

Professor Anne Robertson who died on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1997 at the age of eighty-seven was an archaeologist and numismatist of international repute. From the moment of graduation in 1932 until her retirement in 1975 she was associated with the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow, and its world-famous Hunter Coin Cabinet. Throughout her long and active life she maintained high standards in scholarship and museum curation.

Anne Strachan Robertson was born and educated in Glasgow, graduating Master of Arts with Honours in Classics in 1932. Her enthusiasm for Roman history and archaeology and her attention to minute detail were already noticeable as an undergraduate. S N Miller, lecturer in Roman History, then newly appointed Honorary Curator of the Roman Collections at the Hunterian Museum, saw her as ideally suited to Museum work, in particular to the task of ordering and cataloguing the archaeological and ethnographic collections at the Museum, the former now including material from his own excavations at the Roman forts of Balmuildy and Old Kilpatrick, then still packed in boxes. It was perhaps Miller who brought her to the attention of Sir George Macdonald, Honorary Curator of the Hunter Coin Cabinet, as especially suited also to working with coins. A university scholarship allowed her to spend part of the session 1932-33 travelling to visit museum collections elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In 1933-34 she studied for a second MA, this time in Archaeology, at University College London, working with Sir Mortimer Wheeler; she participated in Wheeler's excavations at Maiden Castle, Dorset. At the same time she gained valuable experience at the Coins and Medals Department of the British Museum. Many of her earliest publications in *Numismatic Chronicle* relate to coin hoards from Roman sites in Britain, a subject that was to remain dear to her to the end of her life. She became a permanent member of Glasgow University staff in 1938-39; for many years her salary was paid from, or augmented by, the Dalrymple Archaeological Fund of the Glasgow Archaeological Society, administered by the University. In consequence she continued to give regular Dalrymple lectures down to the 1960s.

She quickly put her archaeological training to good use, beginning already in 1937 a long series of excavations, interrupted by the Second World War, at Castledykes Roman fort near Lanark, which continued until 1955 and which established periods of both Flavian and Antonine occupation at this important site. Overlapping with this work was a series of 'rescue' excavations at Duntocher on the Antonine Wall (1947-51), where part of the fort was threatened by housing development. During the Second World War she continued with cataloguing, and gave lectures to service personnel on archaeology and Scottish history. At the same time she was working quietly on a massive catalogue of *The Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow*, which appeared in five volumes between 1962 and 1982, and must be considered her chief scholarly contribution. She also found time to complete a volume in the series *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles* (1961), published by the British Academy, devoted to Anglo-Saxon coins in the University of Glasgow collection. As the compiler of any catalogue knows well, such work needs patient attention to detail, intense concentration, and constitutes a strain on the eyesight, out of all proportion to the length of the published work. In succession to Sir George Macdonald, she compiled decennial surveys of Roman coins found in Scotland; see *ProcSocAntiqScot.* 84(1949-50), 137-69; 94(1960-61), 133-83; 103(1970-71), 113-68; 113(1983), 405-38. Her numismatic achievement was widely recognised, for example by the award of the Medal of the Royal Numismatic Society (1964). She gained the greatest pleasure from visits to the American Numismatic Society in New York, where she was awarded the Huntington Medal (1970).

Her numismatic and archaeological interests were often combined, as in her lengthy study of 'The Romans in North Britain, the Coin Evidence', published in the multi-volume *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II 3 (1975), 364-426 and in a paper updating earlier surveys by James Curle, with the title 'Roman Finds from non-Roman Sites in Scotland', subtitled 'More Roman "Drift" in Caledonia', published in the inaugural volume of the journal *Britannia* (1970, 198-225).

She maintained a regular watch and ward along the Antonine Wall, at a time when others paid it scant attention. In 1960 at the invitation of the Glasgow Archaeological Society, she compiled a brief handbook and guide to the surviving remains, subsequently reprinted with minor modifications and still available in its sixth printing. She gained nothing financially from this, and indeed would have thought it strange to do so; indeed she frequently subsidised publications from her own resources, the money stated as coming from an 'anonymous benefactor'. For many enthusiasts this handbook was their first introduction to the Roman frontier between Forth and Clyde. As an excavator she remained active in the field for over 40 years, a remarkable record. Between 1948 and 1973 she was Secretary of the Scottish Field School of Archaeology, and regularly Director of its training excavations, first at Castledykes, then at Birrens in Dumfriesshire, between 1962 and 1967, and at Cardean in Angus, from 1968 until 1973, the work continuing thereafter under the auspices of the Hunterian Museum until 1975; her final operations in the field were again at Duntocher in 1977-78. For students of the Field School, these excavations provided rigorous training in a very formal setting, both bringing home the need for an organised approach to the management of an excavation, and providing a firm grounding in the techniques which had to be deployed to maximise the information obtained. Several hundred students, most drawn from Scottish Universities (including the writer from 1966 onwards), supplemented by school pupils and 'grown ups', participated over the years.

She took care to make the results of her work available to the wider community, with the publication of *An Antonine Fort: Golden Hill, Duntocher* (1957), *The Roman Fort at Castledykes* (1964), and *Birrens (Blatobulgium)* (1975). Of her major archaeological projects only Cardean remains unpublished at her death; but the report is largely complete, and many specialist contributions had been received. Her archaeological and numismatic papers, and many books, together with the cinefilms of her excavations, were recently presented to the Hunterian Museum by the Trustees of the Church of Scotland, to whom the bulk of her estate was bequeathed.

The Glasgow Archaeological Society formed a focus for her attentions for 60 years. She was Vice-President from 1945 until 1954, and then President from 1954 to 1957. Her time as President included the Society's centenary celebrations in the session 1956-57, culminating in a close-packed sequence of receptions, lectures and excursions in August 1957. Her Presidential Address considered the role of the Society in the developing knowledge of Roman Scotland, 1856-1956. Subsequently her strong sense of duty prompted a return to service in 1965 as one of the Society's Honorary Secretaries, a post she continued to hold until 1972. To mark her retirement from the Hunterian Museum in 1975, the Society issued a volume of the *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* devoted to studies in her honour, by friends and colleagues. She was elected an Honorary Member of the Society in the following year.

She was also associated for many years with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. In 1946 she became a member of the Council; incredibly it might seem now, she was the first woman to be elected. From 1949 until 1962 she was the Secretary responsible for Foreign Correspondence, and thereafter, until 1982, an *ex officio* member of Council as representative on the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. She also had particularly close links with the Glasgow and West of Scotland Numismatic Society.

She was active far beyond Glasgow, before and after her retirement, lecturing frequently to archaeological and heritage groups, taking a special interest in fledging societies, in the projects and activities of school pupils, and in local initiatives. She was Honorary Secretary of the Scottish Group of the Council for British Archaeology (1959-61) and in later years she sponsored the Robertson Awards, presented under the auspices of its successor CBA Scotland (subsequently the Council for Scottish Archaeology), to reward a variety of archaeological endeavour, particularly by its younger members.

In an age when professional archaeologists were a small community, she served frequently on the councils, committees or governing bodies of various organisations at a local and national level. She was a member of the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland for an extended period in the 1960s and 1970s and a member of its Rescue Committee. She became a Fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society (1937), of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1941), of the Society of Antiquaries of London (1958) and of the Museums Association (1958); she was also a Council Member of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (1962-65 and 1966-69) and later one of its Honorary Vice-Presidents. Academic honours came her way, though perhaps somewhat belatedly. In 1965 she was awarded a D.Litt by the University of Glasgow in recognition of her publications. She was made a Reader in Roman Archaeology in 1964, and Professor of Roman Archaeology, one of the first women to be given professorial rank at Glasgow University, in 1974, a year before her retirement.

An extremely shy and very private person, not always at ease in large gatherings, she expected the highest standards both from herself and from immediate colleagues. It is easy for present day archaeologists to forget that in the 1930s, few professionals were in post, either in museums, government agencies or in the field. In a male-dominated profession, she was compelled to form her own judgements on a wide range of scholarly topics and rely on them for want of colleagues with whom to share them. The nature of her post, and perhaps her own personality, did not lead her to attract pupils in the normal way; but among her Glasgow students were the distinguished numismatists Robert Carson, later Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, and Marion Archibald, later Assistant Keeper there. Anne Robertson's job-title changed several times, but in latter years it was 'Keeper of the Cultural Collections and of the Hunter Coin Cabinet'. Despite a common belief to the contrary, she was never Keeper or Director of the Museum as a whole; but to many she was the Museum's public face and the person most associated with it.

At about the time of her retirement she moved to a detached bungalow in Bearsden, a few yards south of the Antonine Wall, and so just within the Roman Empire. Here she worked for many years on her final work, *Romano-British Coins Hoards*, a massive undertaking unfortunately long delayed in the press, through no fault of her own; publication is now imminent but it is sad that she herself did not live to see the resulting volume. She maintained her strong association with the Church of Scotland and did unheralded work for the Samaritans. She never married and remained close to her three sisters, only one of whom now survives, and to their children and grandchildren.

LAWRENCE KEPPIE

This is a shortened version of an obituary recently published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 127(1997), and is reproduced here with permission.