snyder	
11. Wing-walls and waterworks. On the planning and purpose of the Antonine Wall	142
Erik Graafstal	
12. The importance of fieldwalking: the discovery of three fortlets on the Antonine Wall	186
James J. Walker	

13. The Roman temporary camp and fortlet at Summerston, Strathclyde	193
Gordon S. Maxwell and William S. Hanson	
14. Thinking small: fortlet evolution on the Upper German <i>Limes</i>, Hadrian's Wall, the Antonine Wall and Raetian <i>Limes</i>	201
Matthew Symonds	
15. The Roman fort and fortlet at Castlehill on the Antonine Wall: the geophysical, LiDAR and early map evidence	218
William S. Hanson and Richard E. Jones	
16. ‘... one of the most remarkable traces of Roman art ... in the vicinity of the Antonine Wall.’ A forgotten funerary urn of Egyptian travertine from Camelon, and related stone vessels from Castlecary	233
Fraser Hunter	
17. The Kirkintilloch hoard revisited	254
J.D. Bateson	
18. The external supply of pottery and cereals to Antonine Scotland	263
Paul Bidwell	
19. The army of the Antonine Wall: its strength and implications	286
David J. Breeze	
20. Why was the Antonine Wall made of turf rather than stone?	300
Nick Hodgson	
21. Antoninus Pius' Guard Prefect Marcus Gavius Maximus with an Appendix on new evidence for the <i>Fasti</i> of Britain under Antoninus	313
Anthony R. Birley	
22. Civil settlement and extra-mural activity on the Antonine Wall	332
William S. Hanson	
23. Roman women in Lowland Scotland	346
Lindsay Allason-Jones, Carol van Driel-Murray and Elizabeth M. Greene	
24. Where did all the veterans go? Veterans on the Antonine Wall	366
Alexander Meyer	
25. ‘So the great Romans with unwearied care’: Sir John Clerk's museum	377
Iain Gordon Brown	

26. John Anderson and the Antonine Wall	394
Geoff B. Bailey and James Mearns	
27. Reconstructing Roman lives	416
Jim Devine	
28. The power of vivid images in Antonine Wall reconstructions: re-examining the archaeological evidence	420
Christof Flügel and Jürgen Obmann	
29. The Antonine Wall: some challenges of mapping a complex linear monument	432
Peter McKeague	
30. Connecting museums and sites. Advanced <i>Limes</i> Applications – a Creative Europe project	448
Erik Dobat	
31. The Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site: People, priorities and playparks	455
Patricia Weeks	
32. ‘Then ’twas the Roman, now ’tis I’	463
Iain Gordon Brown	

List of Figures

1. Lawrence Keppie: an appreciation

Figure 1.1. Lawrence receiving the Presidential Award in 2009 for his services to Glasgow Archaeological Society.....	2
Figure 1.2. Excavations starting at Bothwellhaugh in 1975	4

2. The Antonine Wall: the current state of knowledge

Figure 2.1. Map of the Antonine Wall as completed	11
Figure 2.2. Defensive pits on the berm at Callendar Park	13
Figure 2.3. Section of the Military Way bypass at Croy Hill	13
Figure 2.4. Aerial photograph of the fortlet at Duntocher	14
Figure 2.5. Plan of the fort and annexe at Bearsden	17
Figure 2.6. Plan of the fort and annexe at Rough Castle	18
Figure 2.7. Map of the Antonine Wall as planned	20
Figure 2.8 Map of the Antonine Wall showing the location of Distance Stones and camps.....	20
Figure 2.9. Aerial photograph of the construction camp at Easter Cadder with the line of the Military Way and Antonine Wall Ditch beyond	22
Figure 2.10. Plan of the small enclosure at Buchley	24
Figure 2.11. Lollius Urbicus inscription from Balmuildy	29
Figure 2.12. Sestertius of Antoninus Pius commemorating the victory in Britain	29

3. The Landscape at the time of construction of the Antonine Wall

Figure 3.1. The Antonine Wall in its environmental context, highlighting coastal areas below 13 m OD.....	39
---	----

5. Pre-Antonine coins from the Antonine Wall

Figure 5.1. Coins from the Antonine Wall, with suggested dates of deposition	61
Figure 5.2. Examples of coins from the Antonine Wall	62
Figure 5.3. A virtually unworn <i>dupondius</i> of Domitian from Camelon	62
Figure 5.4. Bar graph of coins from Camelon 1975-81, with suggested dates of deposition	65
Figure 5.5. Bar graph of coins from Newstead, with suggested dates of deposition	66

6. Planning the Antonine Wall: an archaeometric reassessment of installation spacing

Figure 6.1. Fortlet sequence showing distances between fortlets	68
Figure 6.2. Plan of Croy Hill and the change in the Wall's course at Seabegs Wood	70
Figure 6.3. Proposed fortlet positions that correspond with changes in direction of the Wall's Rampart.....	74
Figure 6.4. Spacing between forts considered primary shown in Roman miles	75
Figure 6.5. Spacing between all forts shown in Roman miles	76
Figure 6.6. Fort spacing demonstrating a system where different measurement standards were used in different areas.....	78
Figure 6.7. Spacing between the Wilderness Plantation minor enclosures	81
Figure 6.8. Spacing between the expansions	82

7. The curious incident of the structure at Bar Hill and its implications

Figure 7.1 Outline drawings of the two structures under Bar Hill and Croy Hill	86
Figure 7.2 Outline drawings of all the temporary camps known along the Wall	88
Figure 7.3 Map of the Wall showing the locations of the camps.....	89
Figure 7.4 Viewshed analysis showing areas visible from the Bar Hill structure	90
Figure 7.5 Viewshed analysis showing areas visible from Castlehill.....	92

8. Monuments on the margins of Empire: the Antonine Wall sculptures

Figure 8.1. Traces of pigment on the Parthenon Marbles, British Museum	97
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Figure 8.2. Polychromy on marble relief from Nicomedia	98
Figure 8.3. Distance Stone from Summerston	99
Figure 8.4. Colour palette for Antonine Wall sculptures	102
Figure 8.5. Colour palette for Hadrian's Wall sculptures	102
Figure 8.6. Altars to Mithras from Carrawburgh.....	103
Figure 8.7. Digital reconstruction of the Bridgeness Distance Stone	105
9. Building an image: soldiers' labour and the Antonine Wall Distance Slabs	
Figure 9.1. Antonine Wall legionary distance slab of the VIth Legion, Braidfield	111
Figure 9.2. Antonine Wall legionary distance slab of the XXth Legion, Old Kilpatrick	113
Figure 9.3. The Rudge Cup.....	115
Figure 9.4. Soldiers engaged in construction work on Trajan's Column, Rome	117
10. New perspectives on the structure of the Antonine Wall	
Figure 10.1. Section through Antonine Wall at Croy	122
Figure 10.2. Section through Antonine Wall at Bantaskin	122
Figure 10.3. Section through Antonine Wall at Inveravon fort.....	123
Figure 10.4. Stone base of Antonine Wall at Hillfoot cemetery, New Kilpatrick	124
Figure 10.5. Section through Antonine Wall at St Flannan's Church, Kirkintilloch.....	125
Figure 10.6. Plan and section through Antonine Wall at Callendar Park.....	127
Figure 10.7. Section through Antonine Wall at Tentfield	134
Figure 10.8. Sections and plan through Antonine Wall at Croy	135
11. Wing-walls and waterworks. On the planning and purpose of the Antonine Wall	
Figure 11.1. Contour maps of Bar Hill and Bearsden	149
Figure 11.2. Elevation maps of selected fort and fortlets sites showing their spatial relation to valleys	150
Figure 11.3. LiDAR image of the Seabegs Wood showing the alignment of the Military Way.....	151
Figure 11.4. LiDAR images of Rough Castle showing road tracks leading to the north-east.....	154
Figure 11.5: Intervisibilities between the main installations of the Antonine Wall.	154
Figure 11.6. LiDAR image of the Westerwood area	157
Figure 11.7. Ordnance Survey map of the Cadder area	159
Figure 11.8. Resistivity survey of Castlehill fort.....	160
Figure 11.9. The course of the Ditch in the Auchendavy area	163
Figure 11.10. Intervals between the main installations of the Antonine Wall in Roman miles	164
Figure 11.11. Plans and sections of stone-lined pit at Croy Hill	168
Figure 11.12. Hypothetical north side of the proposed abortive fort on Croy Hill	171
Figure 11.13. 'Sequential stratigraphy' of logical, spatial and structural dependencies between the main elements of the Antonine Wall system	176
Figure 11.14. Fort sizes in relation to the wider geography of the Forth-Clyde isthmus.....	181
12. The importance of fieldwalking: the discovery of three fortlets on the Antonine Wall	
Figure 12.1. Altar dedicated by Vibia Pacata from Westerwood	186
Figure 12.2. Site of Seabegs fortlet	188
Figure 12.3. Site of Kinneil fortlet	189
Figure 12.4. Site of Cleddans fortlet	191
Figure 12.5. Plan of excavations at Seabegs fortlet	192
13. The Roman temporary camp and fortlet at Summerston, Strathclyde	
Figure 13.1. Aerial photograph of Summerston camp and fortlet	194
Figure 13.2. Location map of the line of the Wall, the construction camp and fortlet at Summerston	195
Figure 13.3. Overall site plan, showing the location of the excavation trenches at Summerston	195
Figure 13.4. Sections through the eastern ditches of the camp and enclosure at Summerston	196

Figure 13.5. Photograph of section through the eastern ditch of Summerston camp	197
Figure 13.6. Trench plan and section through the contiguous ditches of the camp and enclosure at Summerston.....	198
Figure 13.7. Photograph of section through the contiguous ditches of the camp and enclosure at Summerston	199
14. Thinking small: fortlet evolution	
Figure 14.1. Plans of fortlets: milecastle 37; Barburgh Mill; Haselburg; and Pen Llystyn	202
Figure 14.2. The Upper German and Raetian frontiers	204
Figure 14.3. Hadrian's Wall, as completed at the end of Hadrian's reign in AD 138	205
Figure 14.4. A selection of fortlet plans from the Upper German Limes, Hadrian's Wall, Antonine Wall and Raetian Limes	206
Figure 14.5. Fortlet locations on the Upper German <i>Limes</i>	207
Figure 14.6. A comparison between the plots occupied by milecastle 48 and milecastle 45.....	209
Figure 14.7. Fortlet locations on the Antonine Wall: Croy Hill; Wilderness Plantation; Summerston; Duntocher.....	212
15. The Roman fort and fortlet at Castlehill on the Antonine Wall	
Figure 15.1. Roy's plan of the fort and small enclosure at Castlehill	218
Figure 15.2. 2nd edition 25 inches to the mile Ordnance Survey map of Castlehill	219
Figure 15.3. Location plan of the resistivity surveys of Castlehill.....	220
Figure 15.4. Location plan of the 2008 magnetic survey of Castlehill	221
Figure 15.5. Location plan of the 2011 magnetic survey of Castlehill	222
Figure 15.6. Annotated composite resistivity survey of Castlehill.....	223
Figure 15.7. Annotated 2008 magnetic survey of Castlehill.....	225
Figure 15.8. Annotated 2011 magnetic survey of Castlehill.....	226
Figure 15.9. LiDAR-derived digital terrain model of Castlehill.....	229
16. '... one of the most remarkable traces of Roman art ... in the vicinity of the Antonine Wall'	
Figure 16.1 The two Camelon urn fragments	234
Figure 16.2. The Camelon complex, with other burials	235
Figure 16.3. The two Camelon urn fragments, digitally restored to their original relationship	237
Figure 16.4. Drawing of the Camelon urn, with proposed restoration of its original form	237
Figure 16.5. Distribution of 'tureen'-type funerary urns	239
Figure 16.6. Three alabaster urns as found in a <i>columbarium</i> on the Via Laurentina, Rome	240
Figure 16.7. Urn MNR 135738 from the Via Laurentina, Rome	241
Figure 16.8. The two basalt vessel sherds from Castlecary	243
Figure 16.9. Drawings of the two basalt vessel sherds	244
17. The Kirkintilloch hoard revisited	
Figure 17.1. Parcel from the Kirkintilloch hoard	255
18. The external supply of pottery and cereals to Antonine Scotland	
Figure 18.1. British potteries as far north as Hadrian's Wall which supplied Antonine Scotland	265
Figure 18.2. The supply at South Shields in Period 6B, beginning in c. AD 222	267
Figure 18.3. Quantities of coarse wares from beyond Scotland compared with those of local or uncertain origins.....	271
Figure 18.4. Sources of stamped mortaria exported to Antonine Scotland	272
19. The army of the Antonine Wall: its strength and implications	
Figure 19.1. The tombstone found at Croy Hill depicting three legionaries	287
Figure 19.2. The altar dedicated by the First Cohort of Baetasians at Old Kilpatrick.....	288
Figure 19.3. One of the altars erected by M. Cocceius Firmus at Auchendavy	293
Figure 19.4. Map of Antonine Scotland	295
Figure 19.5. An impression of the fortlet at Barburgh Mill by Michael J. Moore	296

22. Civil settlement and extra-mural activity on the Antonine Wall

Figure 22.1. Plan of the fort, annexe and adjacent field system at Carriden.....	333
Figure 22.2. Plan of land divisions around the fort at Croy Hill	337
Figure 22.3. Aerial photograph of field systems to the south-east of Inveresk	338
Figure 22.4. The pottery kiln to the east of the fort at Croy Hill during excavation.....	339

23. Roman women in Lowland Scotland

Figure 23.1. Funerary monument from Shirva of a person reclining on a four-legged couch.....	350
Figure 23.2. Cork slipper from Inveresk.....	353
Figure 23.3. Main Antonine footwear styles.....	354
Figure 23.4. Graph of shoe styles correlated with size from Camelon	355
Figure 23.5. A pair of 'Camelon' style ladies' shoes from Camelon	356
Figure 23.6. Bar Hill child's shoe	358

24. Where did all the veterans go? Veterans on the Antonine Wall

Figure 24.1. Altar from Castlecary dedicated by a veteran of <i>legio VI Victrix</i>	367
Figure 24.2. Tombstone of a veteran of <i>legio XX Valeria Victrix</i> from Gloucester	372
Figure 24.3. Tombstone of a veteran of <i>legio II Augusta</i> from Caerleon	373
Figure 24.4. Tombstone of a veteran of <i>legio II Augusta</i> from Great Bulmore, dedicated by his wife.....	373
Figure 24.5. Tombstone of a veteran of <i>legio II Augusta</i> from Great Bulmore, dedicated by his wife and son	373
Figure 24.6. Tombstone of a veteran of <i>legio XX Valeria Victrix</i> from Chester	373

25. 'So the great Romans with unwearied care': Sir John Clerk's museum

Figure 25.1. Sheet of notes on Antonine Wall topics by Sir John Clerk, 1740.....	380
Figure 25.2. Sir John Clerk's sketch for a library and museum on the Penicuik estate, 1741.....	391

26. John Anderson and the Antonine Wall

Figure 26.1. Avondale Folly looking north-east	413
Figure 26.2. Hart's drawing of the lintel at Inveravon Tower	413
Figure 26.3. Hart's drawing of Inveravon Tower.....	413

27. Reconstructing Roman lives

Figure 27.1. Gravestone of Verecunda.....	417
Figure 27.2. Filming Verecunda against a green screen backdrop.....	418
Figure 27.3. Verecunda at the well in Bar Hill fort.....	419

28. The power of vivid images in Antonine Wall reconstructions

Figure 28.1. Saalburg 1913. Position of reconstructed earthworks A and B north of the stone fort and the line of the Upper German Limes	421
Figure 28.2. Saalburg 1913. Total view of the reconstructed earthworks B and A	422
Figure 28.3. Saalburg 1913. Kaiser Wilhelm and dignitaries inside earthwork A.....	422
Figure 28.4. Saalburg 1913. Earthwork A. Preparing the posts and cleaning the building plot of bushes	423
Figure 28.5. Saalburg 1913. Kaiser Wilhelm inspecting work in progress on the wattle-and-daub-construction	423
Figure 28.6. Saalburg 1913. Hammering down the posts for merlons.....	424
Figure 28.7. Saalburg 1913. Earthwork A with merlons in wattle and daub.....	424
Figure 28.8. Antonine Wall, reconstructed milefortlet	427
Figure 28.9. Hadrian's Wall, reconstructed milecastle	428
Figure 28.10. Antonine Wall, Watling Lodge fortlet, virtual reconstruction	429

29. The Antonine Wall: some challenges of mapping a complex linear monument

Figure 29.1. Extract from the Macdonald folio; the course of the Antonine Wall to the west of Callendar House, Falkirk.....	434
Figure 29.2. Extract from the 1954 to 1957 Ordnance Survey map folio depicting the course of the Antonine Wall to the west of Callendar House	436

Figure 29.3. Extract from the 1980 Ordnance Survey map depicting the course of the Antonine Wall to the west of Callendar House, Falkirk	438
Figure 29.4. Sample map depicting the components of the Antonine Wall based on the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site nomination documentation	441
Figure 29.5. Extract from the Event map prepared to support the nomination of the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site	442
Figure 29.6. The course of the Antonine Wall to the west of Callendar House, Falkirk displayed against OS Open data mapping	443
30. Connecting museums and sites. Advanced <i>Limes</i> Applications – a Creative Europe project	
Figure 30.1. Using the Antonine Wall application at Bar Hill fort.....	450
Figure 30.2. Screenshots of the Antonine Wall app: a scanned altar and interview with Prof. Lawrence Keppie	451
Figure 30.3. Augmented Reality: ground plan of Eining-Weinberg scanned with a phone and screenshot displaying the 3D reconstruction	453
31. The Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site: People, priorities and playparks	
Figure 31.1. Antonine Wall Gallery at the Hunterian Museum	456
Figure 31.2. Interpretation panel using new Antonine Wall branding	456
Figure 31.3. Worksheet created to showcase the Antonine Wall	457
Figure 31.4. Examples of different content available in the Antonine Wall app	458
Figure 31.5. One of the characters/scenes showing artefacts in background	458
Figure 31.6. A worksheet that forms part of the handling resources.....	459
Figure 31.7. Children’s design and a completed playpark at Callendar House, Falkirk.....	459
Figure 31.8. The replica Bridgeness distance slab	460
Figure 31.9. Example of trial street art with Antonine Wall themes	461
Figure 31.10. Engaging with the Wall at the Glasgow Mela	461

1. Lawrence Keppie: an appreciation

David J. Breeze and William S. Hanson

Lawrence John Forbes Keppie was born at Johnstone in Renfrewshire on 26 December 1947. He attended Coatbridge High School and then studied classics at Glasgow University where he came under the influence of A.R. Burn, who first introduced him to epigraphy. After graduation he transferred to Balliol College, Oxford, where he studied Roman history and archaeology. In 1971, he submitted a dissertation *Veterans in Italian Society under the Early Principate* in part satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy in Ancient History under the supervision of A.N. Sherwin White. Lawrence then spent a year, from October 1971 to December 1972, as Rome scholar in Classical Studies at the British School at Rome. Here he began work on a thesis on colonisation and veteran settlement in Italy under the supervision of Professor P.A. Brunt. The thesis was duly submitted to the University of Oxford for a D.Phil. in 1979 and subsequently published by the British School at Rome with the title *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy 47-14 BC* (Keppie 1983a). *The Making of the Roman Army, From Republic to Empire* was a spin-off from his time in Rome and his doctoral research (Keppie 1984a). Lawrence returned to the British School as Hugh Last Fellow in 1996.

Lawrence started his digging career as a schoolboy on a medieval castle site in Cumbernauld, before moving on to participate in the Scottish Field School of Archaeology excavations at Birrens Roman fort under the directorship of Anne Robertson. The first excavation he directed himself was on a section of the Antonine Wall at Carleith in 1969. While in Rome he participated in the British School at Rome's excavation at the Roman city of Fregellae to the south-east of Rome. His colleague there, Michael Crawford, writes, 'there his tact, modesty and cheerfulness were crucial to maintaining both good relations with our Italian colleagues (as they were also in the case of Anne Robertson) and the morale of the team. He always played up to the reputation of a Scotsman, by initially offering mineral water all round when it was his turn to buy drinks; and during visits to neighbouring archaeological sites it was only Lawrence, on one occasion, who noticed that the wall over which a stile had been built no longer existed and walked round it after everyone else had climbed over it.'

In 1972 Lawrence was appointed as an assistant curator in the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, taking up the post at the beginning of the following year. The museum was then under the directorship of the redoubtable Anne S. Robertson. The following year he was re-introduced to Jim Walker, whom he had first met while digging in Cumbernauld, establishing a fieldwork collaboration and friendship that continues to this day (Walker, this volume). Lawrence stayed at the University of Glasgow for 30 years, becoming Senior Curator of Archaeology, History and Ethnology in the Hunterian Museum and, in 1999, Professor of Roman History and Archaeology. He took early retirement in October 2003, which allowed him to concentrate on research and writing, and is now Emeritus Professor and an Honorary Professorial Research Fellow. He has also been a visiting member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and a visiting professor at the University of British Columbia.

Lawrence was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1971, of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1978 and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1995. He served as the Honorary





Figure 1.1. Lawrence receiving the Presidential Award in 2009 from Jim Mearns for his services to Glasgow Archaeological Society (by kind permission of James Walker).

Secretary of the Glasgow Archaeological Society, Vice President and then the 45th President of the Society from 1988 to 1991 (see Keppie 1990a for his presidential address) (Figure 1.1). At the university, Lawrence also participated in some teaching in the Department of Classics, including an honours option on the Provinces of the Roman Empire, with a particular emphasis on Britain, focusing on the literary sources.

Lawrence's commitment to the Hunterian Museum has been demonstrated not just through the publication of its Roman inscriptions and sculptured stones (below). In 1990, the year Glasgow was the City of European Culture, he edited a souvenir guide to the museum and on the occasion of the



Hunterian's bicentenary in 2007 produced *William Hunter and the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow 1807-2007* (Keppie 1990d; 2007). Behind the scenes, Lawrence has participated in the improved display of the collection and in preparing temporary exhibitions.

Lawrence's academic career throughout has been focussed on Roman Scotland, Roman Italy and the Roman army. For Roman archaeologists, he is the ultimate polymath. His books range from historiography (Keppie 2012a), Roman inscriptions and sculptured stones (Keppie 1998a; Keppie and Arnold 1984), the Roman army (Keppie 1983a; 1984; 2000), guide-books to Roman Scotland and the Bay of Naples (Keppie 1986b; 1998b; 2004b; 2009c; 2015) and a history of the Hunterian Museum (Keppie 2007), to the how-to-do-it book, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions* (Keppie 1991b). Unsurprisingly, his editing skills have also been in demand. He edited *Britannia* for the Roman Society from 2000 to 2004, having previously served as review editor from 1994-99 and editor of the Scottish section of the annual round-up of fieldwork on Roman Britain from 1992-2000. Together with Fraser Hunter he edited the centenary celebration of James Curle's famous excavations at Newstead, also contributing a paper to the volume (Hunter and Keppie 2012; Keppie 2012b).

Within Scotland, Lawrence's name is indelibly linked to the Antonine Wall. On his arrival at the Hunterian Museum he was immediately plunged into undertaking rescue work on the Wall. In his first report he noted that because of its linear nature, running across the width of Scotland, it was particularly at risk because 'roads and pipe-lines with a north-south alignment have to cross it somewhere' (Keppie 1976b, 61). In that paper, Lawrence brought together short reports on 12 salvage excavations, setting a precedent which continued for many years (Keppie and Breeze 1981; Keppie and Walker 1989; Keppie *et al.* 1995). Of particular note in that original paper was the account of the excavation of a 44.5m length of the Wall at Bantaskin that resulted in the location of three culverts (Keppie 1976b: 68-73). He has literally undertaken excavations along the entire length of the Wall from Bridgeness to Old Kilpatrick, including more substantial work at Bar Hill, Dullatur and Westerwood (Keppie 1978a; 1985; 1995) and beyond the Wall at Barochan Hill (Keppie 1990b; Keppie and Newall 1997).

Lawrence's interest in the details of the construction of the Wall resulted in a discussion paper in which he presented the archaeological and epigraphic evidence for the building of the Wall and which remains the basic treatment of the subject (Keppie 1974). He also provided an overview of the state of knowledge of the Wall and set about summarising the evidence for some of the more neglected fort sites along it (Keppie 1980b; 1982; Keppie and Walker 1985). Lawrence's interest in the distance slabs, most of which are in the Hunterian Museum, continued through the publication of a booklet and a more detailed treatment in his corpus on the *Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in the Hunterian Museum* (Keppie 1979; 1998a; cf Keppie 1976a) and extended to consideration of other inscriptions and sculpture from Roman Scotland (Keppie 1976c; 1978b; 1983b; 1994; 2019; Keppie *et al.* 1981).

The publication in 1976 of a paper by John Gillam on the building of the Antonine Wall contained the suggestion that there had originally been fortlets at distances of about 1.1 miles along the Wall between a series of six primary forts (Gillam 1975). Together with Jim Walker, Lawrence rose to the challenge, discovering fortlets at Kinneil, Seabegs and Cleddans (Keppie and Walker 1981; Walker, this volume). Investigations at a kink in the line of the Wall at Carleith, exactly at the measured distance, revealed an oddity on the base but no clear evidence for a fortlet while work at Nethercroy was also inconclusive (Keppie and Breeze 1981: 242-4; Keppie *et al.* 1995: 643-9).



As befitting a museum curator, Lawrence participated in the re-publication of the 1902-05 excavations at Bar Hill (Robertson, Scott and Keppie 1975). He clearly enjoyed working with Margaret Scott, who drew the finds, and still lauds – and uses – her drawings of the distance slabs (cf Keppie 2015: 33). His contribution to the Bar Hill report led on to his excavation of the headquarters building and bathhouse at the fort from 1978 to 1982 prior to their consolidation and display by the then Scottish Development Department (now Historic Environment Scotland) (Keppie 1985). Parts of these two buildings had been left exposed at the end of the earlier excavations; now all elements are laid out for display and remain the only stone buildings within an Antonine Wall fort to be visible.

Lawrence also has the unique distinction of being the only person to excavate two bathhouses in Scotland as he undertook the complete examination of the bathhouse at Bothwellhaugh in 1975-6 before its flooding by the artificial loch at Strathclyde Country Park (Figure 1.2); the building was lifted and rebuilt at a higher level (Keppie 1981). Indeed, should the hypocausted building at Falkirk prove to have been a bathhouse, he would have another such investigation to his credit (Keppie and Murray 1981). To the tally also has to be added his article bringing into the public domain earlier work on the bathhouse at Duntocher (Keppie 2004a).



Figure 1.2. Excavations starting at Bothwellhaugh in 1975. Lawrence is standing third from the right (by kind permission of James Walker).



In 1960, Anne Robertson published the first edition of *The Antonine Wall, A Handbook to the Roman Wall between Forth and Clyde and a Guide to its surviving remains*, on behalf of the Glasgow Archaeological Society. Two further editions followed in 1973 and 1979. Following her retirement Anne Robertson proposed Lawrence as her successor. His first edition, the fourth in the series, was published in 1990, followed by the fifth in 2001 and the sixth in 2015, modestly continuing to attribute the work to her (Robertson 1990; 2001; 2015). This, Lawrence's final edition (his own choice) is in a larger format, in colour, with an extended bibliography and a section on the World Heritage Site status of the monument awarded in 2008. The guide-book is truly a monument to Lawrence's four decades of work on the Antonine Wall.

Lawrence was also a regular participant in the meetings of the International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, usually offering a paper (Keppie 1977; 1980a; 1986a; 1990b; 1991a; 1997; 2009a). He was part of the small team that organised the meeting of the Congress at Stirling University in 1979. Thereafter, with Bill Hanson, he edited the conference proceedings, which were published in the record time of 12 months (Hanson and Keppie 1980).

While Lawrence's digging days may be over, his interest in the Antonine Wall has not waned. He has surveyed and reported upon the visible stretches of the Wall base in New Kilpatrick Cemetery (Keppie 2009b), while his interest in the historiography of the Antonine Wall has culminated in the publication of *The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall*, though near contemporary publications indicate that this seam is probably not yet exhausted (Keppie 2002; 2003; 2006; 2012a; 2014; 2016; 2018).

The Roman army has retained its fascination for Lawrence since his early work in Italy. In 2000 he brought together 21 papers published over a period of 30 years in *Legions and Veterans. Roman Army Papers 1971-2000*, a volume in the MAVORS series edited by Michael Speidel (Keppie 2000). Two papers extended beyond the remit of the title, trespassing into the realms of the Roman navy and the praetorian guard. And, of course, his interest in the Roman army underpins his guide-book to Roman Scotland, *Scotland's Roman Remains* later renamed *The Legacy of Rome: Scotland's Roman Remains*, which also reflects his concern to reach out to the wider public (Keppie 1986b; 1990c; 1998b; 2004b; 2015).

Throughout his career, Lawrence has never lost his interest in Roman Italy. In the introduction to his book on colonisation and veteran settlement in Italy, he stated that he had been 'to all but a handful of the fifty or more towns where veteran settlement took place on a substantial scale in this period, and to see most of the inscriptions which fall to be discussed here' (Keppie 1983a, ix). His love of Italy has never ceased and over the last 30 years he continued his visits there with his constant companion, Margaret. They particularly liked the Bay of Naples so it should have been no surprise when *The Romans on the Bay of Naples, An Archaeological Guide* appeared (Keppie 2009c).

The esteem in which Lawrence is held by his colleagues is reflected in the range of contributors and contributions to this Festschrift. So eager were they to participate in the project that the slate of contributors was complete within a week. One colleague, the eminent epigrapher Roger Tomlin, who was unable to contribute a paper, writes, 'I have known and valued Lawrence for many years, ever since we met as students at the British School in Rome. His *Making of the Roman Army* has always been on my bookshelf next to Parker's *Roman Legions*. I am proud too that I suggested his name to Batsford as the author of *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*. At Glasgow he was taught by Robin Burn, who inspired my own more provincial *Britannia Romana*, and this benefited greatly from Lawrence's careful reading of a full draft.'



The editors decided that the volume should focus on the Antonine Wall, the subject of so much investigation by Lawrence, but within that framework practically every aspect of the frontier is represented here and we even get a glimpse of Italy. The circle is complete.

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