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Preface

It was only in 1972 that Grant Simpson published his seminal *Scotland's Medieval Burghs: an archaeological heritage in danger*. In response to such pleas, from 1976 onwards Historic Scotland (and its predecessors) began to publish the first of a series of *Burgh Surveys*, intended to ensure that all who might have an interest would understand the implications of development in historic town centres. Since then the pace of development has fluctuated but the idea that archaeological remains should be preserved where feasible, and recorded, analysed and published where that is not feasible is widely accepted, and has been firmly enshrined in *National Planning Policy Guideline* number 5 on *Archaeology and Planning*.

Over the past decades great advances have been made in our understanding of the evidence that lies beneath our streets as a result of archaeological excavation. Many invaluable detailed reports on individual projects have been published. As a result, we have now reached a stage at which there is a need to put together overviews of what has been accomplished in some of the most extensively investigated burghs. This is both to provide a wider view of the scope and limitations of urban archaeology and in particular to enhance our understanding of those burghs. A number of such overviews have now been published. Most recently the Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee, with funding from Historic Scotland, published David Bowler's *Perth, the archaeology and development of a Scottish burgh* in 2004, and those two bodies are now once again coming together to offer the present volume on Dundee by David Perry.

Dundee has been one of the most important conurbations of Scotland from as early as the twelfth century. Sited on the north shore of the tidal waters of the Firth of Tay, it enjoyed the great advantage of a natural harbour that was never likely to be rendered unusable through silting. The 1988 Burgh Survey, *Historic Dundee the archaeological implications of development*, by Sylvia Stevenson and Pat Torrie, provided a masterly synthesis of what was then known

of the documentary history and archaeological potential of the burgh, and that publication will undoubtedly have permanent value. Since then, however, our understanding has been expanded through a series of over thirty excavations and watching briefs within and around the historic centre of the burgh. It is the findings made in the course of these interventions that have made it possible to offer the following account.

Amongst the many discoveries that have been made, it now seems possible that the burgh which was erected by King William the Lion on behalf of his brother, the earl of Huntingdon, at a date before 1195, initially developed on an axis extending northward from the castle, on its rock overlooking the foreshore where St Paul's Episcopal Cathedral now stands. We now also know a little more about the earliest timber buildings of the burgh, from what has been found at the junction of Panmure Street and Murraygate where, fortuitously enough, a carpenter's iron axe has also been found. Evidence located in waterlogged deposits has offered some clues to the diet of medieval Dundonians, while skeletal remains found around St Mary's Church have suggested a population that had to work hard to live, but that achieved adequate nourishment as a reward for its efforts.

Despite all that has been achieved, however, there is much about which it would be good to know more. Little archaeological evidence, for example, has so far been found of the industrial activity on which the burgh's wealth was based. But urban archaeology is an accretive process, with the sum of knowledge increasing exponentially as the work goes on. What we have in this invaluable volume is a summary of what has been achieved so far, and a timely reminder of the need to ensure that no chance of expanding our knowledge is missed. In taking this opportunity to welcome *Dundee Rediscovered*, I particularly wish to congratulate SUAT Ltd, who have carried out much of the work here, and to applaud the initiative of the Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee in ensuring that it is placed before the wider world.

Malcolm Cooper
Chief Inspector, Historic Scotland

Plates



Plate 1 Section through the floors and occupation levels of excavated timber structure at 72–78 Murraygate, towards the east. (© SUAT Ltd)



Plate 2 The foundation wall of the Pillars uncovered during environmental improvements in the city centre, towards the west (© SUAT Ltd)



Plate 3 The stone vaults at Exchange Street, towards the northeast. (© SUAT Ltd)



Plate 4 *The rose window formerly in St Mary's Tower.*
(© SUAT Ltd)



Plate 5 *The ditch under the former cemetery at St Mary's Church, towards the south.* (© SUAT Ltd)



Plate 6 *Wishart Arch from the east, in 1989 before restoration (top) and today after restoration (bottom).*
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