

# I

## Sir Robert Cotton, Camden's *Britannia*, and the Early History of Roman Wall Studies

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### SUMMARY

*During the second half of 1599 William Camden and Robert Cotton toured the Roman Wall country in Northumberland and Cumberland, collecting first-hand materials for a new edition of Camden's Britannia. Britannia was the foundation of serious Roman epigraphical and archaeological study in Britain and the visit by Cotton and Camden is also the starting-date for systematic studies of the Roman Wall (Hadrian's Wall). The visit also saw the start of Robert Cotton's collection of Roman inscribed stones, and this paper traces the context for Cotton and Camden's tour of the north and the evidence for Cotton's activities in collecting the stones, including the difficult and drawn-out process of transporting them to his home in Huntingdonshire. It also discusses the sometimes disputed issues of where Camden and Cotton visited in the north, and whether Sir Robert Cotton made a second visit to Northumberland to locate and collect inscribed stones, notably the important altars from Redesdale.*

In the second half of the year 1599, from summer through to December, two leading antiquarians made an historic tour of the north of England, journeying to Carlisle and then travelling east to Newcastle through the Tyne Gap searching for Roman remains and inscriptions. The two antiquarians were William Camden, then in his late forties and the famed author of *Britannia*, and Robert Cotton, in his late twenties but already building his famous library of manuscripts and books and established as an important figure in late Elizabethan scholarly circles.

The northern tour of 1599 enabled Camden to write at first hand of the Roman heritage in the border counties, an experience recorded in

the new edition of *Britannia* that appeared in 1600. It has also been recognised as the starting-date for systematic Roman Wall studies: as Birley notes in his standard historiography of the Roman Wall, "Camden is in fact the first author to deal with the Wall at length in print, and it is normally with him that a study of its antiquarian history begins."<sup>1</sup> The tour also led Robert Cotton to start his personal collection of Roman inscribed stones, a collection that has had a major and enduring impact on Roman Wall scholarship and was first reflected in the 1607 edition of *Britannia*. This collection was originally housed by Cotton at his home in Conington (Huntingdonshire); most (and possibly all) of it still survives, and can be found in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge University.<sup>2</sup>

This paper sets out to examine the detail of the evidence available for Cotton's activities in the Roman Wall country, tracing the difficult and drawn-out process of collecting and transporting the stones to his collection in Conington. It also discusses the sometimes disputed issues of where Camden and Cotton visited in the north, and when, and whether Robert Cotton later returned to Northumberland on a separate visit. The available evidence is fragmentary, and the individual pieces of evidence can sometimes be read (and dated) in different ways. The aim here is to reconstruct as coherent a picture and narrative as possible, without glossing over alternative interpretations.

It is an opportune time for such an inquiry, both because 1999 marks the 400th anniversary of Camden and Cotton's tour and because a substantial body of work has recently been done on Cotton's life and political activities,<sup>3</sup> on his great library and manuscript collection<sup>4</sup> (which became a foundation collection of the

British Museum), and on his role more generally as a collector.<sup>5</sup> The latter work includes two studies by McKitterick and Davies on Cotton's collection of Roman stones,<sup>6</sup> and the present study should be seen as a northern addendum to that work.

## THE DATE OF THE NORTHERN TOUR

Before beginning any examination of Cotton's role subsequent to the 1599 visit, it is important first to establish the definitive year in which the tour took place, because even here there has been some uncertainty with 1600 given as a rival date. 1599 is the generally accepted date, and Camden himself wrote in *Britannia*:

"what time as he [Cotton] and I together, of an affectionate love to illustrate our native country, made a survey of these [Cumbrian] coasts in the yeare of our redemption 1599, not without the sweet food and contentment of our mindes".<sup>7</sup>

This is supported by Oswald Dykes' letter of 9 January 1600 (quoted below, with a note on the date), which refers to Camden and Cotton having very recently left the north, and by the fact that Camden was able to incorporate details of the northern tour in the 1600 edition of *Britannia*. Yet a date of 1600 is still widely quoted and has distinguished supporters, including Wood, Gibson and later Gough<sup>8</sup>. Gibson for example wrote in his 'The Life of Mr. Camden', prefatory to his own translation and edition of *Britannia* (1695):

"Sir Robert Cotton was his [Camden's] Companion both in studies and travels, both at home and abroad. He and his Library were the two Oracles Mr. Camden generally consulted; and his journey to Carlisle in the year 1600 was rendered much more pleasant and profitable by the company of so true a friend, and so great a master of Antiquities."<sup>9</sup>

Yet Gibson and others did have a substantial foundation for quoting 1600, and it resides in

the edition of Camden's letters published by Thomas Smith in 1691, which includes in an Appendix a one-sheet 'Memorabilia haec sequentia de seipso propria mann exarava reliquit V. Clariss. Guliel. Camdenus'<sup>10</sup> giving Camden's own recollected list of key dates and visits in his career (a list clearly assembled towards the end of his life), which includes:

"1600 Iter ad Carleolum cum Roberto Cotton aestate, domum redii Decemb."

There is a straight contradiction here and, just as even Homer nods, Camden's recollection must have been confused, for 1600 is not consistent with either Dykes' letter or with the other evidence, especially with the tour being made in the second half of the year.

## CAMDEN AND COTTON'S 1599 TOUR

Camden's *Britannia*, which first appeared in 1586, had a major impact on English historical scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Inspired by the great Continental scholar Ortelius "to restore Britain to Antiquity and Antiquity to Britain",<sup>12</sup> Camden set out, in Piggott's words,

"to elucidate the topography of Roman Britain, and to present a picture of the Province, with reference to its development through Saxon and medieval times, which would enable Britain to take her rightful place at once within the world of antiquity and that of international Renaissance scholarship."<sup>13</sup>

The work was a tremendous success and marked a very significant point in the development of historical and archaeological studies in Britain. The first edition in 1586 was a dumpy little book, "easily slipped into a small coat-pocket" as Haverfield puts it,<sup>14</sup> but successive editions added more and more material until the 1607 edition was printed in folio size, complete with maps and woodcuts of Roman inscriptions.<sup>15</sup> In 1610 an English-language version, translated by Philemon Holland, was produced, and this greatly widened the readership

and impact. After James I's accession in 1603, *Britannia* also contributed to the new sense of national identity in 'Britain', and Hay "suspects that in this way [the impact of both Latin and English editions] Camden did more to unite Britain in the long run than did King James".<sup>16</sup> In both the original and later editions Camden had incorporated material from his own travels to different parts of England, but until 1599 he had not visited the far north, and his source materials therefore had to come from earlier visitors.<sup>17</sup> In 1597 however he became Clarenceux King of Arms at the College of Heralds. This freed him from the confines of the school terms he had been forced to keep from 1574 onwards as successively Usher (Second Master) and Headmaster of Westminster School. He was now able to take an extended tour in 1599.

His companion on the tour was his friend and former pupil, Robert Cotton. Cotton was born in 1571 to a landed family with substantial estates in Huntingdonshire. As a child he attended Westminster School and was taught by Camden, but at ten he entered Jesus College, Cambridge, graduating in 1585. He seems to have been one of the founding members of the Society of Antiquaries, established shortly after the first publication of *Britannia*, and in his late teens and twenties Cotton was already building (and lending) his library, and his house in Westminster became, in the late 1590s, a regular meeting place for the Society.<sup>18</sup> After the turn of the century Cotton became more active in court circles, partly through his links with the Howard's; he was knighted after James I's accession, and made a baronet in 1611 (Cotton himself seems to have been one of those who thought up the scheme of baronetcy). During the Jacobean period Cotton played a pivotal role in antiquarian and scholarly circles, and his antiquarian skills and manuscript collections made him politically useful in an era when appeals to historical precedent carried considerable political weight. Cotton's landed background gave him a financial basis for collecting that Camden did not have (Cotton's landed income was some £1,000 pounds a year in 1610 and afterwards),<sup>19</sup>

and although much of Cotton's manuscript and book collection came by gift rather than purchase, this wealth meant that he had the resources for his acquisition of Roman inscribed stones.

The northern tour took Camden and Cotton first to Cumberland, where they visited Moresby, Maryport, Old Carlisle and Bowness. From Carlisle they travelled east to Naworth, where the castle was not yet occupied by their friend Lord William Howard. As McKitterick has recently noted, "It is difficult now to ascertain exactly how much Camden and Cotton saw on their visit to the north in 1599",<sup>20</sup> but from what they recorded – and did not record – one can attempt a reconstruction. From Naworth they went straight to Willowford (missing out Birdoswald itself), and then observed a stretch of the Wall after they entered Northumberland. They visited Carvoran, observing the square plan of the Roman fort, and here "a poore old woman that dwelt in a little poore cottage hard by"<sup>21</sup> showed them a little altar with inscribed text.<sup>22</sup> Shortly after Carvoran, however, they chose to turn south, keeping to the low road through Haltwhistle and Hexham, so missing the most dramatic section of the Roman Wall. Camden noted that he learnt of forts further along the Wall "Iverton, Forsten and Chester in the Wall or 'Busy-gapp' [the name then used for Housesteads]", but they judged it unwise to go further in that direction for fear of thieves and robbers: "per praedones vero limitaneos perlustare tutot non licuit". By 1599 the Anglo-Scottish border was not as disturbed as it had been even ten years before, but it was still a remote region and such fears were by no means groundless.<sup>23</sup> At that date, for example, the Gilsland locality around Naworth and Carvoran (through which they had just travelled) was unsettled because of the lack of local authority during the Dacre inheritance dispute, and this allowed considerable free rein to local clans such as the Grahams; further east the Armstrongs of Housesteads were notorious throughout the seventeenth century for their lawlessness.<sup>24</sup> Cotton's and Camden's trepidation was therefore probably justified,

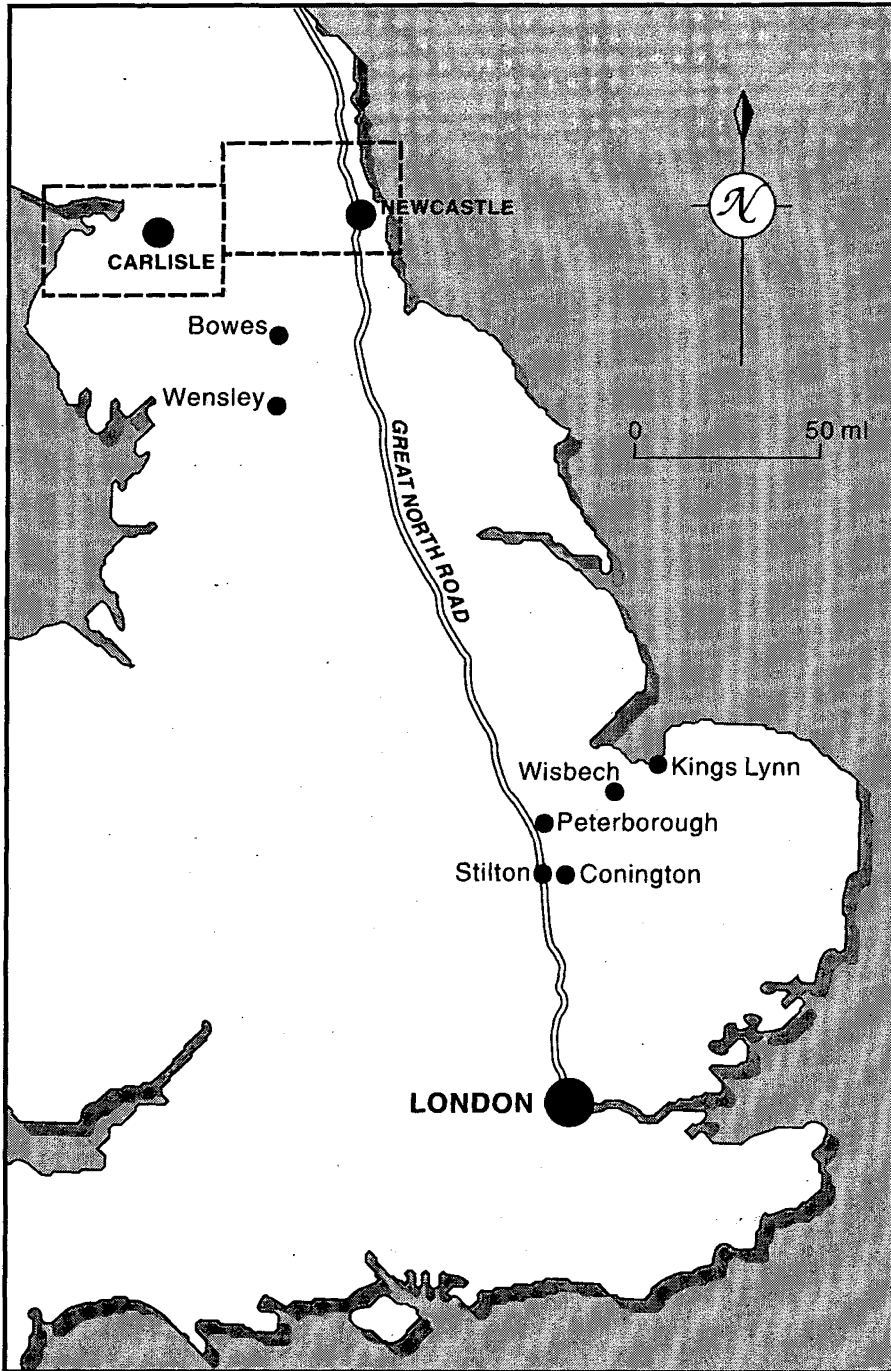


Fig. 1 General location map of places mentioned in the text. For detailed maps of the Carlisle and Newcastle areas, see Fig. 2.

though they were later to learn that another antiquarian traveller, Reginald Bainbrigg, had penetrated further along the Wall, visiting Halton Chesters and probably Housesteads, as well as going beyond the Wall into North Tynedale and Redesdale, gathering information which plays a central role in the later narrative.

On the lowland road, Camden and Cotton encountered and copied an inscribed stone near Melkridge "where now women beat their buckes on it" [this stone has been shown to have been associated with the Carvoran garrison; *RIB* 1792, D10]. The Wall was rejoined at Rudchester "where we plainly saw the remains of a square fort attached to the Wall", and they then followed the Wall to Newcastle. From the Northumberland section of the Wall, the 1600 *Britannia* has only two inscriptions, those for Carvoran and Melkridge. Nor is there any evidence that Camden and Cotton ventured north of the Wall up Dere Street to the forts at Risingham and High Rochester: all the 1600 edition reports is "&c castra fuisse Romanorum limitanea creditur, quorum nonnullae extant Risingham, ut acceptii, Inscriptiones" [and a Roman camp is believed to have been situated in the borderlands, of which some inscriptions at Risingham remain visible, so I am informed]. As Birley forthrightly notes: "Camden never penetrated into Redesdale (though he is often credited with having visited it with Cotton in 1599)".<sup>25</sup>

This question of whether they visited Redesdale is central to the present study. Such a visit is indeed assumed by many authorities: Richmond did so in his study of the Romans in Redesdale for the *Northumberland County History*,<sup>26</sup> Collingwood and Wright have several "seen by Camden and Cotton in 1599" entries against inscriptions from Redesdale<sup>27</sup> as does Davies in her recent study of the Cotton collection of inscriptions<sup>28</sup>. The several editions through which *Britannia* passed are part of the cause of confusion or uncertainty here: though the 1600 edition carries no Redesdale inscriptions, the 1607 edition (followed by the 1610 English translation) contains a considerable number, and the Redesdale stones are the

most significant epigraphic material in the Northumberland chapter. It has to be admitted that a visit in 1599 to Redesdale would solve several problems about how Camden obtained some of the inscriptions recorded in 1607, as we will discuss in later sections. However it is important to here reiterate Birley's view: Camden and Cotton did not venture north of the Wall in 1599. If they had done - and there is no positive evidence for this - then it would be necessary to explain why none of the Redesdale material found its way into the 1600 edition, whereas the poorer Carvoran and Melkridge material did so. Camden's enthusiasm over the Redesdale inscriptions in the 1607 edition makes it hard to believe that he had them available for the 1600 edition and chose not to use them.

The fruits of Camden and Cotton's northern tour were immense, especially if put together with Cotton's subsequent collection of inscribed stones. The region had an especial significance in Camden's project of reconstructing the Roman Province of Britain. For the framework of *Britannia*,

"Camden's famous first-hand account of the Roman Wall, the most considerable monument in the Province, would provide an appropriate climax, between the tribal area of the Brigantes and that of the Ottadini, the last tribe named before he reaches the remote regions of Scotia, and the outer Ocean".<sup>29</sup>

As McKitterick argues: "The results [of the 1599 tour] were as dramatic as any in the history of British archaeology. Between them, the two men set out for the first time the materials for an ordered account of the Roman occupation of northern Britain, based not simply on literary evidence, but, now, on surviving archaeological remains".<sup>30</sup> Kendrick notes "in the *Britannia* of 1607 he published nearly eighty [Roman inscriptions] from the northern counties; this is Camden's principal contribution to the serious study of antiquities in the field".<sup>31</sup>

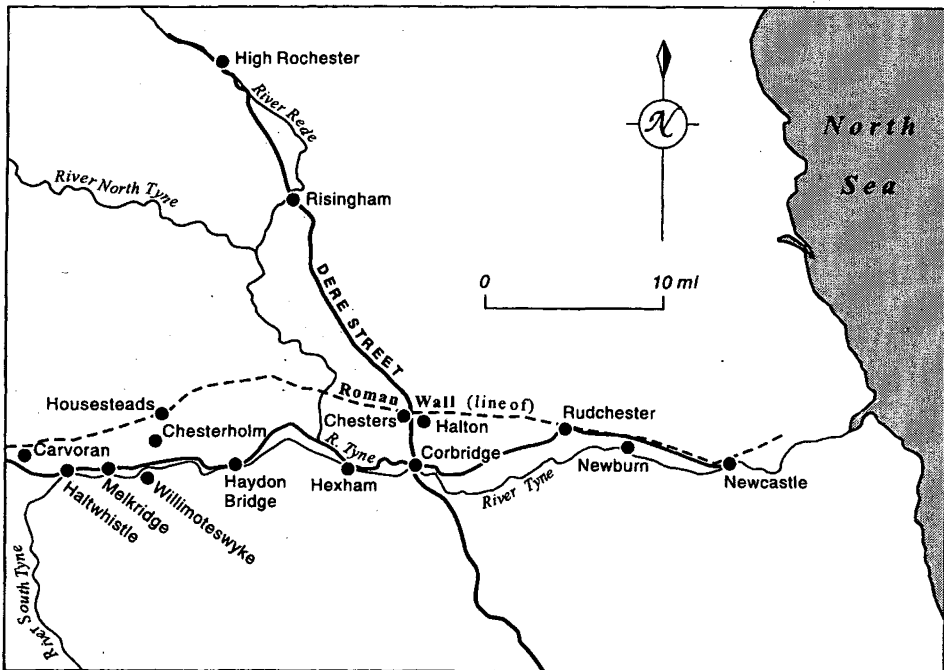
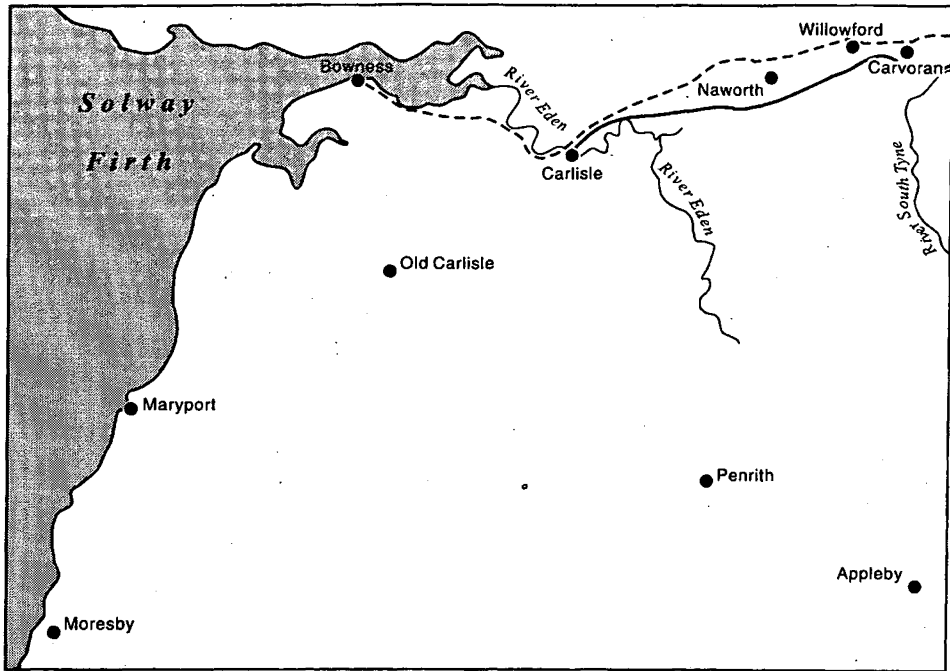


Fig. 2 Location map for places in the Roman Wall country.

## BEGINNING COTTON'S COLLECTION

Cotton's plans to collect inscribed stones and have them taken to his home in Huntingdonshire were put into action during the northern tour-itself. Here we encounter the first of the letters from the Cottonian MSS in the British Library which provide the main documentary source for the process of building the collection. The Rev. Oswald Dykes, rector of Wensley in Yorkshire and a member of the Dykes family of Cumberland,<sup>32</sup> was a keen antiquarian and a correspondent of Camden's, and he accompanied Camden and Cotton on part of their northern tour. He obviously left them somewhat abruptly, for he wrote apologetically to Cotton on 9 January 1600 (the letter is actually dated "9 January 1599" but it should be remembered that it was the practice in England at that time to date the new year from 25 March, not 1 January). The letter reads:

"Salutem in Xto. Sir, I returned home through Bowes from Carlile, and if I cold either for mony or Gould have had the stone, that shold have bene brought yow to Newcastle or yow removed from thence, and I wrott to yow a letter that I directed to meet yow at Durham to this effect, That one Cootes was in Sutton with his wive's sonne about possession of the said howse and tenement, and that nothing cold then be done untill Yorke law had determined that matter. Coots was not at home when I was ther, but his sonne in law kept a blust'ring about. The dayes will waxe long, and I will ride to Bowes shortly, and see what can be done. Yf I get there, as I hoope I shall, yt is best to have yt conveyed to Newcastell. Send me the name of the marchant your acq.[aintance] with whom yow wold take order (as you said) for the cariage therof emongst cooles to your howse besides Stilton. My soden departure from yow was for this cause. I was one with Mr. Egglanbe that had taken up the poole [peel] betwene Wedowe Kyrkebrid and my cosyn Warwicke that had slaine her husband. I feared some rough dealing by the Kirkebrides at that tyme, which maid me hast away with sped, sence which tyme Mr. Egglanbe and his brother ar both slaine in that quarrell. He was runne

through with a spear one evening as he returned home from Corby, and died on Christenmasse day. Commend me right heartily to good Mr. Wm. Camden, and tell him from me that I will be redye to doe any thing I can for either of yow both. I lament that I was chargeable to yow whose company was so sweet and pleasant to me. And be yow well assured yf ever I can pleasure yow or him, yow shall command me, as knoweth Jesus, who have yow ever in his Divine protection. Farewell. From Wenslay this 9 of Januarie 1599. Yor. assured frend in Christ, Oswald Dykes."<sup>33</sup>

The letter nicely conveys the atmosphere of border unruliness that led Camden and Cotton to keep to the low road through Haltwhistle and Hexham. It also shows that Cotton had asked Dykes to negotiate with the possessor of an inscribed stone in Bowes – through which Camden and Cotton probably passed on their way to Carlisle. There was then the question of transporting the heavy object across the country from north Yorkshire to Cotton's home at Conington, just off the Great North Road at Stilton, referred to in the letter. The stone in question was undoubtedly the altar to Fortune described in the 1600 *Britannia* and now in the Cotton collection in Cambridge [RIB 730, D12]. Its weight is some 89kg (1.8 cwt), and is one of the smaller stones acquired by Cotton. It could have been transported on a cart or wagon but the journey to Cotton's home across the Pennine Moors of North Yorkshire and then down the Great North Road would have been long and expensive; a neat and cost-effective solution is set out in Dykes' letter: "conveyed to Newcastell ... for the cariage therof emongst cooles [coals] to your howse besides Stilton". It was a method that was to prove even more appropriate for the much larger stones that Cotton later collected from the Northumbrian borders.

The borders might be backward and apparently remote,<sup>34</sup> but they were close to England's fastest growing industrial region, Tyneside. In 1600 the Newcastle coal-trade was expanding very rapidly.<sup>35</sup> Access to water transport was critical to Tyneside's profitability in the trade: bulky, heavy commodities like

coal (and inscribed Roman stones) were very expensive to transport overland, but the possibility of water carriage could transform the costs. Nef estimated that the price of North East coal doubled with every two miles it was carried overland (for Lancashire, Langton estimates a quadrupling of the pithead price of coal, which was lower than in the North East), and he then cites a 1675 estimate that the cost of carrying coal some 300 miles by sea to London was no greater than carrying it three or four miles overland.<sup>36</sup> Cotton's plan, therefore, was to get the inscribed stone to Newcastle and then have it shipped "amongst cooles" to his home. In fact the plan was even neater than this suggests. Newcastle was a major importer of corn and "[t]he trade was particularly marked between Newcastle and King's Lynn, the coal of the former being exchanged for the corn of the latter".<sup>37</sup> Cotton's estate at Conington lay right on the edge of the Fens, which were largely undrained and unimproved in 1600 (Cotton himself became a promoter of such improvements), and the stones could be transhipped at King's Lynn or Wisbech into Fen barges or lighters for most of the remaining journey.<sup>38</sup>

Cotton had commissioned Dykes to acquire the Bowes inscribed stone, whilst his own role was to organise "the name of the marchant your acq[aintance] with whom yow wold take order ... for the cariage therof", probably whilst in Newcastle at the end of the tour, though the expression "marchant your acq[aintance]" suggests Cotton already knew the person he intended to act through, and later letters reveal the name of Cotton's agent. The acquisition and delivery of this stone was achieved successfully, and the 1607 edition has the note: "This inscription, which from hence has been translated to Conington, unto the house of that right worshipfull and learned Sir Robert Cotton, Knight."<sup>39</sup>

If the acquisition of the Bowes stone set up the channels through which Cotton planned to transport a number of inscribed stones, new information from the borders in the shape of Bainbrigg's Roman Wall travels was to transform Cotton's collecting ambitions.

## REGINALD BAINBRIGG AND THE REDESDALE STONES

Reginald Bainbrigg was headmaster of Appleby Grammar School, a keen antiquarian and a correspondent of Camden's, whose life and surviving manuscript papers to Camden have been studied by Haverfield.<sup>40</sup> Bainbrigg undertook a tour of the Roman Wall country in 1599, recording several inscriptions that Camden had not seen. However, despite the fact that this tour took place in 1599, none of its new material appeared in the 1600 *Britannia*, though information in a letter of 27 March 1600 from Bainbrigg to Camden is used and acknowledged in the 1600 edition. Bainbrigg probably did not send his account of the tour until later in 1600, too late for inclusion in the new edition. Two years afterwards, Bainbrigg undertook a second tour: he starts his account sent to Camden "I began my jorney the xvth daie of August 1601". This second journey followed the Wall from Bowness to Birdoswald, but then cut north of the Wall into Redesdale and North Tynedale, visiting both Risingham and High Rochester, before returning to the Wall and then via Whitley Castle to the south. He reported:

"I was eight daies in Tindale and Rhedesdale. I found nothing in Tindale worth the noting save the discription of north Tyne... Rhead ryseth at Redsqire runneth by Burdoppcrag, Rochester trowg the (?) otterburne, eilsdon castle, monck-rigg, and Resingham, and falls into north Tyne at Rheadsmouth a little frome Bellingham. I went to the heads both of north Tyne and Rhead and did view all thes plaices afore rehearsed."<sup>41</sup>

Then, on the next sheet he reported his most exciting finds, at Risingham, a fort (*Habitan-cum*) situated beside Dere Street close to the crossing of the Rede river. Here were a substantial number of inscribed stones, and most notably a highly decorated dedication-slab, carrying the dedication, in its modern reading, NUMINIB AUGUSTOR COH IIII GAL EQ FEC ("To the Deities of the Emperors the



Fourth Cohort of Gauls, part-mounted set this up").<sup>42</sup> Bainbrigg wrote: "This inscription was worth the sight for fyne and cunning work-manshipp, Numinus (?) was engraven in stone in his cote armure with his sheild and target, an hêron and libard head."<sup>43</sup>

This 1601 journey by Bainbrigg revealed for the first time the richness of the Roman inscriptions at Risingham and High Rochester, and it was a richness fully appreciated by both Camden and Cotton.<sup>44</sup> Not only does the 1607 *Britannia* contain twelve inscriptions from Redesdale, but the surviving Cotton collection (in the Cambridge Museum) comprises fifteen stones, ten of them from the Roman Wall country (see Table 1); of these ten, no fewer than seven are from Redesdale. Cotton's collection may have contained other items now lost (an aspect discussed below), but the Redesdale focus undoubtedly reflects the significance Cotton and Camden placed on Bainbrigg's discoveries. The decorated Fourth Cohort dedication-slab became an important illustration in the 1607 *Britannia*, and when Speed's maps were redrawn for the *Theatre of the Empire of Greate Britaine* (1611), the slab was used (together with the altars from Carvoran and Housesteads) as a prominent marginal illustration for the map of Northumberland.<sup>45</sup>

#### LORD WILLIAM HOWARD AT NAWORTH

Before returning to the story of Cotton's gathering of the stones, there is one further element to put in place: the presence and role of Lord William Howard at Naworth Castle, close to the Roman Wall and the Cumberland-Northumberland boundary. Lord William (1563-1640) was the third son of Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk, who was executed in 1572. Before his death his father betrothed him to Lady Elizabeth Dacre, one of the Dacre heiresses of Gilsland, and William married her in 1577. Becoming a Catholic, and involved in the affairs of his brother Philip, Earl of Arundel, he was imprisoned in the Tower in 1583 and 1585-86. Elizabeth I dis-

trusted all the Howard's and, thanks to a long lawsuit over the Dacre lands, Lord William did not gain possession of Naworth Castle until the end of the reign. Consequently he was not there when Camden and Cotton passed through Naworth in 1599, but was in residence from 1603-04 onwards. His fortunes improved under James I but, as a Catholic, he played a less significant role in border politics than some have assumed,<sup>46</sup> and certainly less than Sir Walter Scott's self-confessed anachronistic portrayal of him as the swashbuckling Warden of the Marches 'Belted Will' in his *The Lay of The Last Minstrel*.<sup>47</sup>

The relevance of Howard to the present narrative lies in his antiquarian and scholarly interests. Howard collected books and manuscripts, published an edition of Florence of Worcester's *Chronicon ex Chronicis* in 1592, and assembled a renowned library in the tower at Naworth.<sup>48</sup> Here he provided a home for the Cornish Catholic scholar Nicholas Roscarrock, who had also suffered in the Tower.<sup>49</sup> They were both friends and correspondents of Camden, Cotton and other scholars, and Howard was a leading signatory of the proposal to revive the Society of Antiquaries in 1617. He sent Camden notes of inscriptions, used and acknowledged in the 1607 *Britannia*,<sup>50</sup> and he borrowed books and manuscripts from Cotton's library.<sup>51</sup> His close friendship with Robert Cotton is very apparent in the letter to be quoted below, and their close friendship eventually led to the two families becoming related: Howard's favourite daughter Margaret married Cotton's son and heir, Thomas, in about 1615-16. Howard was a regular visitor to London, and the two men would have met there, but his presence at Naworth after 1603 gave Robert Cotton a new link with the border country and a friend with considerable local influence.

#### TRANSPORTING THE STONES

The acquisition and transport of the Roman stones to Conington was a long, drawn out business. Dykes' letter was written in January 1600, yet further references to the transport of

stones from Newcastle run right through to 1620, if entries in the Naworth accounts are taken to refer to stones for Cotton.<sup>52</sup> After Dykes' letter the next surviving correspondence is a letter apparently dated to 24 October 1605. However, it should be noted that this letter is hard to decipher, particularly as the hand deteriorates towards the end, and the third numeral of the year-date is obscure.<sup>53</sup> 1615 is therefore an alternative date - an issue discussed below.<sup>54</sup> The letter is from Peter Riddell of Newcastle to Robert Cotton:<sup>55</sup>

"Honorable Knight

Since your departure I have expected still when the burden of your stones shoulde be layde upon my care, but as I did all this tyme, so I doe still expectinge the same, but it shoulde seame some of those you trusted in Northumb: for this busines are in some degree north brytans a great parte wherof are in showe att your service, but in tryall nothinge soe yt the stones are not yet hurde of heare att Newcastle, wherefore if you thinke it so fitt, it weare in my opiinion fitt you shoulde wryte to them that shoulde send them hyther, otherwise your messingers power and myne (wch is but subordynate) will not in haist turne to effect to your pleasure. If they doe come I shall do my parte of your busynes and for this messenger I assure you he hathe bene very willinge to doe your service in this employment, but it must be anoth[er] tyme when he must have them to carye if he come hyther agayne you cannot have a fitte[r] caryer. Thus assureinge you my time is ingaged unto you for requytall of mucche kyndnes I rest Newcastle this 24th of October 16\_5

yours soe farre as my power may doe you service

Peter Riddell

postscript

I did intend to have requyted this kyndnes of your brothers wth an answer, but the messengers haist myne owne shame and my insufficiency that I cannot retorne answer in his owne language, wch is his prayres (?), are casues why I doe intreat you to tayke the burden of my comends to him my frend and loveinge brother when we lyved togeather."

This letter is interesting in several respects, even leaving on one side (for the present) its significant opening "Since your departure". The author is undoubtedly the leading Newcastle merchant and hostman Peter Riddell who was a younger son of William Riddell, one of the founding members of the Company of Hostmen (the monopoly group who controlled the Tyneside coal trade from 1600 onwards) by his second marriage to Barbara Anderson. In 1604 he was sheriff of Newcastle at the same time as his elder half-brother Thomas was mayor.<sup>56</sup>

Several parts of the letter are obscure in their meaning, but the overall message is clear: Riddell is despairing that the stones have still not been delivered to Newcastle, and believes Cotton's agents out in Northumberland are pretty useless: they are "in some degree North Britons" [i.e. Scots, by reputation anyway] and not to be trusted, making a show of being "at your service" but in fact doing nothing. Riddell and Cotton's messenger cannot do anything by themselves to sort out the business, and Riddell asks Cotton to contact his Northumberland agents. The postscript seems to refer to some different business entirely, but it is worth commenting on the expression "brother", which may connote either a family relationship or a close colleague in some venture. Sir Robert Cotton had several younger brothers, one of whom, Ferdinand, was a merchant, who in 1609 was "in the Barbary trade",<sup>57</sup> and Ferdinand may possibly be a personal and business link between Robert Cotton and Peter Riddell.

Subsequent to this correspondence, delivery still did not go smoothly, and nearly three years later Cotton had clearly asked his friend at Naworth to help sort out delivery. Lord William Howard wrote to Cotton:

"Sr, - Though you have not heard from me so soone as you perhapps expected, yett have I not ben forgetfull of my promise to you, and more impediments have happened then I foresaw or ymaged at my comminge from London. The much wett that fell in these partes made the waies not passable for cariages, Sr.

Thomas the Curate of Willemonswike that you directed me to, is removed, and his successor would not adventure to deliver the stones before he knewe his Master his pleasure, which at first mocion I obtained. Till hays tyme was past I could gett no draughts to undertake to carie them, and nowe hays tyme is done ther are no draughts in the cuntry able to drawe them, so as theruppon I have appointed myne owne draught to deliver them at Newborne, from when I doubt not but they shalbe speedely conveyed by water to Mr. Riddall, who I assure my self will take the opportunitie of the first flete to transport them to the most convenient haven from whence you may with moste speede lodg them in such place as you intend they shall rest without remove, which I wishe maie remaine as many yeares in your limits under the protection of your name and familie as they have had residence in these partes sence the authors of them did first erect them. For that I much feare I shall not this yeare see you in these extreame partes, I thought good to informe you in generall but not to mention any in particuler that I have gotten and know weare to have heere about me at least 12 stones<sup>58</sup>, most of them faire inscriptions that you have not yett heard of, and your pennance shalbe to come your self and pick out the contents before you gett any knowledg of them. And so earnestly desiringe so much happines as once to see you in this cold regeon, I wil evermore rest your professed frend William Howard. (Naward Castle, 13 Augusti 1608).<sup>59</sup>

Howard and Cotton had obviously discussed the problem in London; Howard had then returned north to discover that Cotton's agent in Northumberland, the curate at Willimoteswick (which lies on the south side of the South Tyne opposite Henshaw and Bardon Mill), had left the parish and his successor was unwilling to act of his own accord. Then the rhythm of the agricultural year had kept all carts busy until after hay-making. Howard had then found that he had to use his own horses and large cart to carry the stones.<sup>60</sup> Fortunately Lord William was used to arranging carriage between Naworth and Newburn-on-Tyne, for his account books reveal extensive payments over the years for bringing goods from London to Newcastle by sea, and thence by boat to

Newburn, which lies on the upper tidal section of the Tyne, six miles west of Newcastle, and served as a local port for river traffic.<sup>61</sup>

There is a further letter dated two weeks later, reporting action had been taken, and "two stones with inscriptions" were on their way.

"Sir Robert Cotton, according to your request and my promisse, I have sent ij stones with inscriptions to Mr. Riddell of Newcastle, who will safely keep them untill he can receive certain directions from you wheather he may send them to you as by his inclosed letter you may perceave. And so with my kind commendations I bid you farewell. Naward 29 Augusti 1608. Your assured freinde, William Howard.

Yf it please you to send your letter to Mr. Riddell by post, direct it to Mr. Cuthbert Gray, a merchant of Newcastle, and it will come safely and speedely to his hand".<sup>62</sup>

The Cuthbert Gray referred to in the postscript was, like Riddell, an important ship-owner and merchant of Newcastle, who regularly acted as a shipping agent and buyer for the Howard's at Naworth and also leased coalpits at Newbiggen, to the west of the Nuns' Moor in Newcastle, from Lord William.<sup>63</sup> Two later references in the Naworth estate accounts also refer to carrying "great stones" to Newcastle, probably Roman inscribed stones for Sir Robert Cotton:

"For carrying 6 pyes and a great stone to Newcastle and a seller [probably a seloure, or bed canopy], being 2 loades, xs" (March 8 1618)<sup>64</sup>

"Carrying a great stone to Newcastle, ixd" (July 27 1620)<sup>65</sup>

Cotton's problems in transporting the stones were partly a question of agents and organisation, but they were also a question of the sheer weight of the stones, as Howard's letter of August 1608 makes clear. The stones from the 'Roman Wall country' varied from 60kg (1.2 cwt) to a massive 890kg (17.5 cwt) for the altar

to Hercules from Risingham (*RIB* 1215, D4). Table 1 provides full details of the estimated weights. There were five stones each weighing some 300kg (5.9 cwt) or more. All of these would require something more than the standard two-wheeled farm cart, especially for movement in hilly country. The four-wheeled farm wagon had been available in England for several decades by 1600, and recent research has shown its use was quite widespread, especially in lowland England.<sup>66</sup> However, there has been little research on its introduction to the north, and only very limited evidence is available. One national-scale study by Crofts<sup>67</sup> however has cited Lord William Howard's use of wagons for the Newburn to Naworth journey as one of the few northern examples for this date, but it is unlikely that such wagons were very common, especially away from Tyneside itself. Gerhold has estimated that "a

reasonably heavy load for a seventeenth-century wagon horse appears to have been about 6 cwt",<sup>68</sup> so a four-horse wagon could pull up to 24 cwt. The Hercules altar from Risingham, and probably several of the other stones, would require such a wagon to move them. The transport of the stones from Redesdale to Conington simply reversed Howard's usual sequence of ship to Newcastle, boat to Newburn and wagon to Naworth.

Finally, we should note that the sequence of letters discussed in this section, and the deductions drawn from them, have an obvious bearing upon the dispute over the date of Riddell's letter. Two scholars have recently read the date of the Riddell letter as 1615 rather than 1605,<sup>69</sup> probably based on a combination of the ambiguity of the third numeral in the manuscript and also the context. Here the 1605 dating is retained, on the basis that the third

Table 1 The Roman inscribed stones in the Cotton collection, Cambridge University.

Davies No.	Source Location	Cam.Acc.No	RIB No.	est.weight (kg)	est.weight (cwt)
D1	Risingham	D1970.5	1227	367.9	7.2
D2	Risingham	D1970.7	1241	304.6	6.0
D3	Risingham	D1970.16	1237	171.6	3.4
D4	Risingham	D1970.8	1215	889.4	17.5
D5	Risingham	D1970.6	1225	86.7	1.7
D6	Risingham	D1970.11	1254	60.7	1.2
D7	High Rochester	D1970.1	1270	299.8	5.9
D8	Halton Chesters	D1970.15	1433	83.7	1.6
D9	Housesteads	D1970.9	1589	376.5	7.4
D10	Melkridge/Carvoran	D1970.4	1792	199.4	3.9
D11	Old Carlisle	D1970.12	897	206.8	4.1
D12	Bowes	D1970.3	730	89.4	1.8
D13	Greetland	D1970.2	627	119.9	2.4
D14	Silchester	D1970.10	87	135.4	2.6
D15	Peterborough?	D1970.14	2239	*	*

This table lists the surviving Cotton Collection of 15 stones, now in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. They are identified by the number given employed in Davies' catalogue and commentary (Davies, *op.cit.*), the Museum accession number, and the *RIB* number. The estimated weights are based on the dimensions provided by Davies, with the volumes calculated on the simplifying assumption that the blocks are rectilinear, and using the density for sandstone provided in Everett, A. *Materials* (London, 1978, p.103, Table 30). He gives a range of 2130-2750kg per cubic metre, with specific quarry examples in Table 32 (p.107). Here 2500kg per cubic metre is used in the calculations. This density value is also that employed by Bidwell, P.T. and Holbrook, N. *Hadrian's Wall Bridges* (London, 1989, p. 48). D15 (not discussed further in this paper) is made of limestone, not sandstone.

numeral is a "0" and that, given Howard's prompt action in August 1608, it is unlikely that the same matter would have been allowed to linger on for seven years. Nor is it likely that Riddell would write in quite the tone he does about Cotton's agents if Lord William were already involved. But, whatever the sequencing of these letters, the lengthy period over which the collection was assembled in apparent.

### COTTON AND THE ASSEMBLY OF THE COLLECTION

The size and composition of Cotton's final collection of inscribed stones is not known. The only definitive evidence available is the set of fifteen stones that the sixth baronet donated to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1750, and which remain in Cambridge today. It is not known if some stones once in Conington have been lost, though Horsley and Stukeley in their visits to Conington did not note any stones not later taken to Cambridge. They did however find the stones neglected and in some cases damaged. Horsley lamented:

"When I looked round me in that summer-house, and observed particularly the inscriptions which had been removed from our own county and neighbourhood, it gave me for some time a great deal of pleasure; tho' it was afterward much abated, by reflecting on the ruinous state both of the house and inscriptions".<sup>70</sup>

Nor do we know if some transported stones were lost on the way, though Gough, writing in 1768, noted a tradition that "a boat or two" of stones had been lost at sea on the way to Conington.<sup>71</sup> However, by linking up the extant stones with the inscriptions recorded by Bainbrigg in his letter and by Camden in his 1607 edition of *Britannia*, some progress can be made on the matter. The important conclusion that emerges is that, although a few stones (with known inscriptions) probably were lost in transit, the bulk of the collection has survived.

The first point is that fourteen out of the fifteen stones in the surviving collection are recorded in the 1607 *Britannia*, and all eleven stones from the Roman Wall country appear in this edition of the work. Cotton acquired the Melkridge/Carvoran altar first seen on his tour with Camden in 1599, together with a stone from Housesteads first noted by Bainbrigg in 1601 (*RIB* 1589, D9), and both of "These two inscriptions are yet to bee seene in Sir Robert Cotton's home at Conington". An altar from Halton Chesters, also first noted by Bainbrigg in 1601, became part of the collection (*RIB* 1433, D8), as did that from Old Carlisle, seen on the 1599 tour but known well before then and recorded in the first edition of *Britannia* (*RIB* 897, D11). Unlike the first two stones, these two need not have reached Conington by 1607.

This leaves the six stones from Risingham and that from High Rochester, all recorded in the 1607 *Britannia*. However, only four of these are recorded by Bainbrigg (*RIB* 1227, D1; *RIB* 1241, D2; *RIB* 1254, D6; *RIB* 1270, D7). The three not noted by Bainbrigg are *RIB* 1215, D4; *RIB* 1225, D5; and *RIB* 1237, D3. Camden in fact describes twelve inscriptions from Risingham and High Rochester in the 1607 edition: these are the seven inscriptions found in the surviving Cotton collection, plus five from stones now lost. These lost stones are all from Risingham: *RIB* 1209, *RIB* 1213 and *RIB* 1242, all seen by Bainbrigg, together with *RIB* 1226 and *RIB* 1231, neither of which was recorded by Bainbrigg. In addition, the altar seen at Carvoran by Camden and Cotton in 1599 (*RIB* 1801) was not seen again after that date, and a second inscription seen by Bainbrigg at Halton Chesters and recorded in the 1607 *Britannia* is also lost (*RIB* 1434). There is clearly scope for some of these seven lost inscriptions to have been on stones "lost in transit" to Conington. Five stones almost certainly fall into this category, since they are not recorded after 1607. The two exceptions are probably *RIB* 1231, which was seen by Horsley being used as a seat at the back door of a house at Chesterhope,<sup>72</sup> and *RIB* 1213, which Horsley saw in use as a

gatepost on the site of the south gateway at Risingham.<sup>73</sup>

There may have been other stones, for which the inscriptions are also lost, but these surely cannot have been more than one or two, if they existed at all. The bulk of the collection thus survives, with possibly a small number of further recorded stones lost.<sup>74</sup>

Given that Cotton's collection comprised the eleven 'Roman Wall country' stones together with possibly four to six lost stones, with all seventeen of these inscriptions recorded in the 1607 *Britannia*, where were these stones located in 1607? The 1607 contains a significant sentence linked to drawings of eight of the Risingham and High Rochester inscriptions:

"Repertae etiam hic fuere hae inscriptiones quas ut alis C. L.V. Roberto Cottono de Conington Equiti aurato debemus qui nuperrime vidit & descripsit."<sup>75</sup>

or, in Holland's translation:

"Moreover, these inscriptions also were here found: for which with others, we are to thanke the right worshipfull Sir Robert Cotton of Conington Knight, who very lately both saw them, copied them out, and most kindly imparted them to this worke."<sup>76</sup>

There are two reasonably plausible inferences one can draw from this statement: either Cotton had had all the stones sent from the north, and he could see and copy them in the leisure of his garden and summer house at Conington, or he had been back to the north to visit Risingham for himself. The latter is Birley's view;

"Camden evidently passed word [of Bainbrigg's discoveries in Redesdale] to Cotton, who made a special journey north to examine them and secure them for his collection, giving Camden copies of their texts in time for reproduction in his 1607 edition."<sup>77</sup>

The plausibility of the two interpretations needs discussion. Consider first the implications of Cotton reading the inscriptions in his

Conington garden. Four out of the "lost inscriptions" are amongst the drawings linked to the statement. If some of these relate to stones at Conington in 1607, this means all the stones sent by Howard (in 1608 and later) must be both lost and completely unrecorded, and that several stones have been lost subsequent to arrival at Conington. It also means that Howard was chasing "tail end" or additional stones only. It further implies that Cotton had an effective "shopping list" of stones he wanted, made up principally of items seen by Bainbrigg, and a very effective agent to ensure the acquisitions in Northumberland. This agent missed very little that Bainbrigg had seen, and acquired further items of note. In light of the transport difficulties noted by Dykes, Riddell and Howard, the existence of this highly efficient agent seems somewhat implausible. It might be that the difficulties related only to Roman Wall stones (though both Housesteads and Melkridge/Carvoran stones were definitely in Conington by 1607), with a separate and efficient agent in Redesdale, but Riddell's comment about untrustworthy and inefficient "north bryttons" seems even more likely to apply to a Redesdale shipment.

The alternative interpretation is to accept that Cotton did make a second visit to Northumberland, at some date between 1601 and 1607. Such a visit allows for Cotton to locate the stones seen by Bainbrigg, making his own copies of those inscriptions and others, and then to arrange the acquisition of the stones and try to set the transport in motion. This hypothesis fits better than the hypothesis of a "want list" and an efficient agent in Northumberland. It also does not require such a full complement of stones to be in place in Conington by 1607. It may well be significant in this connection that Camden says the Bowes, Housesteads and Melkridge stones are "to bee seene" at Conington, but the Redesdale inscriptions had been "very lately" seen, copied and imparted. The hiccups recorded in the Riddell and Howard letters may thus refer to part of the known group of Risingham stones, rather than to hypothetical, unknown inscriptions, and the "lost inscriptions" may

have been on stones subsequently lost in transit rather than lost after delivery to Conington.

There is, however, only limited positive evidence for a second visit to the north. The one definite piece is the opening of the Riddell letter of 1605: "Since your departure". This presumably refers to Cotton departing from Newcastle. It is extremely unlikely that the departure in question is that dating from December 1599, so it strongly suggests that Cotton visited Newcastle a second time. If we date the letter to 1615, that suggests a visit in 1613-1615, a visit that would be unrelated to the one inferred from Camden's 1607 statement (though it could relate to a visit connected with his son's marriage to Margaret Howard). Such an interpretation would force one back to the 'efficient agent with a list' hypothesis, but this is already circumstantially contradicted by the delays; the context thus reinforces the likelihood of a 1605 date for the letter. If this is the best positive evidence (and it is), there is further possible support from the words of Howard's letter of 1608: "For that I much feare I shall not this yeare see you in these extreame partes" – possibly "this yeare" implies Cotton had visited in another year, though the closing "And so earnestly desiringe so much happines as once to see you in this cold region" with its "as once to see you" perhaps countermands this implication. Certainly Howard's residence on the borders after 1603, and the Cotton's growing friendship and family links with Howard, suggest such a repeat visit to the north would have been attractive to Cotton.

Against the likelihood of a 1601-1607 visit one has to set Cotton's very busy political activities and timetable after 1603.<sup>78</sup> Cotton's close association with the Howard dynasty was not only (or even mainly) with the scholarly interests of Lord William, but was also with Lord Northampton and later Lord Arundel.<sup>79</sup> The extent of Cotton's role as political adviser, researcher, MP and influential go-between has emerged from the recent studies by Sharpe, Peck, Howarth and others. In these years after 1603 Cotton would not have had the time for a lengthy visit to the north, extending over many

months as his 1599 tour did. But he would have had time for a briefer visit, though possibly one that might not have included both Redesdale and Naworth.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is asking a lot of the fragmentary documentary evidence to demand detailed answers about the where and when of the acquisition, transport and copying of some fifteen Roman inscribed stones from Northumberland in the first years of the seventeenth century. However, by relating this evidence to the surviving Cottonian stones and to the broader context of Cotton's network and activities, one can assemble quite a lot of the detail. The proximity of the Roman Wall country to the booming Tyneside coal-trade and its shipping made Cotton's whole plan much more feasible, and his contacts with leading Newcastle hostmen like Peter Riddell and with his close scholarly friend Lord William Howard (who became a leading landowner and influential figure on the border itself after 1603) were important factors which assisted Sir Robert Cotton's ambitious plans to move a substantial number of these heavy stones from the Scottish border to Huntingdonshire. There is no conclusive proof that Sir Robert Cotton returned to Northumberland to acquire the Redesdale stones, unless one lays very heavy weight on the opening of Riddell's letter, but putting the evidence together with the problems generated by an assumption that he worked entirely at a distance after 1599, the balance of the direct and circumstantial evidence lies in favour of such a visit. But however he did it, Cotton's acquisition of the stones from the Northumbrian borders for his home at Conington was a major achievement, one that added substantially to the evidence he and Camden had seen on their 1599 tour and one that was formative in both Roman Wall studies and more widely in Roman epigraphy in Britain. Cotton's pioneering contribution to the early years of Roman Wall historical and archaeological studies deserves due recognition.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Birley, E. *Research on Hadrian's Wall*, p.1. (Kendal, 1961)

<sup>2</sup> Cotton originally housed the collection in a specially-built octagonal summer-house at his home in Conington (Huntingdonshire). His descendant gave them to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1750, and the stones resided in the Wren Library until 1969, when they were moved to the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Table 1 gives a list of the fifteen stones, their source locations, catalogue identifiers, and estimated weights.

<sup>3</sup> Notably Sharpe, K. *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631. History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1979), and Sharpe, K. "Introduction: Rewriting Sir Robert Cotton", in Wright, C.J. (ed.) *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector. Essays on an Early Stuart Courtier and his Legacy* (British Library, London, 1997), 1-39. An earlier, and very individual study was Mirlees, H. *A Fly in Amber, being an extravagant biography of the romantic antiquary Sir Robert Bruce Cotton* (Faber, London, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> Tite, C.G.C. *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton* (British Library, London, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Wright, C.J. *op. cit. passim*. All seventeen essays in this study are important contexts for Cotton's life, activities and collecting.

<sup>6</sup> McKitterick, D. "From Camden to Cambridge: Sir Robert Cotton's Roman inscriptions, and their

subsequent treatment, in Wright, C.J. *op. cit.*, 105-128. Davies, G. "Sir Robert Cotton's collection of Roman stones: a catalogue with commentary", in Wright, C.J. *op. cit.*, 129-167.

<sup>7</sup> Britannia (1610 English translation) p.769.

<sup>8</sup> Wood, A. *Athenae Oxoniensia* (1721), vol. ii, p. 342; Gibson, E.(ed.) *Britannia* (London, 1695), p.9. Recent attributions of the tour to 1600 include Levy, F.J. *Tudor Historical Thought*, p.155 [with explicit reference to Smith, T., cited in footnote 10 below] (San Marino, California, 1967); Parry, G. *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century*, p.74 (Oxford, 1995); Sharpe, K. *Sir Robert Cotton*, p.20.

<sup>9</sup> Gibson, *op. cit.* p.9.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, T. (ed.) *Guilielmi Camdeni et Illustrorum Virorum ad G. Camdenum Epistolae*, appendix, p.85 (London, 1691).

<sup>11</sup> On Camden see Helgerson, R. *Forms of Nationhood. The Elizabethan writing of England* (Chicago and London, 1992); Kendrick, T.D. *British Antiquity* (London, 1950); Levy, F.J. "The making of Camden's Britannia", *Bibliothèque d'Humanité et de la Renaissance*, 26, 70-97 (1964); Levy, F.J. *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, California, 1967); Mendyck, S.A.E. 'Speculum Britanniae'. *Regional Study, Antiquarianism, and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto, 1989); Parry, G. *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995); Piggott, S. "William Camden and the Britannia", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 37, 199-217 (1951).

<sup>12</sup> Cited by Kendrick, *op. cit.* p.142.

<sup>13</sup> Piggott, *op. cit.* pp.207-208.

<sup>14</sup> Haverfield, F.J. *The Roman Occupation of Britain*, pp. 68-69 (Oxford, 1924).

<sup>15</sup> The editions were Camden, W. *Britannia* (London, 1586), the 1st edition, followed by 1587 (ed. 2), 1590 (ed. 3), 1594 (ed. 4), 1600 (ed. 5), 1607 (ed. 6.). All of these six editions were in Latin. An English translation was produced by Philemon Holland in 1610 (ed. 2 1637), and a more literal translation, with additional materials, by E. Gibson in 1695.

<sup>16</sup> Hay, D. *Annalists and Historians*, p. 151 (London, 1977)

<sup>17</sup> For these earlier sources used by Camden, see Birley, *op. cit.* pp.1-5, where he locates Camden's dependence on three documents - Leland's brief description, a letter originating with Christopher Ridley of Willimoteswike near Haltwhistle, and the notes of the Scots surgeons obtained via Edward Thelkeld. Camden's own regional correspondents in the Roman Wall region start to play a role in the 1600 edition.



<sup>18</sup> Sharpe. K. *Sir Robert Cotton*, passim.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* p.61.

<sup>20</sup> McKitterick, *op. cit.* p.110.

<sup>21</sup> *Britannia* (1610 English translation), p.800.

<sup>22</sup> *RIB* 1801, now lost. See Collingwood, R.G. and Wright, R.P. *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain, volume I: Inscriptions on Stone* (Oxford, 1965). The standard *RIB* number is used to identify all the inscriptions (and the stones on which they are carved). Where a stone survives in the Cotton collection, the identification number given by Davies in her catalogue of the stones is also given (Davies, *op. cit.*).

<sup>23</sup> The year 1599 is reported as "a quiet year" in Tough, D.L.W. *The Last Years of a Frontier*, pp. 271-273 (Oxford, 1928), though there were outlaws busy in the Middle Marches and an incursion by the Armstrongs of Liddesdale, so Camden may have heard disturbingly recent news of problems.

<sup>24</sup> See Birley, *op. cit.* p.179, and Bosanquet, R.C. "The Roman camp at Housesteads" *AA*<sup>2</sup>, 25 193-300 (1904).

<sup>25</sup> Birley, *op. cit.* p.235.

<sup>26</sup> Richmond, I.A. "The Romans in Redesdale" in *NCH* XV (1940), pp. 130-154. Examples are "seen by Cotton in 1599" (p.132, *RIB* 1242), and "The stone was seen by Camden and Cotton in 1599" (p.133, *RIB* 1213).

<sup>27</sup> Collingwood, R.G. and Wright, R.P., *op. cit.* Examples are *RIB* 1213 (p.398): "Altar seen in 1599 by Camden and Cotton"; *RIB* 1231 (p.405) and *RIB* 1237 (p.408): "seen in 1599 at Risingham" [D3].

<sup>28</sup> Davies, *op. cit.* Examples are *RIB* 1227 (p.132) "seen in 1601 by Bainbrigg, and probably by Cotton and Camden in 1599" [D1]; *RIB* 1241 (p.136) where 'probably' becomes 'possibly' [D2]; *RIB* 1254 (p.146), where it becomes "and by Camden and Cotton in 1599?" [D6].

<sup>29</sup> Piggott, *op. cit.* p.208.

<sup>30</sup> McKitterick, *op. cit.* p.106.

<sup>31</sup> Kendrick, *op. cit.* p.147.

<sup>32</sup> See Ornsby, G. *Selections from the Household Books of the Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle* (Surtees Society 68, 1877) p. xxviii: "Mr. Oswald Dykes was brother of Mr. Dykes of Wardale". The Dykes family have continued in Cumberland since the fourteenth century, and still exist there: see Hudleston, C.R. and Boumphrey, R.S. *Cumberland Families and Heraldry*, pp.98-99. (Kendall, 1978). Camden noted of a Cumberland inscription, "This also with others Oswald Dykes, a learned minister of Gods word copied out for me, and now is to bee seene in the house of T. Dykes,

Gentleman at Wardale" (*Britannia*, 1610 ed., p.774). A second letter from Dykes to Cotton, sending inscriptions, is in BL Cotton MS Julius C III f.163.

<sup>33</sup> BL Cotton Julius C III, f.162; also transcribed in Ornsby, *op. cit.* xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>34</sup> On the borders at this time, see Watts, S.J. *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586-1625* (Leicester, 1975), and on the 'names' or clans of Tynedale and Redesdale, see Robson, R. *The English Highland Clans. Tudor Responses to a Medieval Problem* (Edinburgh, 1989).

<sup>35</sup> See Howell, R. *Newcastle Upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution*, chapters 1 and 2 (Oxford, 1967); Levine D. and Wrightson, K. *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham 1560-1765*, chapter 1 (Oxford, 1991); Nef, J.U. *The Rise of the British Coal Industry*, 2 vols. (London, 1932)

<sup>36</sup> Nef, *op. cit.* vol. I, p.103. Langton, J. *Geographical Change and Industrial Revolution: Coalmining in South West Lancashire, 1590-1799* (Cambridge, 1979), p.45.

<sup>37</sup> Howell, *op. cit.* p.22.

<sup>38</sup> For the state of the Fens at this time, see Darby, H.C. *The Medieval Fenland* (Cambridge, 1940) and *The Draining of the Fens* (Cambridge, 1940).

<sup>39</sup> *Britannia* (1610 English translation), p.732

<sup>40</sup> Haverfield, F.J. "Julius F VI: Notes on Reginald Bainbrigg of Appleby, on William Camden and some Roman inscriptions", *CW*<sup>2</sup>, 11, 343-378 (1911)

<sup>41</sup> Haverfield, *op. cit.* p.356; BL Cotton Julius F VI f.325.

<sup>42</sup> *RIB* 1227 [D1].

<sup>43</sup> Haverfield, *op. cit.* p.356; BL Cotton Julius F VI f.326.

<sup>44</sup> The principal interest of Bainbrigg, Camden and Cotton was *Roman* inscriptions on stone, and this is also the focus of the present paper, but it is worth noting that Bainbrigg also provided the first record of the decorated and rune-inscribed pre-Conquest Bewcastle Cross (BL Cotton Julius F. VI f.321 and Haverfield, *op. cit.* p.357), information used by Camden in the 1607 *Britannia* (p.644). As with the Roman inscribed stones discussed in the present paper, Lord William Howard seems to have been a source of further information, sending a portion of rune-inscribed cross-head (or possibly just a draft of the stone's inscription rather than the stone itself) to Cotton. The copy of the 1607 edition *Britannia* in Bodleian MS Smith 1 (Camden and Cotton's own copy) has an inserted MS (the insertion is in p.645) in Cotton's hand noting "I receaved this morning a ston from my lord of Arundell sent him

from my Lord William it was the head of a Cross at Bewcastell." All the sources and references for this Bewcastle Cross material are in Bailey, R.N. and Cramp, R. *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, vol. II Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands*, pp. 19-22, 61-73 and 172-173 (by R.I. Page) (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> McKitterick, *op. cit.* pp. 112-114. See also Helgerson, *op. cit.* pp. 105-147 for the political significance of the choices of such illustrations.

<sup>46</sup> On Howard's role on the border, see Williams, P. "The Northern borderland under the early Stuarts" in Bell, H.E. and Ollard, R.L. (eds) *Historical Essays 1600-1750 presented to David Ogg*, 1-17 (London, 1963); Reinmuth, H.S. "Border society in transition" in Reinmuth, H.S. (ed.) *Early Stuart Studies*, 231-250 (Minneapolis, 1970); Reinmuth, H.S. "Lord William Howard (1563-1640) and his Catholic associations", *Recusant History*, 12, 226-234 (1974). A less significant role is suggested in Spence, R.T. "The pacification of the Cumberland border, 1593-1628", *Northern History*, 13 (1977), pp. 59-160.

<sup>47</sup> Scott, W. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (London, 1811). See Canto IV and Scott's historical footnote on Howard, p. 297.

<sup>48</sup> Mathew, D. "The library at Naworth", in Woodruff, D. (ed.) *For Hilaire Belloc* 117-130 (London, 1942).

<sup>49</sup> For Roscarrock at Naworth and his contacts with Cotton and Camden, see Rowse, A.L. "Nicholas Roscarrock", in Plumb, J.H. (ed.) *Studies in Social History: A tribute to G. M. Trevelyan*, 3-31 (London, 1955), and Orme, N. *Nicholas Roscarrock's Lives of the Saints: Cornwall and Devon*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, 35 (Exeter, 1992), which has a full bibliography on Roscarrock.

<sup>50</sup> *Britannia* (1610 translation), p. 782. A letter from Roscarrock to Camden, concerning antiquities, is in BL Cotton Julius C V f. 77, and printed in Smith, T., *op. cit.* pp. 91-92.

<sup>51</sup> Loans from Cotton to 'My Lord William Howard and Mr. Roscarrock' are listed in BL Harley MS 6018; see Tite, C.G.C. "A catalogue of Sir Robert Cotton's printed books?", pp. 183-193, and "Lost or stolen or strayed: a survey of manuscripts formerly in the Cotton Library", pp. 262-306, both in Wright, C.J., *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> This is a reasonable inference: there is no record of any other collections of Roman Wall inscribed stones for this period, other than the local collections assembled close to the Wall itself. These

local collections from the seventeenth century are those of Bainbrigg at Appleby (see Haverfield, *op. cit.*), Lord William Howard at Naworth, and John Senhouse at Netherhall near Maryport.

<sup>53</sup> The numeral "0" is reduced to almost a black dot. The swirling lower curve of the "I" in the line above runs through the year-date, and this gives the numeral something of the appearance of an italic "1". However, if the line of the curved "I" is taken account of, one is left with the black dot.

<sup>54</sup> The 1615 date is suggested in Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton*, p. 66 note 136, and McKitterick, "From Camden to Cambridge", p. 126 note 27, though neither discuss the letter, or its handwriting, in any detail. The standard catalogue of the Cotton manuscripts dates this letter as 29 October 1605: Planta, J. *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library, deposited in the British Museum* (London, 1802).

<sup>55</sup> BL Cotton Julius C III, f. 314

<sup>56</sup> Peter Riddell was admitted to the Hostmen's Company on 29 March 1602, and his father's death propelled him into immediate prominence with the Hostmen and the 'Inner Ring' of Newcastle government. He was knighted in 1617, mayor in 1619 and later, MP in 1624 and later. See Howell, *op. cit.*, p. 113, note 6 and the references given there.

<sup>57</sup> Mirrlees, H. *op. cit.* p. 41 and p. 353.

<sup>58</sup> Howard formed his own collection of Roman inscribed stones (chiefly from Amboglanna) in the garden at Naworth. They were still there in Stukeley's time, and he commented "In the gardens are many altars and inscriptions. I copied these tolerably fair. With much regret I saw these noble monuments quite neglected and exposed; some cut in half to make gate-posts (Stukeley, W. *Iter Boreale*, published as part of the *Iterarium*, 1776, quotation at p. 58; the visit was in 1725). They were later dispersed: see Ornsby, *op. cit.* p. lix.

<sup>59</sup> BL Cotton Julius C III, f. 210; also transcribed in Ornsby, *op. cit.* p. 42.

<sup>60</sup> It may be interesting to set these seventeenth century transport difficulties alongside a letter written during the early Roman occupation of the region, before Hadrian constructed the Wall, and preserved on the writing tablets found at Vin-dolanda. It records:

"... you ought to decide, my lord, what quantity of wagons you are going to send to carry stone. For the century of Vocontius ... on one day with wagons. Unless you ask Vocontius to sort out (?) the stone, he will not sort it out. I ask you to write what you want me to do (?). I pray that you are in good

health." Bowman, A.K. *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier. Vindolanda and its people*, pp. 135-136 (London, 1994) [Bowman's translation].

<sup>61</sup> e.g. "Nov. 18 1620: for bringing a load of fish and wine from Newbourn, xxjs" and "Mr. Gray, 3 Febr: Botehire to Nuburn with the stuffe, ijs. vid" (Ornsby, *op. cit.* p.140).

<sup>62</sup> BL Cotton Vespasian F XIII, f.322; also transcribed in Ornsby, *op. cit.* p.412.

<sup>63</sup> Welford, R. "Cuthbert Gray, merchant", *AA*<sup>2</sup>, 11, 65-79 (1885-6). Cuthbert also was the father of William Gray, author of *Chorographia: Or, a Survey of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne* (Newcastle, 1649), an early example of a local historical chorography which closely followed "the pattern of Camden's book" (Levy, F.J., *op. cit.* p.160).

<sup>64</sup> Ornsby, *op. cit.* pp.101-102. Ornsby footnotes this entry "The 'pyes' were probably red-deer pies sent to Lord William Howard's friend, Sir Robert Cotton, to whom he was transmitting some 'great stone' with a Roman inscription".

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p.140.

<sup>66</sup> Gerhold, G. "Packhorses and wheeled vehicles in England, 1550-1800", *Journal of Transport History* (3rd series), 14, 1-26 (1993); Jenkins, J.G. *The English Farm Wagon: Origins and Structure* (Newton Abbot, 1972); Gerhold, D.(ed.) *Road Transport in the Horse-Drawn Era* (Aldershot, 1996).

<sup>67</sup> Crofts J. *Packhorse, Waggon and Post. Land Carriage and Communications under the Tudors and Stuarts* (London, 1967), p.4.

<sup>68</sup> Gerhold, D. *Road Transport before the Railways. Russell's Flying Wagons* (Cambridge, 1993), p.27.

<sup>69</sup> Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton*, p.66 note 136, and McKittrick, "From Camden to Cambridge", p.126 note 27.

<sup>70</sup> Horsley, J. *Britannia Romana* (1732), p.182.

<sup>71</sup> [Gough, R.] *Anecdotes of British Topography* (London, 1768), p.8. I owe this reference to McKitterick, *op. cit.* p.127.

<sup>72</sup> Horsley, J., *op. cit.* p.237.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p.236.

<sup>74</sup> It is worth noting that in the Bodleian Library

there is "a copy of the 1607 (London) edition of Camden's *Britannia*, with some corrections, notes, and papers, chiefly by the author" (*Summary Catalogue*, entry for MS Smith 1). There are, indeed, notes and corrections in Camden's hand, but the title page also has Robert Cotton's name written on it, and the book clearly became his copy, and there are marginal annotations in his secretarial hand amending the reading of the Melkridge altar (p. 660; *RIB* 1792, D10) and, probably in his hand, the lost Risingham altar (p.662; *RIB* 1209). There is also a small manuscript "Papers written by William Camden" (MS Smith 84) containing (contents list on f. vii) "3: Several old Roman inscriptions collected by Mr. Camden. Not printed in the *Britannia*". The little inscription notebook contains copies of four Risingham inscriptions (*RIB* 1209 on f.32; *RIB* 1226 immediately below on f.32, *RIB* 1231 on f.29, and *RIB* 1254 on f.29 [D6]), all printed in the 1607 *Britannia* but with the first three later lost. It would be interesting to know how these sketches came to be made, and whether Camden or Cotton actually drew them, and it might be useful to compare their handwriting styles when drawing inscriptions with the sketches notebook. Camden spent part of the year 1603 at Conington, to escape the plague raging in London (see the note in his 'Memorabilia' in Smith, *op. cit.* p.85), and one interesting possibility is that these Risingham stones had already reached Conington, and Camden was able to draw and copy them there. However, this hypothesis then requires these stones to have disappeared after their arrival at Conington.

<sup>75</sup> *Britannia* (1607 edition), p.662.

<sup>76</sup> *Britannia* (1610 edition), p.805.

<sup>77</sup> Birley, *op. cit.* p.235.

<sup>78</sup> As elsewhere, the key source for Cotton's activities is Sharpe, K. *Sir Robert Cotton* (Oxford, 1979), and Sharpe, K. "Rewriting", *op. cit.*

<sup>79</sup> On Northampton, see Peck, L.L. *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I*, especially pp.101-117 (London, 1982). On Arundel, see Howarth, D. *Lord Arundel and his Circle* (New Haven and London, 1985).

