

# Scotland during the Roman Empire



**Monument at site of the Roman fort of [Trimontium](#)**

Scotland during the Roman Empire encompasses a period of [history](#) from the arrival of Roman legions in c. AD 71 to their departure in 213. The history of the period is complex: the [Roman Empire](#) influenced every part of Scotland during the period. However the occupation was neither complete nor continuous. Interpretation is complicated by the fact that the idea of both "[Scots](#)" and of "[Scotland](#)" as a discrete entity did not emerge until [later](#). The period is marked by appearance of the first [historical accounts](#) of the peoples of Scotland, as well as by extensive, yet inconclusive archaeological evidence. During this time, several tribes occupied Scotland. The Romans gave the name [Caledonia](#) to the land north of their [province](#) of [Britannia](#), beyond the empire's [frontier](#). Although the Roman presence was at an important time in [Scottish history](#), because it was when written records emerged, Roman influence on [Scottish culture](#) was not enduring.

The Roman invasion under [Quintus Petillius Cerialis](#) began in AD 71 and culminated in the battle of [Mons Graupius](#) at an unknown location in northern Scotland – probably in the Grampian mountains in AD 84. Although the [Caledonia Confederacy](#) suffered a defeat, it was not long before the legions abandoned their gains and returned to a line south of the [Solway Firth](#), later consolidated by the construction of [Hadrian's Wall](#). Roman commanders subsequently attempted to conquer territory north of this line, including building the [Antonine Wall](#), but their success was short-lived. Roman forces ceased to have a significant impact after 211. By the close of the Roman occupation of southern and central Britain in the 5th century, the [Picts](#) emerged as the dominant force in northern Scotland, with the [Brythonic](#) tribes the Romans had first encountered occupying the southern half of the country.

In the 4th century BC, [Aristotle](#) knew of "Albinn" and "Ierne" (islands of [Great Britain](#) and [Ireland](#)). The Greek explorer [Pytheas](#) visited Britain sometime between 322 and 285 BC and may have circumnavigated the island, which he describes as triangular. In *On the Ocean*, Pytheas refers to the northerly point as *Orcas*, conceivably a reference to [Orkney](#).

The earliest record of a connection between Rome and Scotland is attendance of the "King of Orkney" - one of eleven British kings who submitted to the Emperor [Claudius](#) at [Colchester](#) in AD 43 following the [invasion of southern Britain](#) three months earlier. The long distances and short time involved strongly suggest a prior connection between Rome and Orkney, although no evidence has been found and the contrast with later [Caledonian](#) resistance is striking. Originals

of *On the Ocean* do not survive, but copies are known to have existed in the 1st century AD, so at least a rudimentary knowledge of the geography of north Britain would have been available to Roman military intelligence. [Pomponius Mela](#), a Roman geographer, recorded in *De Chorographia*, written about AD 43, that there were thirty [Orkney islands](#) and seven *Haemodae* (possibly [Shetland](#)). There is certainly evidence of an Orcadian connection with Rome before 60 AD from pottery found at the [Broch](#) of [Gurness](#) in the Orkneys.

By the time of [Pliny the Elder](#), who died in AD 79, Roman knowledge of Scotland extended to the *Hebudes* ([Hebrides](#)), *Dumna* (probably [Outer Hebrides](#)), [Caledonian Forest](#), and [Caledonii](#). [Ptolemy](#), possibly drawing on early sources and accounts from the [Agricolan](#) invasion, identified 18 tribes in Scotland in his *Geography*, but many names are obscure and geography was less reliable in the north and west, suggesting early Roman knowledge was confined to observations from the sea.

Ptolemy's tribes located north of the Forth-Clyde isthmus include [Cornovii](#) in [Caithness](#), Caereni, Smertae, Carnonacae, Decantae, Lugi and Creones also north of the [Great Glen](#), [Taexali](#) in the north-east, [Epidii](#) in [Argyll](#), [Venicones](#) in [Fife](#), Caledonii in the central [Highlands](#) and Vacomagi near [Strathmore](#). It is likely that these cultures all spoke a form of [Celtic](#) known as [Pritennic](#). Occupants of southern Scotland were [Damnonii](#) in the Clyde valley, [Novantae](#) in Galloway, [Selgovae](#) on the south coast and [Votadini](#) to the east. These peoples may have spoken a form of [Brythonic](#). Unfortunately, [radiocarbon dating](#) for this period is problematic and chronological sequences poorly understood. For a variety of reasons, much archaeological work in Scotland has concentrated on islands of the west and [north](#).

Scotland also has numerous [vitrified forts](#), but an accurate chronology has proven evasive. Extensive studies at Finavon Hill near [Forfar](#) in [Angus](#) suggest dates for destruction of the site in either the last two centuries BC, or the mid-first century AD. The lack of Roman artifacts suggests that many sites were abandoned before arrival of the legions. A traveler, [Demetrius of Tarsus](#), related to [Plutarch](#) the tale of an expedition to the west coast around AD 83. He stated that it was "a gloomy journey amongst uninhabited islands", but that he had visited one that was the retreat of holy men. He mentioned neither [Druids](#) nor the name of the island.

The cordial beginning recorded at Colchester did not last. We know nothing of the foreign policy of senior leaders in mainland Scotland in the 1st century, but by AD 71 the [Roman governor Quintus Petillius Cerialis](#) launched an invasion. The Votadini, who occupied the south-east of Scotland, came under Roman sway at an early stage and Cerialis sent a [division](#) north through their territory to the shores of the [Firth of Forth](#). The XXth Legion took a westerly route through [Annandale](#) in an attempt to encircle and isolate the Selgovae who occupied the central [Southern Uplands](#). Early success tempted Cerialis further north and he constructed a line of [forts](#) to the north and west of [Gask Ridge](#), marking a frontier between [Venicones](#) to the south and Caledonii to the north.



## Mons Graupius

In the summer of AD 84, the Romans faced the Caledonian armies at the [Battle of Mons Graupius](#). Agricola, whose forces included a fleet, arrived with [light infantry](#) bolstered by British [auxiliaries](#). It is estimated that 20,000 Romans faced 30,000 Caledonians. Agricola put auxiliaries in the front, keeping his legions in reserve, and relied on close-quarters fighting to make the Caledonians' unpointed slashing swords useless. Even though the Caledonians were put to rout and lost this battle, 2/3 of their army escaped and hid in the Highlands or the "trackless wilds" as [Tacitus](#) called them. Tacitus estimated battle casualties at 10,000 on the Caledonian side and 360 on the Roman side. A number of authors reckoned the battle to have occurred in the [Grampian Mounth](#) within sight of the [North Sea](#). In particular, Roy, Surene, Watt, Hogan and others have advanced notions that the battle site may have been [Kempstone Hill](#), [Megray Hill](#), or on other knolls near the [Raedykes Roman camp](#). These points of high ground are near [Elsick Mounth](#), an ancient [track](#) used by Romans and Caledonians for military maneuvers. Other suggestions include the hill of [Bennachie](#) in [Aberdeenshire](#), [Gask Ridge](#) near [Perth](#), or [Sutherland](#). It has also been suggested that in the absence of archaeological evidence and Tacitus' low estimates of Roman casualties, that the battle was fictitious.

## Calgacus

The first named Scot to appear in history by name was [Calgacus](#) ("Swordsman"), Caledonian leader at Mons Graupius - referred to by Tacitus in *Agricola* as "most distinguished for birth and valor among chieftains". Tacitus even invented a speech for him before the battle in which he describes Romans as:

“ Robbers of the world, having by their universal plunder exhausted the land, they rifle the deep. If the enemy be rich, they are rapacious; if he be poor, they lust for dominion; neither the east nor the west has been able to satisfy them. Alone among men they covet with equal eagerness poverty and riches. To robbery, slaughter, plunder, they give the lying name of empire; they make a solitude and call it peace. ”

## Aftermath

Calgacus' fate is unknown, but according to Tacitus, after the battle Agricola ordered the [prefect](#) of the fleet to sail around the north of Scotland to confirm that Britain was an island and receive the surrender of the [Orcadians](#). It was proclaimed that Agricola had finally subdued all the tribes of Britain. However, the Roman historian [Cassius Dio](#) reports that this circumnavigation resulted in [Titus](#) receiving his 15th acclamation as emperor in 79 AD - five years before the battle at Mons Graupius took place.

Marching camps may have been constructed along the southern shores of [Moray Firth](#), although their existence is questioned. Total size of the Roman garrison in Scotland during the [Flavian](#) period is thought to be 25,000 troops, requiring 16–19,000 tons of grain per year. In addition, material to construct the forts was substantial, estimated at 1 million [cubic feet](#) of timber during

the 1st century. Ten tons of buried nails were discovered at the Inchtuthil site, which may have had a garrison of 6,000 men.

Soon after his announcement of victory, Agricola was recalled to Rome by [Domitian](#) and his post passed to [Sallustius Lucullus](#). Agricola's successors were seemingly unable or unwilling to further subdue the far north. Despite his apparent successes, Agricola fell out of favor and it is possible that Domitian may have been informed of the fraudulence of Agricola's claim to have won a significant victory. The fortress at Inchtuthil was dismantled before its completion and other fortifications at Gask Ridge (built to consolidate the Roman presence in Scotland after Mons Graupius) were abandoned. It is possible that the cost of a drawn-out war outweighed any economic or political benefit and it was wiser to leave the Caledonians alone. By AD 87, occupation was limited to the Southern Uplands and by the end of the 1st century, the northern limit of Roman expansion was a line between the [Tyne](#) and [Solway Firth](#). [Elginhaugh](#) fort in [Midlothian](#) dates to this period as may [Castle Greg](#) in [West Lothian](#), most likely used as a monitoring base for an east-west road running along the foot of the nearby [Pentlands](#), from the [Forth](#) to the [Clyde Valley](#).

As a consequence of the Roman advance, hill forts such as Dun Mor in Perthshire, abandoned by the natives long ago, were reoccupied. New ones may even have been constructed in the northeast such as Hill O' Christ's Kirk in [Aberdeenshire](#).

## "Towns" and southern brochs



[Edin's Hall Broch](#)

Ptolemy's map identifies 19 "towns" from intelligence gathered during the Agricolan campaigns. No archaeological evidence of truly urban places has been found from this time and the names may have been those of hill forts or temporary market or meeting places. Most of the names are obscure: *Devana* may be modern [Banchory](#), and *Alauna* (meaning "rock") in the west 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.

Remains of broch towers in southern Scotland appear to date from the period just before or following Agricola's invasion. They are about fifteen in number found in four locations: Forth

valley near the [Firth of Tay](#), far southwest, and eastern [Borders](#). Their existence far from main centers of broch-building is a mystery. The destruction of Leckie broch may have been by Roman invaders, yet like the nearby site of Fairy Knowe at [Buchlyvie](#), a substantial amount of Roman and native artifacts have been found. Both structures were built in the late 1st century AD and were evidently prestigious buildings. The inhabitants raised sheep, cattle, and pigs, and hunted wild game including [red deer](#) and [wild boar](#).

[Edin's Hall Broch](#) in [Berwickshire](#) is the best preserved southern broch and although the ruins are similar to larger Orcadian broch villages, it is unlikely that the tower was ever more than one story high. There is an absence of Roman artifacts. Various theories for existence of these structures have been proposed, including construction by northern invaders following withdrawal of Roman troops, or by allies of Rome encouraged to emulate the impressive northern style to suppress native resistance, perhaps even Orcadian chiefs whose relationship with Rome may have continued from the start of Roman-British relations. It is also possible that their construction had little to do with Roman frontier policy and was simply the importation of a new style by southern elites or it may have been their response to the growing threat of Rome prior to the invasion and an attempt to ally with the free north.

## Hadrian's Wall



[Hadrian's Wall near Greenhead](#)

[Quintus Pompeius Falco](#) was governor of Britannia between 118 and 122. He suppressed an uprising of the [Brigantes](#) of northern Britannia and the Selgovae. In his last year, he hosted a visit by Emperor [Hadrian](#) that resulted in the construction of [Hadrian's Wall](#) ([Latin](#): *Rigore Valli Aeli*, "line along Hadrian's frontier").

This line of occupation was one of the [limes](#) (defensible frontiers) of the empire. It was a stone and turf [fortification](#) built across the width of what is now the border between northern [England](#) and southern Scotland. The wall is 80 [Roman miles](#) (73.5 English miles long - width and height dependent on construction materials from nearby. East of the [River Irthing](#), the wall was of squared stone and measured 9.7 ft wide and 16–20 ft high, while west of the river, the wall was of turf and measured 20 ft wide and 11.5 ft high. The Romans augmented the wall with ditches, [berms](#), and forts.

The wall had several purposes. Defense was obvious, but it also controlled movement behind the line, enabled the rapid transmission of military intelligence and collection of customs dues. Its

scale demonstrated the power of Rome to her enemies, and enhanced the prestige of its builders. Hadrian's Wall remained the frontier between Roman and Celtic worlds in Britain until 139.



**Britain between the Walls**

## Antonine Wall

[Quintus Lollius Urbicus](#) was made governor of [Roman Britain](#) in 138 by the new Emperor [Antoninus Pius](#). Antoninus Pius soon reversed the containment policy of his predecessor Hadrian, and Urbicus began the reconquest of [Lowland Scotland](#). Between 139 and 140, he rebuilt a fort at [Corbridge](#) and by 142/143. Commemorative coins of that period celebrated a victory in Britain. It is likely that Urbicus led reoccupation of southern Scotland using [Legio II Augusta](#). He campaigned against several [British tribes](#) (including the northern Brigantes), lowland tribes of [Scotland](#), Votadini, Selgovae of the Scottish Borders, and Damnonii of Strathclyde. His total force was about 16,500 men. It is likely that Urbicus planned his campaign from Corbridge, moving north and leaving garrison forts at High Rochester in Northumberland and Trimontium as he struck toward the Firth of Forth. His overland supply route for personnel and equipment was along [Dere Street](#), Urbicus set up a supply port at Carriden for grain and other foodstuffs before proceeding against the Damnonii.



**Antonine Wall Trace at Barr Hill**

Success was swift and construction of a new *lime* between the Firth of Forth and [Firth of Clyde](#) began. Contingents from at least one British legion assisted in building the new turf barrier, evidenced by an inscription from the fort at [Old Kilpatrick](#). Today, the [sward](#)-covered wall is all that remains of a defensive line of [turf](#) 20 feet high with nineteen forts. It was built after AD 139 and extended for 37 miles. It was possibly after the defenses were finished that Urbicus turned

his attention on the Novantae who inhabited the Dumfries and Galloway peninsula. The main lowland tribes, sandwiched between Hadrian's Wall to the south and the new wall to the north, formed a confederation against Roman rule, known as the [Maeatae](#).

The Antonine Wall provided a defensive line against the Caledonians. It cut off the Maeatae from their Caledonian allies and created a buffer zone north of Hadrian's Wall. It also facilitated troop movements between east and west, but its main purpose may not have been military. It enabled Rome to control and tax trade and may have prevented potentially disloyal subjects of Roman rule from communicating with independent brethren to the north for the purpose of coordinating revolts. Urbicus achieved an impressive series of military successes, but like Agricola's they were short-lived. Having taken twelve years to build, the wall was overrun and abandoned soon after AD 160. The destruction of some of the southern brochs may date to the Antonine advance - whether they had previously been symbols of Roman patronage, they had outlived their usefulness.

## Later Roman campaigns

The Roman frontier became Hadrian's Wall again, although Roman incursions into Scotland continued. Initially, outpost forts occupied in the southwest and Trimontium remained in use but they too were abandoned after the mid-180s.



[Inscription on Roman altar at Cramond](#)

Roman troops penetrated far into the north of Scotland several more times. There is a greater density of Roman marching camps in Scotland than anywhere else in Europe as a result of at least four major attempts to subdue the tribes. The legions occupied the Antonine Wall again for a brief period after AD 197. The most notable invasion was in 209 when the emperor [Septimus](#)

[Severus](#), claiming to be provoked by belligerence of the [Maeatae](#), campaigned against the Caledonian Confederacy.

Little is known about this alliance of tribes, augmented by fugitives from Roman rule further south. The exact location of "Caledonia" is unknown, and the boundaries are unlikely to have been fixed. The name itself is a Roman one used by Tacitus, Ptolemy, Pliny the Elder, and [Lucan](#), but the name which Caledonians called themselves is unknown. No evidence has emerged of any specific Caledonian military or political leadership or stable confederation.

Severus used three legions of the British garrison (augmented by the recently formed [Legio II Parthica](#)), 9,000 imperial guards with cavalry support, and numerous auxiliaries supplied by the British fleet, Rhine fleet, and two fleets transferred from the Danube. According to [Dio Cassius](#), he inflicted genocide on native peoples but lost 50,000 of his own men to the attrition of [guerrilla](#) tactics.

A string of forts was constructed in the northeast (some may date from the earlier Antonine campaign). These include camps associated with Elswick Mounth, such as [Normandykes](#), [Ythan Wells](#), [Deers Den](#), and [Glenmailen](#). Only two forts in Scotland - [Cramond](#) and Carpow (in the Tay valley) are known to have been permanently occupied during this incursion before troops were withdrawn again to Hadrian's Wall about 213. There is evidence that these campaigns coincide with destruction and abandonment of fortifications in southern Scotland due either to Roman military aggression or collapse of local grain markets in the wake of Roman withdrawal.

Severus repaired and reinforced Hadrian's Wall with a thoroughness that led many authors to attribute the construction of the wall to him. It was during negotiations to purchase the truce necessary to secure the Roman retreat to the wall that the first recorded utterance, attributable with any reasonable confidence to a native of Scotland was made. When Septimus Severus' wife, Julia Domna, criticized the morals of Caledonian women, the wife of Caledonian chief Argentocoxos replied: "We fulfill the demands of nature in a much better way than do Roman women; for we consort openly with the best men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest".

Septimus Severus died at [York](#) in 211 while planning to renew hostilities, but his son Caracalla abandoned these plans. Later excursions by Romans were limited to scouting expeditions in the buffer zone that developed between the walls, trading, bribes to purchase truces, and eventually the spread of Christianity. The [Ravenna Cosmography](#) uses a 3rd or 4th century Roman map that identifies four meeting places and major markets in southern Scotland. *Locus Maponi* is possibly modern Lochmabenstane near [Gretna](#) used as a muster point throughout Roman times. Two others are meeting places of Damnonii and Selgovae, and the fourth, *Manavi* may be [Clackmannan](#). From the time of Caracalla onwards, Rome made no attempts to permanently occupy territory in Scotland.

## The Painted Ones



**Pictish symbol stone in [Strathpeffer](#)**

The intermittent Roman presence in Scotland coincided with emergence of the [Picts](#), a [confederation](#) of tribes living north of the Forth and Clyde from Roman times until the 10th century. They are assumed to be the descendants of Caledonii, though evidence is circumstantial. The name by which Picts called themselves is unknown. They are said to have tattooed themselves, but evidence for this is limited. Naturalistic depictions of Pictish nobles, hunters, and warriors without obvious tattoos are found on [monumental stones](#). [Gael](#)s of Dalriada called Picts [Cruithne](#), and Irish poets portrayed Pictish counterparts as much like themselves.

The means by which the Pictish confederation formed is unknown. There is speculation that reaction to growth of the Roman Empire was a factor. In later periods, multiple kings ruled over separate kingdoms, with one king, sometimes two, dominating lesser neighbors. [De Situ Albanie](#), [Pictish Chronicle](#), and [Duan Albanach](#), along with Irish legends, have been used to argue the existence of seven Pictish kingdoms although more may have existed and some evidence suggests that a Pictish kingdom also existed in Orkney.

The Pictish relationship with Rome appears to have been less hostile than their Caledonii predecessors, at least in the beginning. There were no pitched battles and conflict was limited to raiding parties until just prior to and after the Roman retreat from Britannia. Their success in holding back Roman forces cannot be explained solely with reference to the remoteness of Caledonia or difficulties of terrain. It may have been due to difficulties encountered in subduing a population that did not conform to local governance upon which Roman power usually relied.

The technology of everyday life is not well recorded, but archaeological evidence shows it to have been similar to that in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England. Recently evidence has been found of [watermills](#) in Pictish lands and [kilns](#) used for drying wheat or barley, not easy in the damp climate. Although constructed in earlier times, brochs, roundhouses and [crannogs](#) remained in use into and beyond the Pictish period. Elsewhere in Scotland, [wheelhouses](#) were constructed, probably for ritualistic purposes, in the west and north. Their geographic locations were restricted, which suggests that they may have been within a political or cultural frontier and the

coincidence of their arrival and departure associated with Roman influence in Scotland is a matter of debate. It is not known whether the culture that constructed them was "Pictish" although they would certainly have been known to the Picts. As Rome's power waned, the Picts got bolder. War bands raided south of Hadrian's Wall in force in 342, 360, and 365 and participated in the [conspiratio barbarica](#) of 367. Rome fought back, mounting campaigns in 369 and 384, but they were short-lived successes. The legions finally deserted *Brittania* in 410 - never to return.

## Roman legacy

The military presence of Rome lasted for little more than 40 years in most of Scotland and only 80 years at most in the south. At no time was even half of Scotland under Roman control. Scotland inherited two main benefits from the Roman period: the [Roman alphabet](#), and [Christianity](#) as the predominant religion. Through Christianity, [Latin](#) was used in Scotland for church and government purposes for centuries.

There is little evidence of a direct link between the Roman Empire and Christian missions north of Hadrian's Wall. Traditionally, [Ninian](#) is credited as the first [bishop](#) active in Scotland. He is briefly mentioned by [Bede](#) who states that around 397 he set up his base at [Whithorn](#) in southwest Scotland - building a stone church named [Candida Casa](#). More recently it has been suggested that Ninian was the 6th century missionary [Finnian of Moville](#). Either way, Roman influence on early Christianity in Scotland does not appear to have been significant.

Although little more than a series of brief interludes of military occupation, Imperial Rome was ruthless and brutal in pursuit of its ends. Genocide was a common element of foreign policy and it is clear that invasions and occupations cost thousands of lives. Alistair Moffat writes:

“ The reality is that the Romans came to what is now Scotland, they saw, they burned, killed, stole and occasionally conquered, and then they left a tremendous mess behind them, clearing away native settlements and covering good farmland with the remains of ditches, banks, roads, and other sorts of ancient military debris. Like most imperialists they arrived to make money, to gain political advantage and to exploit the resources of their colonies at virtually any price to the conquered. And remarkably, in Britain, in Scotland, we continue to admire them for it. ”

All the more surprising given that the [Vindolanda tablets](#) show that the Roman nickname for north British locals was *Brittunculi* meaning "nasty little Britons". Similarly, William Hanson concludes that:

“ For many years it has been almost axiomatic in studies of the period that the Roman conquest must have had medium or long-term impact on Scotland. On present evidence, that cannot be substantiated either in terms of environment, economy, or, indeed, society. The impact appears to have been very limited. The general picture remains one of broad continuity, not of disruption. The Roman presence in Scotland ”

was little more than a series of brief interludes within a longer continuum of indigenous development."

The Romans' part in clearing the once-extensive Caledonian forest remains a matter of debate. These forests were once much more extensive than they are now. The 16th century writer [Hector Boece](#) believed that the woods in Roman times stretched north from Stirling into [Atholl](#) and [Lochaber](#). Modern research suggests a more complex picture. Changing post-glacial climate may have allowed for a maximum forest cover between 4000 and 3000 BC and deforestation of the Southern uplands was well underway by the time the legions arrived. Extensive analyses of Black Loch in [Fife](#) suggest that arable land spread at the expense of forest from about 2000 BC until the 1st century AD Roman advance. Thereafter, there was regrowth of birch, oak and hazel for five centuries, suggesting invasions had a very negative impact on the native population. The situation with Roman-held areas is harder to assess, but long-term influence of Rome may not have been substantial.

The archaeological legacy of Rome in Scotland is sparse in the north. Almost all sites are military and include about 400 miles of roads, such as the northern section of [Dere Street](#) that runs along the east coast to Cramond. It is hard to find direct connections between native architecture and settlement patterns and Roman influence. In Scotland, the Celtic way of life, threatened but not extinguished by Rome, reasserted itself. In the north, Picts continued to be the main power before the arrival and subsequent domination of the Scots of [Dalriada](#). The [Damnonii](#) eventually formed the [Kingdom of Strathclyde](#) based at [Dumbarton Rock](#). South of the Forth, Welsh-speaking [Brythonic](#) kingdoms of [Yr Hen Ogledd](#) (English: *The Old North*) flourished during the 5th–7th centuries. In 1984, a possible [Roman fort](#) was found at [Easter Galcantray](#), southwest of [Cawdor](#) by [aerial photography](#). The site was excavated by 1988 and several features identified, but no datable artifacts were found. If confirmed, it is one of the most northerly known Roman forts. A discovery in Easter Ross suggests that the legions may have reached further north in Scotland. The site of a temporary camp was proposed at [Portmahomack](#) in 1949, although this has not been conclusively confirmed. The most enduring Roman legacy may be that of Hadrian's Wall. Its line approximates the border between Scotland and England, and created a cultural buffer – “the Borders”, across the island that has lasted into the present.

## Fiction Rivaling Facts

The [9th Spanish Legion](#) participated in the Roman invasion of Britain, suffering losses under Quintus Petillius Cerialis in the rebellion of [Boudicia](#) of 61, and setting up a fortress in 71 that became part of [Eburacum](#). Although some authors claim that the 9th Legion vanished during its conflicts in Scotland by 117, there are later records of its activities, and it was probably annihilated in the east of the Roman Empire by the Persians. This idea was used in the novels [The Eagle of the Ninth](#) by Rosemary Sutcliff, [Legion From the Shadows](#) by [Karl Edward Wagner](#), [Red Shift](#) by [Alan Garner](#), [Engine City](#) by [Ken MacLeod](#), [Warriors of Alavna](#) by N. M. Browne, [Mons Graupius](#) by Robert Wallace, and the feature film [The Last Legion](#).

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