

common in the post-Hadrianic period. Later Roman houses were more expensively decorated, with a greater use of stone-built construction, although this report shows that timber buildings were more common in the later city than is sometimes assumed.

Some of the most interesting results that are newly presented here concern the disuse of the roads and the drainage system in the second half of the fourth century. Occupation at Poultry continued into the last decades of the century but not, it would seem, beyond, and there are indications in the different character of the finds assemblages of this period that 'abandonment, when it came, may have been abrupt' (447). A decapitated human body found in a disused roadside culvert illustrates the changing nature of the urban landscape in the final quarter of the century. There is an emerging pattern, supported in particular by evidence from Roman Southwark, of late Roman burials encroaching into previously built-over parts of Roman London. It is tempting to suggest that London was being remodelled as a smaller settlement, with an urban core restricted to the area east of the Walbrook, following a pattern of contraction similar to that witnessed in some cities in Gaul. If so this was a short-lived concept, since the smaller site was not enclosed with walls in the Gallic fashion and excavations in more central areas fail to suggest that London remained recognisably urban beyond the end of the fourth century.

The importance of the Poultry site is such that the report on the PCA excavations at Tokenhouse Yard can only be given brief attention in this review. The excavations consisted of two small but deep trenches in the upper reaches of the Walbrook: a far more peripheral part of the Roman settlement than was examined at Poultry. Here a stream channel had been infilled early in the Roman period, followed by various episodes of land reclamation and drainage associated with buildings and gardens represented by short lengths of timber walls and fences. Some of the finds may have been associated with votive offerings. This clearly presented report is a useful addition to our knowledge of this part of London, without introducing new data that might require us to rethink current interpretive models.

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Hadrian's Wall, A Life. By R. Hingley. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012. Pp. xx + 394, figs 109. Price: £75.00. ISBN 978 0 19 964141 3.

The Antiquarian Rediscovery of the Antonine Wall. By L. Keppie. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Edinburgh, 2012. Pp. xiii + 169, figs 100 (some colour). Price: £30.00. ISBN 978 1 908332 00 4.

It is fortuitous that these two books are published at the same time, for each offers an account of the post-Roman history of their respective frontiers. Both are written by archaeologists eminently qualified for the task, and both are well written and copiously illustrated.

Hadrian's Wall has been in existence for nearly 2,000 years. The story of its use, re-use and abuse is thus complicated. Hingley offers a clear and accessible account of its history through these two millennia. In this well-structured book, his approach is to present the evidence in a series of essays, each focusing on a period, a person or an interpretation, though generally all are intertwined, from Hadrian himself to the present day. These include Gildas and Bede, Camden and his contemporaries, Horsley, Gordon and Warburton, Bruce and Clayton, Forster and Kipling, Haverfield, Collingwood, Birley and Richmond. During the journey we are introduced to many who have featured little in other accounts of the Wall. Throughout, the discussion of each period is placed within its wider contemporary English/Scottish, British imperial, and increasingly international background in the manner we have come to expect from the author. The narrative thus embraces subjects that we might not expect to be here, such as the influence of the literary and archaeological sources on painting and poetry and vice versa, issues of authenticity and presentation, and the problems of the National Trail. A subtle twist is to divide the book into parts based on its name: *Vallum Aelium*, the Picts' Wall, the Roman Wall, Hadrian's Wall and the 'Inclusive Wall', a treatment also enshrined in the useful timeline.

In two chapters the story of Hadrian's Wall is brought up-to-date. H. considers the issues relating to the authenticity of reconstructions, acknowledging that the form taken by any reconstruction of the Wall relates directly to interpretations of its function, while the reconstruction itself will only represent the best evidence available at the time; the next generation will prove it wrong, at least in part. Tourism now has a greater

impact on the Wall than at any time in the past. In this context, H. discusses the way that the Wall has been used in Wallsend to remake the town following its de-industrialisation. Finally we come to an account of the creation of the National Trail along the Wall and the internationalisation of the frontier. H. notes the value of the Trail in underlining the unity of the Wall which, as it is 130 km long and differentially preserved, is difficult for most visitors to envisage as one monument. This leads naturally to the question of 'who owns Hadrian's Wall?'. The answer is, 'all of us'. In these circumstances, it is important to note that H. emphasises the need for archaeologists to be involved in issues relating to protection and presentation, for if the Wall is not appropriately preserved archaeologists will have nothing to study.

H.'s judgements are always carefully considered. My favourites relate to the way in which earlier ideas cling on long after they have been disproved, for example, those of Gildas which influenced the painter William Bell Scott in the 1850s (170), and how difficult it is to dislodge them (336). It is difficult to find anything to criticise in this book and slips are few, though it should be noted that Burne-Jones was married to Kipling's mother's sister, not his sister (214).

The text is supported by contemporary illustrations, many not generally known, and by a useful series of maps locating the sites discussed in each chapter and other drawings specially prepared by C. Unwin. All the illustrations are black-and-white. This aids the flow because the reader does not have to turn to a centre-fold, but there is a downside for wonderful colour paintings are reproduced in monochrome; these include Bobby Shafto's drawing of Benwell bath-house of about 1751 and Scott's painting *Building of the Roman Wall* created for Wallington Hall in 1857.

H. has written *the* historiographical account of Hadrian's Wall for this generation and, I suspect, beyond: it is one of the most important books ever to have been written on Hadrian's Wall. For this we owe him our thanks. There are two further thanks due. First, to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this project: the money has been well spent. Second, to OUP for producing a book which is as satisfying to hold in the hand as it is to read.

Keppie has worked on the Antonine Wall for over 40 years as an excavator, museum curator, interpreter and writer. No one is better placed to tackle the subject of his new book, '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', the cut-off date being 1911, the year Macdonald published the first edition of his *The Roman Wall in Scotland*. K.'s account is published in the sumptuous style which we have come to expect from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland which deserves our congratulations.

The first chapter offers an introduction to the Antonine Wall, an overview of the antiquarians, a consideration of the Wall in its landscape and historical setting, and a review of the place-names both ancient and modern. There follows one chapter on the period from the abandonment of the Wall through to the Renaissance, with each of the remaining chapters roughly covering a century. Repeatedly, the records of these antiquarians provide valuable information on the state of the Wall and its associated monuments, as well as the countryside in which they sat, at the time of their visits, illustrated by their drawings and paintings, in particular those of the Rev. John Skinner who walked the Wall in 1825. Rather than simply quote from their published monographs, as has been the norm in the past, K. has gone back to their correspondence and papers to give greater insight into their observations and methods of working.

K. gives due attention to the heroes of the story, though I suspect few are known to readers south of the Border. These include Timothy Pont who mapped Scotland towards the close of the sixteenth century. On the relevant map is marked the line of the Antonine Wall together with the names of many of the places along it still recognisable today. Pont also prepared a detailed drawing of the various elements of the frontier which was not believed for centuries until modern excavations have rendered it plausible. It is remarkable what was recorded at this early date. Sir William Brereton in the account of his visit in 1636 states that 'at every mile's end there was erected a tower for the watchmen, and a castle at every two miles' end', a perfect description of the fortlets and forts on the Wall, while George Buchanan in 1582 had already noted the existence of the forts and also Arthur's O'on.

Another hero is William Dunlop, Principal of Glasgow College from 1690 to 1700, who began the internationally important collection of inscriptions and sculpture relating primarily to the Antonine Wall, now housed in the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow. In this way he ensured the survival of so many stones which previously had been subject to the vagaries of the interests of the local landowners. One of these inscriptions was that first seen at Balmuildy in 1696–8. It records the name of

Lollius Urbicus and was described as ‘The most invaluable Jewel of Antiquity that ever was found in the Island of Britain’ for it proved the location of the frontier built by Antoninus Pius (*RIB* 2191).

In the early eighteenth century, both Walls were well served by the same observers, Alexander Gordon and John Horsley, but following the Jacobite Uprising of 1745/6 their paths separated again. While the Uprising resulted in the destruction of part of Hadrian’s Wall, it led to the detailed recording of the Antonine Wall by William Roy and the planning of other Roman sites in Scotland by him and by Robert Melville, the man credited with first recognising Roman temporary camps in the field, who walked the Wall in 1754. At the same time, land changed hands as a result of local families being on the wrong side and some of the incomers were industrialists. The Antonine Wall was to suffer severely over the next 200 years owing to its location in central Scotland and this underlines the importance of the antiquarian records.

The industrialisation of central Scotland eventually led to a series of important rescue excavations, and these, together with contemporary research excavations, form the penultimate section of K.’s book. An epilogue carries the story forward to the ascription of the Antonine Wall as a World Heritage Site in 2008.

K.’s account of the antiquaries and the Antonine Wall is in what one might term a traditional manner. H., on the other hand, is keen to relate his account to a wider world. Both need to be on the shelf of all interested in Roman Britain and in Roman frontiers. Both are essential reading for those who want to understand the origin of today’s theories about these complex monuments as well as those cultural resource managers who seek to interpret them to a wider public; as H. demonstrates, both aspects are intimately linked.

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The Roman and Medieval Town of Staines. The Development of the Town. By P. Jones, with R. Poulton. SpoilHeap Monograph 2. SpoilHeap Publications, Woking, 2010. Pp. xxiii + 404, illus (+ digital download). Price: £25.00. ISBN 978 0 9558846 1 0.

The Roman Town of Great Chesterford. By M. Medlycott. East Anglian Archaeology Report 137. Essex County Council, Chelmsford, 2011. Pp. xvi + 368, illus (+ CD-ROM). Price: £40.00. ISBN 978 1 84194 072 4.

Ariconium Herefordshire. An Iron Age and Romano-British ‘Small Town’. By R. Jackson. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2012. Pp. xvii + 258, illus. Price: £25.00. ISBN 978 1 84217 449 4.

The three volumes under review here are all concerned with examples of a class of site often loosely described as ‘small towns’, though only two (Great Chesterford and Staines) were sufficiently well known to feature in detail in the 1990 volume on *The ‘Small Towns’ of Roman Britain* (B.C. Burnham and J.S. Wacher).

Most of the volume on Staines comprises six reports on a series of sites excavated within the core of the Roman and later town between 1977 and 1989. Considerable effort has been made to standardise their presentation in the printed report, despite the circumstances of the individual excavations and some significant variations in the coverage of their specific stratigraphies and associated finds. Additional material about the stratigraphy and the finds catalogues, together with most of the tables, has been consigned to a digital supplement which can be accessed as a downloadable pdf on the Surrey County Council website (easily located in the section about SpoilHeap Publications). I suspect that most general readers will focus on the summary chapter at the outset (1–52), which seeks to contextualise the material from these and other excavated areas within a wider narrative covering the origins, development and changing status of the town from prehistory through to the mid-nineteenth century. More specialised readers will no doubt find the presentation of a new type series of Roman pottery from the town of particular interest and value.

The summary chapter presents a reasonably coherent story about the development of Roman Staines: settlement began in the pre-Flavian era, apparently without any military stimulus, on a gravel island adjacent to a major crossing over the Thames on the London to Silchester road; already by the Flavian period its inhabitants were engaged in iron production, with occupation straddling both sides of the road and extending into the land behind; activity intensified in the second century, when the town flourished as a market centre and stopping place providing a range of services; most buildings were of timber, with clay