

## = Architecture of Scotland in the Roman era =

The architecture of Scotland in the Roman era includes all building within the modern borders of Scotland , from the arrival of the Romans in northern Britain in the first century BCE , until their departure in the fifth century . Although Ptolemy indicated that there were 19 " towns " in Caledonia , north of the Roman province of Britannia , no clear evidence of urban settlements has been found and these were probably hillforts . There is evidence of over 1 @, @ 000 such forts , most below the Clyde @-@ Forth line , but the majority seem to have been abandoned in the Roman period . There is also evidence of distinctive stone wheelhouses and small underground souterrains .

From about 71 CE the Romans began military expeditions into what is now Scotland , building forts , like that at Trimontium , and probably pushing north as far as the River Tay where they created more fortifications , like those at Inchtuthil . These were soon abandoned , and the Romans settled for the occupation of the Southern Uplands by the end of the first century , below a line drawn between the Tyne and Solway Firth . This resulted in more fortifications and the building of Hadrian 's Wall across what is now northern England . Around 141 CE they moved up to construct a new limes , a sword @-@ covered wall made of turf known as the Antonine Wall , the largest Roman structure in modern Scotland . They soon retreated to Hadrian 's Wall , with occasional expeditions that involved the building and reoccupation of forts , until the collapse of Roman power in the early fifth century .

## = = Caledonia = =

Caledonia was the name that the Romans gave to the land north of their province of Britannia . In his *Geographia* , Ptolemy , possibly drawing on earlier sources of information as well as more contemporary accounts from the Agricola invasion , identified 19 " towns " in Caledonia . No archaeological evidence of any truly urban places has been found from this time , and the names may have indicated hill forts , temporary markets or meeting places . Most of the names are obscure : Devana may be the modern Banchory , Alauna ( meaning " the rock " ) in the west is probably Dumbarton Rock and the place of the same name in the east of the Lowlands may be the site of Edinburgh Castle . Lindon may be Balloch on Loch Lomond side . There is evidence for about 1 @, @ 000 Iron Age hillforts in Scotland , most located below the Clyde @-@ Forth line . The majority are circular , with a single palisade around an enclosure . However , they appear to have been largely abandoned in the Roman period . There are also numerous vitrified forts , whose walls have been subjected to fire , which may date to this period , but an accurate chronology has not been created . Extensive studies of this type of fort at Finavon Hill near Forfar in Angus , suggest dates for the destruction of the site in either the last two centuries BCE , or the mid @-@ first millennium CE . Many of these forts would be reoccupied after the Roman departure .

Beyond the area of Roman occupation , in the west and north , there are over 60 sites identified of wheelhouses . Perhaps a development of earlier Atlantic roundhouses , these have a characteristic outer wall surrounding a circle of stone piers ( bearing a resemblance to the spokes of a wheel ) . Over 400 souterrains , small underground constructions , have been discovered in Scotland , many of them in the south @-@ east , and although few have been dated , those that have suggest a construction date in the second or third centuries CE . They are usually found close to settlements ( whose timber frames are much less well @-@ preserved ) and may have been for storing perishable agricultural products .

## = = Early Roman constructions = =

The Romans began military expeditions into what is now Scotland from about 71 CE . In 78 CE Gnaeus Julius Agricola arrived in Britain to take up his appointment as the new governor and began a series of major incursions . Two years later his legions constructed a substantial fort at Trimontium near Melrose . He is said to have pushed his armies to the estuary of the " River Taus " ( usually assumed to be the River Tay ) and established forts there , including a legionary fortress at Inchtuthil

. After his victory over the northern tribes at Mons Graupius in 84 CE , a series of forts and towers were established along the Gask Ridge , which marked the boundary between the Lowland and Highland zones , probably forming the first Roman limes or frontier in Scotland .

Agricola 's successors were unable or unwilling to further subdue the far north . The fortress at Inchtuthil was dismantled before its completion , and the other fortifications of the Gask Ridge were abandoned within the space of a few years . By CE 87 the occupation was limited to the Southern Uplands , and by the end of the first century the northern limit of Roman expansion was a line drawn between the Tyne and Solway Firth . Elginhaugh fort , in Midlothian , dates to about this period , as may Castle Greg in West Lothian . The Romans eventually withdrew to a line in what is now northern England , building the fortification known as Hadrian 's Wall from coast to coast .

= = The Antonine Wall and later invasions = =

Around 141 CE the Romans undertook a reoccupation of southern Scotland , moving up to construct a new limes between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde . The resulting Antonine Wall is the largest Roman construction inside Scotland . It is a sward @-@ covered wall made of turf , around 20 feet ( 6 m ) high , with nineteen forts and extending for 37 miles ( 60 km ) . The stone foundations and wing walls of the original forts demonstrate that the intention was to build a stone wall similar to Hadrian 's Wall , but this was quickly amended . There is a wide ditch on the north side , and a military way on the south . The Romans initially planned to build forts every 6 miles ( 10 km ) , but this was soon revised to every 2 miles ( 3 km ) . One of the best preserved forts , but also one of the smallest , is Rough Castle Fort . In addition to the forts , there are at least nine smaller fortlets , probably on Roman mile spacings , which formed part of the original scheme , some of which were later replaced by forts . The most visible fortlet is Kinneil , at the eastern end of the Wall , near Bo 'ness . Having taken twelve years to build , the wall was overrun and abandoned soon after CE 160 . The Romans retreated to the line of Hadrian 's Wall .

Roman troops penetrated far into the north of modern Scotland several more times , with at least four major campaigns . The Antonine Wall was occupied again for a brief period after 197 CE . The most notable invasion was in 209 when the emperor Septimius Severus led a major campaign . A string of forts was constructed in the north @-@ east ( some of which may have been begun in the earlier Antonine campaign ) . These include camps associated with the Elswick Mounth , such as Normandykes , Ythan Wells , Deers Den and Glenmailen . However , only two forts in Scotland , at Cramond and Carpow ( in the Tay valley ) are definitely known to have been permanently occupied during this incursion . There is evidence that these campaigns are coincident with the wholesale destruction and abandonment of souterrains in southern Scotland . This may have been due either to Roman military aggression or the collapse of local grain markets in the wake of Roman withdrawal . After the death of Severus in 210 the Romans withdrew back to Hadrian 's Wall , which would be the frontier until Roman authority in Britain collapsed in the fifth century .