Interpreting Hadrian's Wall:

Antiquarian Engagement with the Roman Wall, 1848-1892

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Table of Contents

Introduction

This thesis will examine the early antiquarian period of excavation on Hadrian's Wall, which took place between 1848 and 1892, before the advent of systematic archaeology in the later 1890s. Over these years, Hadrian's Wall gained visibility in both academic and popular culture as increased study of its remains by antiquarian societies began to generate widespread interest, in particular through the work of schoolmaster-antiquarian John Collingwood Bruce (1805-1892). I argue that this antiquarian activity enabled 20th- and 21st-century archaeological investigation by drawing wider attention to the monument, and that this prompted a shift in the Wall's significance by serving to popularize it as a tourist site. Compared to previous centuries, interest in the Wall took a new shape in the 19th century with the formation of antiquarian societies that published and discussed findings in their academic journals. For many of these scholars, the Wall represented the cultural and intellectual legacy of Rome embedded in the landscape of northern England. Additionally, discourses of classical study and imperialist ideology reinforced each other during this period, as the British Empire continued to grow in size and influence until the end of the 19th century while drawing on Roman exempla in its terminology and iconography.

My first chapter will contextualize the 19th-century antiquarians' contribution to Hadrian's Wall studies by tracing the evolution of theories about the Wall to the early 19th century. My second chapter will examine the first large-scale uncoverings of the Wall's buried remains by antiquarian John Clayton, starting in the 1840s. My third chapter will investigate the beginnings of Hadrian's Wall as a symbolic heritage site as interpreter John Collingwood Bruce popularized Clayton's discoveries to support the now-familiar attribution of the Wall to Hadrian.

History, memory, and heritage

In examining the role of the Wall in the development of the British historical imagination, I will draw on theoretical frameworks for thinking about history, memory, and heritage, including the work of Pierre Nora, Jay Winter, and David Lowenthal. In the third volume of Pierre Nora's project *Realms of Memory*, he investigates the French national identity and past through the cultural meanings that have become attached to various national symbols, arguing that "national memory has congealed in a historical tradition, a historiography, of landscapes, institutions, monuments, and language which the historian can treat as so many *lieux de mémoire.*"[1] He conceives of the *lieu de mémoire* as a physical or abstract location that serves as a container for meaning and memory, and he distinguishes such symbols into the categories of "imposed" and "constructed."[2] Imposed symbols are those created at a definite moment in time with "a symbolic and memorial intention," whereas the meaning of constructed symbols comes from layers of resonance in the national memory acquired over time, through a process of "unforeseen mechanisms, combinations of circumstances, the passage of time, human effort, and history itself."[3] Among the examples Nora offers for each category are the Eiffel Tower and Joan of Arc, respectively.[4] Hadrian's Wall, in my analysis, serves as a British *lieu de mémoire*, as a constructed symbol of British heritage as opposed to an imposed one.

Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* and *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century* apply the concept of the *lieu de mémoire* to France's memory of the Great War through a study of war memorials in the French landscape. He finds a search for a "language of mourning" in post-1918 Europe that involved "sites of

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[1] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: the Construction of the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), xii.
[2] Nora, x.
[3] Nora, x.
[4] Nora, x.

memory" located in "physical, emotional, and artistic artefacts" like literature, film, and monuments.[5] Although Winter focuses on a history of mourning that is in itself less applicable to my study of Hadrian's Wall, his discussion of rituals and remembrance located in physical monuments illuminates how Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimages have contributed to modern and contemporary understandings of the Wall's significance.[6] His work also provides another important study of how memory is situated in the physical features of a national landscape.

Lowenthal's influential examination of heritage in *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* explores the relationship between heritage and history within the context of the late 20th-century phenomenon he calls "the cult of heritage."[7] He argues that history shares with heritage an unavoidable subjectivity, writing that his examination of history takes it to be a discipline characterized by a futile effort towards impartiality.[8] In Lowenthal's view, the fact that "any past worth pursuing is bound to arouse historians' passions" means history involves interpreting the past just as heritage does, rather than simply studying "what happened."[9] Lowenthal's characterization of narratives of history as shaped in complex ways by diverse historical perspectives offers a model for my historiographical investigation of the interrelated processes of classical and imperial thinking, with respect to the Wall.

Cultural context: imperial and classical thought in the British Empire

Imperial thinking in 19th-century Britain drew on Adam Smith's liberal idea of progressive development—that it was natural for more advanced societies to "dominate those at lower stages

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[5] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6-7.
[6] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* 78; *Remembering War* 6.
[7] David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 1.
[8] Lowenthal, 106.
[9] Lowenthal, 108.

of development."[10] For this reason, "history" tended to take the form of a teleological story of progress, a narrative that British thinkers and policy-makers could shape to support various viewpoints on empire, arguing that the British should "either keep [progress] to themselves, demand it for themselves, or establish more stringent conditions on which it might be slowly granted to colonial others."[11] The classical world figured prominently among these sorts of narratives as the origin of the civilization that the British Empire purported to spread, with Rome in particular serving as a convenient point of comparison and emulation. Classicist Mark Bradley bases his approach to the study of Classics during the British Empire in a methodology of "hegemony and cornucopia."[12] Here he refers respectively to the interdependent processes of empires using classical exempla to "forge power from heterogeneity," and to the resulting accumulation of imperial wealth.[13] The interaction between these two elements of empire—"profiting from the diversity of empire while constructing discourses of identity and of alterity to maintain control"—informs the intellectual and cultural connection between imperial and classical thought in 19th-century Britain, a linkage also common to other post-Roman European empires.[14] The study of Ancient Greek and Roman topics "was often directly or indirectly influenced by empire and imperial authority," while classical exempla played a crucial role in inspiring and explaining British imperialism.[15] The wealth and resources of empire often enabled engagement with Greco-Roman antiquity, and the ubiquity of classical study influenced the British Empire in ways as direct as the requirement for administrators of British India to have

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[10] Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth Century Visions of Greater Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3.
[11] Koditschek, 8.
[12] Mark Bradley, "Introduction: Approaches to Classics and Imperialism," in *Classics and imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.
[13] Bradley, "Introduction," 19-20.
[14] Bradley, "Introduction," 10.
[15] Bradley, "Introduction," 10.

knowledge of Greek and Roman languages and history.[16] Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) is one prominent example of an imperial administrator who admired the Romans and desired to emulate them in his career. Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* and Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* were among his favourite readings at Oxford, and he enjoyed being compared to Julius Caesar.[17]

One locus for the interplay of imperialist and classical thought was the British Museum, where in the early years of the 19th century collections of Greek and Roman archaeological artifacts began to outpace the Museum's original offering of exhibits on natural history.[18] Acquisitions of continental classical antiquities also vastly outnumbered British archaeological finds in the Museum's holdings, largely because during the first half of the century British archaeology had a poor reputation compared to excavations on the continent.[19] The earliest acquisitions of antiquities came from private donors, but by the 1860s and 70s substantial imperial wealth allowed the Museum to make purchases from continental collectors.[20] By accumulating classical artifacts in this way, the Museum made a British claim on the cultural legacies of Ancient Greece and Rome, asserting that Britain could be a legitimate steward of classical antiquity.

The classroom also maintained this theme of classical material as a British cultural inheritance, as Roman authors such as Virgil, Cicero, and Tacitus had provided examples of language and rhetoric to British students for centuries.[21] During the 19th century, the account of

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[16] Bradley, "Tacitus' Agricola and the Conquest of Britain," 148.
[17] Raymond F. Betts, "The Allusion to Rome in British Imperialist Thought of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Victorian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1971): 151.
[18] Bradley, "Introduction," 2.
[19] Martijn Polm, "Museum Representations of Roman Britain and Roman London: A Post-Colonial Perspective." *Britannia* 47 (2016): 213.
[20] Mark Bradley, "Introduction: Approaches to Classics and Imperialism," in *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.
[21] Mark Bradley, "Tacitus' *Agricola* and the Conquest of Britain," in *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 139.

the Roman imperial conquest of Britain in Tacitus' *Agricola* gained particular relevance as fuel for debates surrounding empire: writing in line with Roman historical tradition, Tacitus applied his rhetorical skill to the speeches of both his Romans and his Britons, and as a result the text presents an ambivalent reading of empire.[22] Between 1820 and 1940, classroom editions of the *Agricola* proliferated, as did translations, many of which made an effort to "deproblematize" Tacitus' ambivalence by ignoring the text's anti-imperial speeches and implications or abridging them.[23] Among these new translations was one of the earliest editions in the Loeb Classical Library, and the Loeb editor was not alone in praising the text for its capacity to support comparisons between Roman administration of Britain and the British Empire in India.[24] For many readers, Tacitus' work showed empire's capacity to civilize, and they saw Agricola and his fellow Romans as bequeathing Roman civilization to the Britons—a view that in turn explained and justified British imperial expansion. As excavations of Roman British sites like Hadrian's Wall became more widely known, illustrations of the findings became a motif in the classroom *Agricola* alongside maps that connected Tacitus' text to Britain's past and present geographical realities.[25]

Antiquarianism and archaeology

Founded in 1813, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne is now the oldest provincial antiquarian society in England, and since 1822 many of the foremost scholars and interpreters of Hadrian's Wall have published their findings in its journal, *Archaeologia Aeliana*. British antiquarianism had its roots in the Renaissance, when early antiquarians began to look to "antiquities"—material culture, especially coins and inscriptions—to fill the gaps left by

[22] Bradley, "Tacitus' *Agricola* and the Conquest of Britain," 134.
[23] Bradley, "Tacitus' *Agricola* and the Conquest of Britain," 143.
[24] Bradley, "Tacitus' *Agricola* and the Conquest of Britain," 143-44.
[25] Bradley, "Tacitus' *Agricola* and the Conquest of Britain," 147.

"narrative accounts" of the past.[26] Antiquarians were primarily interested in classical history, but the early modern availability of ancient historical and geographical texts brought readers into contact with the ancient Mediterranean world's understanding of Britain, making British identity and character a concern for many early antiquarians.[27] Over the following centuries, antiquarianism and archaeology developed as closely linked, overlapping fields, with amateur excavation providing more artifacts for antiquarian study and collection.

Both disciplines became central to the study of the past, which in 19th-century Britain equalled the sciences as part of "the dominant intellectual resources which shaped Victorian culture."[28] This widespread interest in history meant that the early decades of the 19th century saw a proliferation of historical societies that aimed to combine antiquarians' resources and enable discussion of antiquities. By the end of the century, the development of geological stratigraphy had contributed to more precise archaeological techniques, and archaeology quickly became a professional discipline while antiquarian methods gained a reputation in many archaeological circles for being unable to provide satisfactory answers to questions about antiquity.[29]

Historiography

Perceptions of the antiquarian era of scholarship have shifted over the past century: John Clayton and John Collingwood Bruce's work was often discounted by their immediate successors in favour of the new, "scientific" archaeology, and only during the later 20th century have those

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[26] Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 1.
[27] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.
[28] Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 1.
[29] Francis Haverfield, "Five Years excavation on the Roman Wall," *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society* 15, (1899): 337.

earlier contributions been reassessed as valuable. This change in opinion has accompanied a gradual transformation of approaches to archaeological problems posed by Hadrian's Wall, with scholars of the era between 1890 and 1935 often expressing hope that their excavations might definitively resolve mysteries of the Wall's function and construction, and modern writers more frequently looking to reexamine assumptions carried forward from the early 20th century. In what follows, I will examine, in chronological order of publication, works by Francis Haverfield and R. G. Collingwood from the period between 1890 and 1935, along with recent works by Richard Hingley and David J. Breeze, as well as *Frontiers of Knowledge*, the 2009 research framework funded by English Heritage. These publications each reflect on earlier eras of scholarship and provide insight into their own phases of historical thought.

The first reflections on the 19th-century era of John Clayton and John Collingwood Bruce as history come from the last decade of the 19th century. Writing in 1899 in a report on excavations for the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological & Antiquarian Society, archaeologist Francis Haverfield (1860-1919) characterizes the earlier decades as an era of "surface depictions" of the Wall.[30] While he praises the extent of the 1852-4 survey financed by the Duke of Northumberland and carried out by Henry MacLauchlan, he groups it together with the work of Bruce and his contemporary John Hodgson as falling short of the archaeological rigour of his own era. Haverfield's 1899 assessment assumes that the purpose of archaeological investigation is to provide certainty about the Wall's Roman past; he writes that in the earlier decades "[t]he spade was rarely used to prove theories which were suggested by the appearance of the ground, and excavations made in some of the forts were incompletely recorded or more often not recorded at all."[31] He notes that work on Hadrian's Wall is less extensive than

[30] Haverfield, 337.
[31] Haverfield, 337.

excavations occurring at the Roman frontier in Germany, but he sees the latest excavations by antiquarian and archaeological societies as the solution to the "misleading precision" of Bruce's descriptions of the Wall.[32]

In terms of findings, Haverfield explicitly responds to Bruce's explanation of the Vallum (an earthwork to the south of the stone wall) with new discoveries that he says have "done much to render obsolete all previous accounts of the Wall and its appurtenances."[33] Citing these discoveries, he dismisses the suggestion that the Vallum was military in nature, a theory put forward by Bruce and Hodgson.[34] Haverfield's "fairly certain conclusions" are that the Vallum "is a ditch between mounds, made by the Roman for some purpose, legal or other, which was not directly connected with fighting or fortification."[35] Less certain is the purpose of the newly-discovered "Turf Wall," of which question he writes that "the spade alone can solve the puzzle, and no quantity of guesses will profit anything."[36] Haverfield's report sums up the results of five years of work on new excavations of Hadrian's Wall and the attitude of archaeological optimism that informed them, and he presents these findings as replacements or amendments to what he characterizes as the unmethodical "descriptions" of earlier decades.[37]

Twenty years after Haverfield's report, in 1921, his student R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943) put forth similar claims about the importance of archaeological evidence in his article "Hadrian's Wall: a History of the Problem" published in *The Journal of Roman Studies*. Collingwood's stated aim is to recount the history of investigations of Hadrian's Wall up to the point when "within the last generation, a complete solution seems to have come within the range

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[32] Haverfield, 337-8.
[33] Haverfield, 338.
[34] Haverfield, 340.
[35] Haverfield, 341.
[36] Haverfield, 343.
[37] Haverfield, 337.

of possibility."[38] In his discussion of the early 19th century, he praises Hodgson's account of Hadrian's Wall as "an excellent description of the remains […] based on personal inspection and excavation," and credits him with the first attribution of the Wall to Hadrian.[39] For Collingwood, the crucial element of Hodgson's work was "the abandonment of an uncritical faith in a string of bad historians, and the attempt to check written history by archaeological evidence."[40] Collingwood characterizes Clayton and Bruce as "able and energetic" but of Clayton's approach he writes: "[i]t was, of course, not what we call scientific digging. That had not yet been invented. It was pioneer work, and inevitably destroyed much evidence which to-day would be valuable."[41] Collingwood notes that Bruce's publications contributed greatly to the popularization of the Wall, but that the theories he put forth were essentially reiterations of Hodgson's rather than his own innovations.[42] He also calls the maps and text of MacLauchlan's 1850s survey "unrivaled," and approves of MacLauchlan's approach to evidence that seemed to contradict the Hadrianic theory: "MacLauchlan makes no parade of putting forward a theory; he simply states facts […] for theorists to explain."[43] While Collingwood offers the earlier era more praise than Haverfield does, the elements he finds most commendable are those most closely aligned with the principles of "scientific excavation," such as Hodgson's "attempt to check written history by archaeological evidence." Like Haverfield, Collingwood argues that the excavations of the 1890s provided a "scientific" solution to the problem of the Vallum, which had "remained an unsolved riddle" from 1840 to 1890.[44]

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[38] R. G. Collingwood, "Hadrian's Wall: A History of the Problem," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 11 (1921): 37.
[39] Collingwood, 55.
[40] Collingwood, 56.
[41] Collingwood, 55.
[42] Collingwood, 56.
[43] Collingwood, 57.
[44] Collingwood, 59.

Assessments and reassessments of Hodgson's work continue today. Published in 2009 and edited by M. F. A. Symonds and D. J. P. Mason, *Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall* collects summaries of current scholarship on the Wall with the aim of creating and organizing paths for future research. Volume I: Research Assessment "summarizes and assesses the existing knowledge base [...] including the surviving physical remains of the monument [...] the sum of evidence produced by investigations so far, and the collections of artefacts recovered."[45] It acknowledges Hadrian's Wall as a site of great archaeological interest as well as a tourist destination "embedded in the popular imagination."[46] Beginning with a summary that also appears in French and German, the collection also suggests the international context and significance of research around the Wall. The collection's title links its development to the incorporation of Hadrian's Wall into the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site in 2005.[47]

While compiled as a survey of current archaeological evidence about the Wall, the collection also includes a brief history of relevant scholarship written by editor David J. P. Mason, who calls Hodgson's work "comprehensive and useful" and credits Bruce with "the first modern statement of the function of Hadrian's Wall" as a fortification intended for defense on either side of the Wall, not only to the north.[48] MacLauchlan's survey appears as "the first accurate topographic survey of the Wall," and Haverfield's work as the beginning of "systemic excavation" in the 1890s.[49] Mason also mentions the influence of Collingwood's papers on the context of the Wall, and describes the subsequent division of the ancient history of the Wall into

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[45] *Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall, Part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. Vol. I. Research Assessment*, ed. M. F. A. Symonds and D. J. P. Mason (Durham: Durham County Council, 2009), ix.
[46] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, ix.
[47] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, ix, xii.
[48] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, xviii.
[49] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, xviii.

four periods between its construction in 122 CE and 383 CE.[50] He identifies the development of this system, alongside increased understanding of the Turf Wall between 1925 and 1935, as the source for "the premature assertion that all the problems of Hadrian's Wall had been solved."[51] Mason goes on to describe the current scholarly opinion that the four-period framework does not explain all the archaeological evidence available, as well as noting the beginning of involvement from the British government, English Heritage, and the National Trust over the course of the 20th century.[52] As part of *Frontiers of Knowledge*, Mason's assessment of the early and mid-19th century characterizes the period as one of significant developments and multiple firsts in Hadrian's Wall studies rather than as simple or unscientific compared to later archaeological efforts.

In 2012, Richard Hingley, also a contributor to *Frontiers of Knowledge*, published *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* as a product of the research project *Tales of the Frontier; political representations and cultural practices inspired by Hadrian's Wall*.[53] The book approaches interpretations of the Wall through a chorographical framework that Hingley describes as "based on the idea that the character of the land described in particular places persists through time."[54] He argues that the Wall's Roman identity persists throughout its "range of broader associations as a result of its long and complex sequence of use."[55] Chapter 10, entitled "The Clayton Wall: A New Era in Antiquarian Research," responds to the late 19th- and early 20th-century historiographical approach to Clayton, Bruce, and their contemporaries, pointing out that scholars have become more appreciative of the early excavations over the course of the later 20th century. Hingley claims that the attention Clayton and Bruce drew to the site allowed subsequent

[50] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, xviii-xix.
[51] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, xix.
[52] *Frontiers of Knowledge*, xix.
[53] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), vii.
[54] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 8.
[55] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 11.

scholars to reassess earlier ideas about the Wall.[56] He argues for the value of the antiquarians' contributions to Wall studies, writing that these decades "resulted in a fundamental re-conceptualization of [the Wall's] significance and a growing international appreciation of the monument."[57] For Hingley, Haverfield and Collingwood's judgment of earlier work on the Wall relies on the "overt claim that archaeological work can produce certainty to replace guesswork."[58] While he acknowledges the scholarly value of the early 20th century's archaeological discoveries, he argues that the "focus on an analytical comprehension of definitive knowledge [...] effectively kills the Wall's living significance today."[59]

By contrast, Hingley characterizes 21st-century scholarship as responding to "the development of a new image for Hadrian's Wall" following its World Heritage Site designation in 1987.[60] The "new image" is an "inclusive" one, with management of the site incorporating the importance of sharing archaeological knowledge with the general public, as well as the economic value of tourism.[61] Hingley notes that the development of the *Research Framework* laid out in *Frontiers of Knowledge* "predominantly drew upon archaeologists who were actively involved in research on the Wall" while the accompanying *Management Plan* document recommends inviting participation from all kinds of people interested in the Wall.[62] Additionally, he acknowledges the "masculine bias" of earlier scholarship and writes that "it is worth considering whether other voices might contribute alternative valuations today."[63] Rather than expressing optimism for an imminent "solution" to the problems the Wall poses, Hingley argues that the field benefits from a diversity of approaches that can challenge and re-examine earlier ideas.

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[56] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 178.
[57] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 178.
[58] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 177.
[59] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 332.
[60] Hingley *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*,, 333.
[61] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 333.
[62] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 334.
[63] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 334.

Hadrian's Wall: A Life received positive reviews, one of which praises Hingley's unique biographical approach as an effective lens for capturing the Wall's cultural history through "psychoanalysis of the times."[64] Another review calls the book "high quality, engaging and instructive [...] always intelligent and critical," only regretting that Hingley's ambitious scope leaves limited space for extended theoretical reflection on every issue.[65]

David J. Breeze calls his 2014 book *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* "largely complementary" with *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, writing from a perspective similar to Hingley's that "a greater understanding of how and why we think about Hadrian's Wall in the way that we do would be of value."[66] Breeze believes the unexamined influence of "shadows" of previous hypotheses about the Wall poses a problem for contemporary scholars, writing that many ideas about the Wall held to be fact over the past century are rather interpretations begun during the excavations of the 1920s and 1930s.[67] This book approaches the historiography of Hadrian's Wall though "literary, documentary and epigraphic evidence," which Breeze deems essential in forming a picture of the Wall alongside archaeological findings.[68]

A review by Emmett L. Wheeler for *The Journal of Roman Studies* also notes that *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* and *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* complement one another.[69] Wheeler writes that "few are more qualified for the task" of examining these historiographical problems than Breeze, with more than 50 years of Wall studies behind him including his publishing of the definitive history of the Wall itself with Brian Dobson in 1976.[70]

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[64] Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels. "Hadrian's Wall: A Life," *Antiquity* 87, no. 336 (June 2013): 610.
[65] Shelley Hales, "Reviews of Books," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 167, no. 1 (2014): 214.
[66] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), xix.
[67] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, xix.
[68] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, xx.
[69] Everett L. Wheeler, "Hadrian's Wall: The Ongoing Search for Certainty" *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 30, (2017): 692.
[70] Wheeler, 692.

As criticism of *A History of Archaeological Thought*, he points out that Breeze's bias towards British, English-language scholarship, despite the Wall's strong links with Roman frontiers in Germany, results in Breeze paying little attention to German publications in this book.[71] However, Wheeler ultimately praises the work as "a good introduction to the history of Wall studies" with "few blemishes."[72] Breeze also contributed to *Frontiers of Knowledge*.

The publications I have explored here represent a shift in the historiography of Hadrian's Wall over the past century. Much of Clayton and Bruce's work fell out of favour with their immediate successors, who viewed their approaches as unscientific and descriptive rather than analytical. More recent scholarship recognizes the role of the antiquarians in popularizing the Wall to make future studies possible and problematizes the early 20th-century belief in the ability of archaeology to conclusively resolve questions about the Wall. *Frontiers of Knowledge* provides a compilation of current archaeological knowledge about the Wall, and it emphasizes the national and international significance of the site as a destination for visitation and future study.

[71] Wheeler, 692.
[72] Wheeler, 695.

Chapter 1: Evolving Understandings of Hadrian's Wall

Introduction to Hadrian's Wall

Today, Hadrian's Wall is one of the two most prominent ancient sites in Britain alongside Stonehenge.[73] It received a World Heritage Site designation in 1987 and became part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site in 2005.[74] The site's "scale and complexity" have made it an immensely valuable archaeological resource as well as compelling the popular imagination from the medieval period onward.[75] When it was constructed in 122 CE under the Roman emperor Hadrian, the Wall was 80 Roman miles (117 kilometres or 73 standard miles) in length, stretching across northern England from Wallsend in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west.[76] Multiple architectural elements make up the site: the most well-known is the stone curtain wall, which is marked by small forts called "milecastles" at intervals of about one Roman mile.[77] From the River Irthing to Bowness-on-Solway, the western stretch of the stone wall was originally built in turf and later replaced with stone, but parts of both walls survive in areas where the stone replacement departs from the turf original.[78] An extensive system of earthworks accompanies the wall and includes the Vallum, a later addition to the Wall complex that consists of "a deep central ditch with a mound set back on each side" placed to the south of the curtain

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[73] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 1; *Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall, Part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. Vol. I. Research Assessment*, ed. M. F. A. Symonds and D. J. P. Mason (Durham: Durham County Council, 2009), ix.
[74] Frontiers of Knowledge, ix.
[75] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 1.
[76] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), xi.
[77] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 23.
[78] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 25.

wall and running along its length.[79] Interpreting the age and function of these various elements has proved a central challenge in the study of Hadrian's Wall.

Adopted in the early 20th century, the name "Hadrian's Wall" expresses a relatively modern understanding of the site.[80] Medieval and early modern writers knew it predominantly as "the Picts' Wall," and 18th- and 19th-century writers most often called it "the Roman Wall."[81] These changes in the monument's name reflect the evolution of understandings of its origins and meaning, even as the 19th century inherited these centuries of scholarship and hypotheses alongside the Wall and its Roman past. An examination of some of the major developments in the study of Hadrian's Wall before 1848 contextualizes the questions that the 19th-century antiquarians sought to answer, in particular relating to the Wall's builder. It also illuminates the way the site has functioned for each age as a *lieu de mémoire*, accumulating layers of academic, political, and popular meanings.[82] In many ways, construction of Hadrian's Wall continued long after its Roman era on both literal and metaphorical levels.[83]

Medieval writers and the memory of the Romans

The only explicit reference to a wall built by Hadrian in a Roman text comes from the *Historia Augusta*, which states that "Hadrian was the first to build a wall from sea to sea, 80 miles long to separate the Romans and the barbarians."[84] Other ancient sources discuss a wall built by the emperor Septimius Severus, who reigned from 197 to 211 CE over an empire that included

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[79] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), xii.
[80] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 16.
[81] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 33.
[82] Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: the Construction of the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), x.
[83] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 7-8.
[84] Qtd. in Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 11.

Britain, about two generations after Hadrian's reign.[85] The Wall's history becomes increasingly uncertain during the centuries following the Roman departure from Britain in the early 400s CE, as medieval writers transformed their ancient sources or invented explanations to fill gaps in knowledge. For example, monk and early historian Gildas (6th c. CE) removed the Wall from the context of Roman conquest and instead wrote that after the Romans left Britain, the Britons asked Rome for help defending against the Picts and Scots to the north.[86] In response, Gildas reports, the Romans returned and constructed a wall across the north of England with the help of the local people.[87] Confusion between Hadrian's Wall, the Vallum, and the Antonine Wall further north complicated the issue further for those looking to apply ancient sources to the landscape.[88]

Bede, another monk, finished *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in 731 and made use of Gildas among other sources in his discussion of the Wall.[89] Attempting to reconcile the ancient sources with the landscape (with which he seems to have had some familiarity), he identified three walls, counting the Vallum alongside Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall.[90] He attributed the Vallum to Severus, and dated both Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall to the post-Roman period, with the latter predating the former.[91] Gildas and Bede both based their accounts of the Wall in larger narratives about the ancient Britons' Christian faith: Gildas blamed the Britons for incurring their own misfortunes by failing to be good Christians, and Bede framed the conflicts around the Roman frontiers as threatening to the Christian faith of the local Britons.[92]

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[85] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 11.
[86] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 13.
[87] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 14.
[88] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 14.
[89] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 40.
[90] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 14.
[91] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 14.
[92] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 40-41.

Early Modern writers and the classical texts

Early Modern interest in the Wall benefited from the invention of the printing press, which enabled the spread of ancient historical and geographical texts including those that fed debate about the Wall's origins.[93] Sixteenth-century writers struggled to interpret the complex system of ruins alongside the ambiguous ancient references, but in 1527, Scottish scholar Hector Boece was the first to attribute part of the Wall to Hadrian.[94] Boece believed that Severus finished Hadrian's work on the structure, but Polydore Virgil, an Italian humanist writing in England in 1534, emphatically argued that the whole structure was Hadrian's with no involvement from Severus.[95] David Breeze writes that these early scholars were successful because they deviated from the medieval accounts in favour of the classical textual sources, although they were familiar with writing of both periods.[96] However, English writers including the influential early antiquarian John Leland dismissed Boece and Polydore Virgil along with the slightly later claims of Welshman Humphrey Lhuyd, most likely because of their national affiliations.[97] Generally, 16th-century observers understood that the Wall stretched from Wallsend to Bowness, but they differed in the ways they linked together (or did not link together) the stone wall, the forts, the Vallum, and the other site's other earthworks.[98]

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[93] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study in Archaeological Exploration and Interpretation* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2019), 11.
[94] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 16.
[95] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 16.
[96] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 16.
[97] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study in Archaeological Exploration and Interpretation* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2019), 11.
[98] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study in Archaeological Exploration and Interpretation*, 12.

A chorographical tour of the Wall with William Camden, 1599

Mapmaking and surveying also thrived with the arrival of the printing press. The earliest depiction of the Wall in a map comes in 1579 from Christopher Saxton, who based his work on a visit to northern England in 1576. Similarly, schoolmaster William Camden (1551-1623) and his former student Robert Cotton toured as much of the Wall as they could in 1599, and the visit provided the basis for the description of the Wall in the fifth edition of Camden's *Britannia*, published the following year in 1600.[99] Camden and Cotton were unable to visit Housesteads and other sites along the central section of the Wall in 1599 because thieves and bandits posed a danger for travelers.[100] At around the same time, Reginald Bainbrigg (1544/5-1612/13), a collector of Roman stones, made his way through the central section "at considerable personal risk" and came away with "the first detailed description of an excavated structure on Hadrian's Wall," which he recorded when a local man dug into the Castlesteads site for stone and uncovered a Roman inscription.[101] Safety remained a concern for visitors to the Wall well into the 18th century, and it was not until 1849 that the opening of the Newcastle Central Station streamlined rail transport to the Wall from other parts of England.[102]

Camden intended *Britannia*, first published in Latin in 1586, to trace ancient mentions of Roman British towns and camps and to locate them in the British landscape of the late sixteenth century.[103] He drew on previous scholarship, both recent and medieval, and ancient sources, and

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[99] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 66.
[100] William Camden, *Britain, or A Chorographicall Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands Adioyning, out of the Depth of Antiquitie Beautified With Mappes of the Severall Shires of England: Written First in Latine by William Camden Clarenceux K. of A. Translated Newly into English by Philémon Holland Doctour in Physick: Finally, Revised, Amended, and Enlarged with Sundry Additions by the Said Author* (London, England: [Printed at Eliot's Court Press] impensis Georgii Bishop & Ioannis Norton, 1610), 800.
[101] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 73-5.
[102] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study in Archaeological Exploration and Interpretation* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2019), 6.
[103] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23.

his reliance on Gildas and particularly Bede did a great deal to prolong their influence, which extended even to some writers of the 19th century.[104] Camden decided that the extant stone wall had been built by Severus to replace a turf wall, itself also a Severan construction, which in turn had replaced an earlier "wall of stakes or pikes" built by Hadrian.[105] Aiming to bring together Britain's past and present landscapes with his work by "[restoring] antiquity to Britaine, and Britain to his antiquity," Camden's chorographical approach to mapping Roman sites demonstrates the "living" nature of the Wall at the time of his writing.[106]

Camden's approach inspired the structure and tone for Michael Drayton's 1622 poetic work *Poly-Olbion*, in which the personified "Pictswall" declares himself the "first the *Romans* did invent, / And of their greatness yet, the long'st-liv'd monument."[107] Drayton's collection deals with historical enmity between the English and the Scottish along the border, and he imagines the Wall as originally a turf construction of Hadrian's that Severus later "builded new of stone."[108] He conceives of it as a defense against the Picts and a point of pride for the Britons, who in Drayton's poem have gone to great lengths to repair the Wall.[109] Both Camden and Drayton used Hadrian's Wall as a place to explore the theme of "English superiority over the Scots," imagining it as a boundary separating the Britons from the Scots and Picts.[110] This was a

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[104] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 70.
[105] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 17.
[106] William Camden, *Britain, or A Chorographicall Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands Adioyning, out of the Depth of Antiquitie Beautified With Mappes of the Severall Shires of England: Written First in Latine by William Camden Clarenceux K. of A. Translated Newly into English by Philémon Holland Doctour in Physick: Finally, Revised, Amended, and Enlarged with Sundry Additions by the Said Author* (London, England: [Printed at Eliot's Court Press] impensis Georgii Bishop & Ioannis Norton, 1610), 1.
[107] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 76; Michael Drayton, "Song XXIX," in *The Complete Works of Michael Drayton, Vol. III: Polyolbion and The Harmony of the Church* (London: John Russel Smith, 1876), lines 315-16.
[108] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 79; Michael Drayton, "Song XXIX," in *The Complete Works of Michael Drayton, Vol. III: Polyolbion and The Harmony of the Church* (London: John Russel Smith, 1876), line 340.
[109] Drayton, lines 341-2.
[110] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 85.

politically significant idea, as the unity of the two kingdoms had begun to approach with the reign of James I over both England and Scotland.[111]

In terms of its public influence, Camden's *Britannia* proved very popular: the first English translation was published in 1610, and new editions followed "well into the eighteenth century."[112] In particular, the 1695 edition helped to reinvigorate interest in the Wall after a comparatively slow 17th century.[113] It maintained its authority until 1732, when John Horsley's *Britannia Romana* was published.[114]

John Horsley: "The father of the science of archaeology?"

John Horsley (1685-1732) took a novel approach in his *Britannia Romana*, a substantial volume in which Horsley examines Roman sites primarily by describing and analyzing their visible remains; Horsley mainly looked to the Wall and other Roman sites to provide information about the Roman period of Britain's history rather than trying to place it within his own 18th-century world.[115] Fittingly, his work demonstrates the semantic shift from the Picts Wall to the Roman Wall that occurred around the beginning of the 18th century.[116]

In *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, Richard Hingley writes that "Horsley produced [...] in modern terms, a remarkably accurate record of the Wall and its inscriptions, an approach that appears to have foreshadowed the archaeological works of the late nineteenth to early twenty first centuries."[117] John Collingwood Bruce also understood Horsley as a turning point for the study

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[111] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 85.
[112] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 17.
[113] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 87.
[114] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 87.
[115] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life*, 108.
[116] Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 162.
[117] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 113.

of the Wall and admired him as foundational to his own understanding of the Wall.[118] In 1851, Bruce wrote of Horsley, "is it too much to say that he was the father of the science of Archaeology?"[119] On this point at least, the scientific archaeologist R. G. Collingwood agreed with Bruce, writing in 1921 that "with [Horsley] we feel that we have emerged from a tentative and amateurish, a pre-scientific, study of the subject, in which grave oversights and fundamental errors are expected and pardoned, into an age of clear thinking, where problems are faced and evidence mustered in a scientific spirit."[120]

Horsley's approach to his material reflects his clearly articulated belief in the value of knowledge of antiquity for its own sake, but he also laid out an argument to convince those who might disagree that his work was important. He wrote that knowledge of "many antient rites and customs both civil and religious" is "conveyed to us by such [Roman] monuments," claiming ruins as an alternative to texts for discovering details "which could not otherwise have been known."[121] In his discussion of the value of the Roman sites, Horsley took an unusually ambivalent stance compared to his peers and 19th-century successors, finding in the monuments' ruined condition a lesson about human vanity against the ravages of time.[122] His assessment directly compared the didactic potential of sites with that of the textual historical tradition: "What surprising revolutions and catastrophes may we read not only in history, but in these very monuments!"

Horsley argued that the forts along the Wall had been built by Agricola, the Vallum by Hadrian, and the Wall itself by Severus.[123] Attempting to understand the arrangement of the

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[118] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall: A Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, Extending from the Tyne to the Solway* (London: John Russell Smith, 1851), 104.
[119] Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 104.
[120] R. G. Collingwood, "Hadrian's Wall: A History of the Problem," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 11 (1921): 52.
[121] John Horsley, *Britannia Romana: or The Roman Antiquities of Britain* (London: Printed for John Osborn and Thomas Longman at the Ship in Pater-Noster Row, 1732), iii.
[122] Horsley, iv.
[123] Horsley, 98.

earthworks, he believed that the Vallum had a defensive purpose and supported his theory by suggesting that the north mound of the Vallum had actually been Agricola's old military road and not part of the Vallum system at all.[124] This theory has since been disproved, but Collingwood praises Horsley's methodical, deductive approach and credits Horsley's work with demonstrating that study of the Wall needed to take a new form: with Horsley, "it became clear that the method of surface inspection, combined with uncritical acceptance of the literary authorities, could be pushed no further."[125] His theory of the various structures' origins remained influential for almost two centuries, until archaeological investigations of the early 20th century confirmed John Hodgson's 1840 attribution of the Wall to Hadrian.[126]

John Hodgson and the Hadrianic Theory

John Hodgson (1779-1845), a member of the clergy and an antiquarian, was the first to claim the entire complex of structures that make up the Wall as Hadrian's work.[127] In contrast with Horsley, who worked for the most part alone, Hodgson was closely involved with collaborative peer networks and antiquarian societies throughout his antiquarian career.[128] Bruce credits Hodgson with being the driving force behind the founding of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1813.[129] Hodgson read a paper at the second meeting of the Society that outlined the members' motivation for coming together to discuss local antiquities, arguing that the social value of antiquarianism lay in its ability to identify classical examples of excellence that could be

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[124] R. G. Collingwood, "Hadrian's Wall: A History of the Problem," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 11 (1921): 53.
[125] Collingwood, 53.
[126] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 18.
[127] Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought*, 18.
[128] Eric Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (Kendall: Titus Wilson, 1961), 59-60.
[129] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall: A Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, Extending from the Tyne to the Solway* (London: John Russell Smith, 1851), 106-7.

followed with the goal of furthering human progress.[130] In the subsequent decades, this paradoxical idea of backward-looking progress would come to characterize Victorian study of the past and Victorian culture more widely.[131] Hodgson pointed to the antiquarian activities of Cato the Elder, the emperor Germanicus, and Plutarch to demonstrate that the discipline itself followed a classical precedent.[132] He also noted that by organizing into societies, the antiquarians would be able to more easily collect and preserve both ancient and recent texts.[133] Addressing the matter of the Wall specifically, Hodgson acknowledged "the accurate and judicious Horsley" but summed up the state of study as follows:"The remains [...] are still but slightly investigated; and the received opinions respecting the constructors of the several parts of it, seem to be founded on very inaccurate criticism."[134]

In an attempt to depart from these "received opinions" and make his own investigations, Hodgson undertook excavation efforts at Housesteads in the following years, and these benefited from Society sponsorship.[135] His definitive treatment of the Wall appeared in his 1840 work *A History of Northumberland* in the form of a very lengthy footnote divided into ten chapters of its own. Because his statements came in this obscure format, he received "little or no credit for the novelty of his views," which instead later gained popularity through Bruce's work.[136] By studying inscriptions found in the milecastles along the Wall, Hodgson arrived at the conclusion that Hadrian must have built the milecastles, and by studying the way the milecastles attached to

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[130] John Hodgson, "On the study of antiquities. Read before the Society at its second monthly meeting," *Archaeologia Aeliana* I (1822): x.
[131] Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 1.
[132] John Hodgson, "On the study of antiquities. Read before the Society at its second monthly meeting," *Archaeologia Aeliana* I (1822): xii.
[133] Hodgson, "On the study of antiquities. Read before the Society at its second monthly meeting," x.
[134] Hodgson, "On the study of antiquities. Read before the Society at its second monthly meeting," xviii.
[135] Eric Birley, *Research on Hadrian's Wall* (Kendall: Titus Wilson, 1961), 60.
[136] R. G. Collingwood, "Hadrian's Wall: A History of the Problem," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 11 (1921): 55.

the stone wall, he extended this conclusion to the Wall itself.[137] Then, considering that the various parts of the site exhibited considerable "unity of design," he took the whole system as a coherent work by Hadrian, based on the inscriptions.[138] This attribution contradicted the dominant opinion that Severus was the builder of the Wall, which was based in the Roman texts. Of this deviation from the norm Collingwood writes that "the real advance made by Hodgson was precisely the abandonment of an uncritical faith in a string of bad historians, and the attempt to check written history by archaeological evidence."[139]

Hodgson's health failed him in 1845, only a few years after the publication of his Hadrianic theory in *A History of Northumberland*. His arguments appealed greatly to John Collingwood Bruce, who popularized and defended them in his own writings and lectures by drawing on the corroborating archaeological evidence from John Clayton's excavations, starting in the late 1840s. However, many remained convinced by the textual evidence for Severus's being the Wall's author, and even the medieval influence of Gildas and Bede remained until stratigraphic archaeology finally settled the question in favour of Hadrian in the 1920s.[140]

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[137] Collingwood, 56.
[138] John Hodgson, *A History of Northumberland: Part II, Volume III* (Newcastle, for the author, 1840), 307.
[139] R. G. Collingwood, "Hadrian's Wall: A History of the Problem," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 11 (1921): 56.
[140] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 16.

Chapter 2: John Clayton and Antiquarian Excavation

This chapter examines the efforts of antiquarian John Clayton (1792-1890) to preserve and excavate sites along Hadrian's Wall, as well as his contributions to debates surrounding the Wall's builder, its function, and its significance. The unprecedented scale of his excavations brought in a new era of engagement with the Wall and its forts as sites to be uncovered, studied, and visited. Clayton developed an interest in antiquity through his education, and his training in Latin assisted his study of inscriptions along the Wall. His wealthy background made it possible for him to acquire estates containing sections of the Wall and its forts and to oversee large-scale excavations on his property. Additionally, Clayton drew on the expertise of his peers and shared his own through letter-writing and participation in antiquarian societies. While the archaeologists of the 1890s and early 20th century tended to discount Clayton's methodology, his excavations helped transform scholarly approaches to Hadrian's Wall, and he also began to increase general access to material finds and excavation sites through his collection held at the Chesters estate.

Clayton's education and social background

David Breeze identifies "the interest of individuals and the availability of money" as major factors in the growth of Hadrian's Wall studies.[141] Certainly both are present in Clayton's case, his wealth in particular allowing him to transform engagement with the Wall to such a great extent.

The Clayton family was notably upper-class and well-established in Newcastle: Clayton's

[141] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 1.

grandfather and great-grandfather had each been Sheriff and Mayor of Newcastle, and Clayton himself followed his father in becoming Town Clerk in 1822.[142] He held this position until 1867, meaning that the Clayton family remained a significant force in the town council for eighty years.[143] Combined with the family's prominent legal business, this longstanding concentration of civic power provoked some contemporaries to call the family the "Clayton Dynasty."[144] Clayton himself continued to maintain a high level of civic involvement, holding more than fifteen other offices over the course of his life in addition to his Town Clerkship.[145] He was central to architectural and commercial developments in Newcastle throughout his life, and has been credited with elevating Newcastle to the status of "a true capital city of the north instead of just another urban conglomeration."[146] Clayton's obituary praises his time as Town Clerk as follows: "[i]n no period was the progress so great or so rapid."[147] One such advancement in which Clayton and his family had substantial influence was the construction of the railway between Newcastle and Carlisle that was planned and constructed in the 1820s and '30s, with Clayton serving as legal advisor to the railway company, his father on the board of directors, and his brothers owning a total of 65 shares.[148]

Clayton's civic positions allowed him to enrich himself through investments and business dealings, as well as the work he did with his father's firm, but he also had access to considerable family wealth. Frances McIntosh notes that Clayton's father "was one of only three people from Tyneside between 1830 and 1839 to leave over £100,000 in his will, whilst in the year he died

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[142] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 38.
[143] McIntosh, 38.
[144] McIntosh, 38.
[145] McIntosh, 39.
[146] Qtd. in McIntosh, 40.
[147] *In Memoriam. Mr. John Clayton of Chesters* (Newcastle upon Tyne:Daily Journal, 1890), 9.
[148] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 41.

(1832) his wealth excluding land amounted to £160,000, the sixth largest that year in Britain."[149] At his father's death, Clayton inherited his father's estate jointly with two of his brothers, and later inherited his brothers' shares at each of their deaths in 1847 and 1856.[150] Part of Clayton's joint inheritance of 1832 was the Chesters estate, which contained the Roman site of Cilurnum: it was there that Clayton began his career as an excavator, performing his first excavations in 1840.[151]

Clayton brought a classical education to his work on Hadrian's Wall that was typical of a young man of his social standing. A letter to his father from 1808 (when he was 16) recounts his school reading, with Homer, Theocritus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Thucydides, and Herodotus among the authors he lists.[152] Later, recalling his school days, Clayton wrote: "My studies were a little varied by the interpretation of Roman inscriptions, found in the Fortresses erected by the Romans as a protection against the Scottish invaders, to which my attention was occasionally drawn by my father, who had received good classical education at the public school at Newcastle-upon-Tyne."[153] However, Clayton's father did not share an interest in preserving the Roman remains on his land, "in fact levelling the lumps and bumps created by the ruins to landscape his garden."[154]

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[149] McIntosh, 39.
[150] McIntosh, 33-34.
[151] McIntosh, 53.
[152] Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological, Vol. III* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), 170-71.
[153] Smith, 171-72.
[154] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 45-6.

Purchases and preservation

After inheriting Chesters and Cilurnum, Clayton began to purchase estates containing portions of Hadrian's Wall at every opportunity.[155] Many areas of the Wall had suffered from serving as convenient sources of pre-cut stone for centuries, and large stretches of it had collapsed into rubble.[156] Missing stones harmed the Wall's structural integrity, but they also posed problems for early 19th-century scholars looking to investigate the monument's origins, as crucial evidence could be dispersed over the landscape. This was the case for one inscription that formed the basis for the first conclusive claim, in 1840, that the Wall was built by Hadrian rather than by the later emperor Septimius Severus: earlier antiquaries had lacked access to the full inscription because another part of the stone "had been built up in the wall of a farm-house … near to Borcovicus."[157] Clayton wished to protect the surviving Wall from stone robbing by taking it into his own custody, as well as looking to uncover long-hidden Roman remains, and his substantial familial and personal wealth allowed him to accomplish this on an unprecedented scale. More recent scholars have suggested that Clayton performed "the single greatest act of conservation in the history of the Wall."[158] He moved farmhouses and other structures away from the Wall, and rebuilt a large section of it today called the "Clayton Wall."[159] As well as taking place over a great geographic distance, Clayton's effort was unique in that "[h]e was the first to understand that the whole landscape, and its context, was as important as individual sites or finds, and that the Wall as a monument should be preserved in situ."[160] He made his first purchase of Wall land

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[155] McIntosh, 53.
[156] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 187.
[157] John Clayton, "Account of Excavations at the Mile Castle of Cawfields, on the Roman Wall," *Archaeologia Aeliana* IV (1855): 54-59.
[158] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life,* 184.
[159] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life,* 185.
[160] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 53.

in 1834, and followed it with ten more over the course of his life, with his final acquisition taking place in 1885.[161]

Antiquarian work had commonly depended on patronage and sponsorship (or faced challenges of lack of funding), and Clayton's work took place after the tradition of southern Britain's "landed gentry … [sponsoring] antiquaries to excavate Roman villas on their estates."[162] The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne benefited from the patronage of the Percy family, beginning with the second Duke of Northumberland, who had supported its founding in 1817.[163] The fourth Duke, himself an ordinary member of the Society, contributed to excavations and notably commissioned Henry MacLauchlan's landmark survey of the Wall and its roads, published in 1857-8.[164] Over the course of Clayton's lifetime, antiquarianism and archaeology became separate disciplines, the advent of professional archaeology at the end of the century occurring just after his death.[165] As part of this process of professionalization, excavation ceased to be possible only "on behalf of or by wealthy landowners" and became a career for many interested in antiquity.[166]

Clayton's own excavations began at Cilurnum in 1843, and he excavated at one site or another "nearly every year until his death" almost fifty years later.[167] He did not dig at the sites himself, but rather hired local labourers and visited approximately weekly, as he spent the majority of his Town Clerkship based in Newcastle.[168] Later professional archaeologists would regard many of his methods, such as disregarding finds of animal bones that today's

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[161] McIntosh, 55.
[162] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7; Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 188.
[163] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 50.
[164] McIntosh, 50.
[165] McIntosh, 45.
[166] McIntosh, 45.
[167] McIntosh, 53.
[168] McIntosh, 54.

archaeologists would investigate for evidence of "agricultural and butchery practices," as crude and unscientific, but today this assessment seems harsh in light of the fact that Clayton was undertaking an unprecedented task before professional archaeological standards had been conceived.[169]

Antiquarian correspondence and connections

19th-century antiquarianism inherited from previous centuries a largely collaborative and interpersonal quality, and debate and encouragement took place through networks of communication within the antiquarian community.[170] Clayton's work also took on this social dimension: with his personal papers since lost, much of his thinking about his own work and that of his peers survives in the many letters he wrote to antiquarian friends and colleagues. For example, in addition to working closely with John Collingwood Bruce, Clayton drew on the knowledge and friendship of London-based numismatist Charles Roach Smith.[171] The relationship benefited both men's reputations, as Roach Smith contributed his numismatic knowledge to the study of the coins in Clayton's collection and recorded a list of other antiquarians he encountered through Clayton during his visits to Chesters.[172] Clayton enjoyed hosting fellow antiquarians and members of the public at Chesters, which formed a physical node in this network of intellectual exchange.[173] The spirit of exchange extended as well to the antiquarians' material collections, so not all the artifacts in Clayton's personal collection came from his own excavations: some arrived "through swapping material with friends, sometimes

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[169] McIntosh, 6.
[170] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.
[171] Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological, Vol. III* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), viii-x.
[172] Smith, 165.
[173] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 49.

through purchase, and some through inheritance."[174] His collection includes artifacts from Pompeii, suggesting that the social and intellectual tradition of exchanging gifts may have reached internationally in some cases.[175]

Societies had also increasingly begun to provide a more organized sense of community for antiquarians and archaeologists, a relatively new development at the time Clayton began excavating.[176] Clayton himself joined the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1832, the same year in which he inherited the Chesters estate.[177] He was also involved with the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Royal Archaeological Institute at Rome.[178] *Archaeologia Aeliana*, the journal of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, published many of Clayton's accounts of his excavations to his peers. He also gained a wider reputation through Bruce's publications, including "at least one excavation in the journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London."[179]

Changing understandings of the Wall

Hingley writes that "[t]he development of knowledge about the history and structure of the Wall at this time resulted in a fundamental re-conceptualization of its significance and a growing international appreciation of the monument."[180] Clayton contributed to a shift in how scholars engaged with the Wall as a feature of the landscape, with excavation taking place on a new scale and with a new focus on large-scale preservation and protection of the monument. A crucial

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[174] McIntosh, 3.
[175] McIntosh, 8.
[176] Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 19.
[177] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 84.
[178] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 46.
[179] McIntosh, 52.
[180] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 178.

aspect of this shift in scholarship involved the "revision of earlier ideas" about the Wall's place in the ancient world.[181] Specifically, the questions of who ordered the Wall's construction and for what function were among the prominent concerns of Clayton and his contemporaries.

In 1840, clergyman John Hodgson, one of Clayton's early contemporaries, had been the first to definitively attribute the stone wall to Hadrian.[182] He had done so on the basis of inscriptions found on and around the wall that mentioned Roman legions known to have been involved with Hadrian's projects in Britain and not with Severus's work, laying out his evidence in a footnote to his *History of Northumberland*.[183] Within the decade, Clayton's excavations uncovered previously hidden inscriptions to support this hypothesis, and Clayton reported to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1848 that "all this evidence seems to lead irresistibly to the conclusion, that between the Stations of Borcovicus and Aesica at least, the Wall of Hadrian has been the most northern of the lines of fortification, and has occupied the site of the Wall ascribed to Severus."[184] Although the problem of dating and attributing forts along the Wall remained, Clayton's further archaeological support for Hodgson's hypothesis proved foundational to the present-day understanding of Hadrian's Wall's location in the history of Roman Britain.

Clayton also excavated evidence that challenged the dominant theory of the Wall's function, namely that it separated the Romans and Britons from invaders to the north. Gildas overtly makes this claim, drawing on the *Historia Augusta*'s mention of the Wall as "[separating] the Romans and the barbarians," but his narrative is otherwise fictional.[185] One consequential

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[181] Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life,* 178.
[182] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 17-18.
[183] John Clayton, "Account of Excavations at the Mile Castle of Cawfields, on the Roman Wall," *Archaeologia Aeliana* IV (1855): 55.
[184] Clayton, 56.
[185] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014), 14.

piece of archaeological evidence suggesting otherwise comes from Clayton's excavation of a milecastle (a small fort built into the wall) at Cawfields, where he unearthed a gate on the north side of the structure mirroring the one on the south side–the conclusion being that the Romans evidently intended to pass through the wall in both directions with equal ease, so it could not have been originally intended solely as an impenetrable barrier between civilization and the barbarians.[186] This was an important discovery, but as Clayton's own description from 1889 of the Wall's forts as having been built "as a protection against the Scottish invaders" demonstrates, imagining the Wall as a protective northern barrier remained appealing.[187] In fact, the Wall as barrier was still such a prominent assumption that the very concept of "movement through the Wall" was new with Clayton's discovery.[188] Richard Hingley's assessment of the modern prevalence of the idea that Hadrian's Wall is or was the border between England and Scotland makes clear that this view endures strongly today, and that it is a misconception based in later distinctions between England and Scotland rather than archaeological evidence.[189] Hingley writes that imagining the Wall as a national border or barrier between cultures "has very little to do with the original purpose, location, or context of the Roman Wall; rather it has to do with the afterlife of the monument."[190]

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[186] John Clayton, "Account of Excavations at the Mile Castle of Cawfields, on the Roman Wall," *Archaeologia Aeliana* IV (1855): 59.
[187] Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological, Vol. III* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), 171-2.
[188] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 191.
[189] Richard Hingley, "Hadrian's Wall: An Allegory for British Disunity," in *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influences in the Construction of British Identities*, ed. Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 201.
[190] Hingley, "Hadrian's Wall: An Allegory for British Disunity," 202-3.

“More and more for the visitor to see”

Rather than exploiting the natural resources of his purchased sections of the Wall, Clayton aimed to preserve them and to make them accessible and presentable to interested parties: he provided “more and more for the visitor to see.”[191] His treatment of the “Clayton Wall” aimed “to recreate the ‘Romanness’” of the monument, using debris from the same section of the Wall in his reconstruction.[192] Hingley notes that Clayton succeeded to the extent that “in some places it can prove difficult to distinguish the rebuild from the original without careful excavation.”[193] Clayton’s relocation of newer structures near the Wall decreased the amount of modern activity in the vicinity of the remains, but also made it more visible as a feature of the landscape, and scholars have noted that in some places, “the appearance of today’s landscape probably owes more to the work of Clayton and his successors than to the Romans,” so impactful were his preservation efforts.[194] With his work on the “Clayton Wall,” he began a process of rebuilding and restoration that continued into the 1970s and drastically expanded the scale of the remains visitors can observe today.[195]

Clayton also maintained a collection of finds from his excavations at Chesters, and although no formal museum existed until after his death, he curated this collection with an audience of peers and students in mind. Clayton enjoyed entertaining visitors interested in the artifacts, operating under a kind of “open-house policy.”[196] His letters suggest that he frequently hosted groups of students, as well as friends and even complete strangers.[197] Emphasizing the benefit to the antiquarian community, his obituary describes the collection as “a museum of

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[191] Eric Birley, *Research on Hadrian’s Wall* (Kendall: Titus Wilson, 1961), 28.
[192] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian’s Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 185.
[193] Hingley, *Hadrian’s Wall: A Life*, 187.
[194] Hingley, *Hadrian’s Wall: A Life*, 187.
[195] Hingley, *Hadrian’s Wall: A Life*, 187.
[196] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 49.
[197] McIntosh, 49.

Roman Antiquity of great interest and value,"[198] and Charles Roach Smith writes admiringly of that Clayton was "[f]ortunately possessed of means, and, more fortunately, of the heart and soul to use them freely and judiciously."[199] He welcomed study of the collection and concerned himself with its availability to future scholars, setting out the conditions in his will for it to be catalogued and housed in a true museum setting.[200] A local architect, himself also a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, assisted with the establishment of the museum on the Chesters estate, and the guest books indicate that the building opened to the public in 1896.[201] Among the museum's first visitors were the Hadrian's Wall Pilgrims of that year.[202] Frances McIntosh also compares Cilurnum under Clayton to a modern publicly accessible archaeological site, pointing out similarities between 19th-century photographs and the modern appearance of the site.[203] For example, parts of the area were fenced in by 1877, perhaps to protect excavations from animals or to manage visitation.

Conclusions

Clayton personally funded excavation on Hadrian's Wall to an unprecedented extent with his purchases of estates containing sections of the Wall. His discoveries provided archaeological support for the much-debated theory that the Wall was Hadrian's construction, and his preservation work continues to provide iconic views of the monument that are visible today from the National Trail, especially near Chesters and Housesteads. Although his teams used amateur excavation methods, the results were indispensable to later 19th-century understandings of the

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[198] *In Memoriam. Mr. John Clayton of Chesters* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Daily Journal, 1890), 35.
[199] Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospections, Social and Archaeological, Vol. III* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891), 165.
[200] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017), 14.
[201] McIntosh, 14-15.
[202] McIntosh, 16-17.
[203] McIntosh, 89.

Wall, and they greatly increased access to its sites and artifacts for both antiquarian and public audiences. Additionally, John Collingwood Bruce, the Wall's most prominent 19th-century interpreter and a personal friend of Clayton's through their shared antiquarian interest, drew on Clayton's excavations for his popular interpretation of the Wall as a great Roman monument constructed under Hadrian.

Chapter 3: John Collingwood Bruce and Heritage Tourism of Hadrian's Wall

After walking the length of Hadrian's Wall in the summer of 1848, schoolmaster and antiquarian John Collingwood Bruce (1805-1892) began to work consistently to bring the Wall to the attention of a general audience. Bruce's conviction that visitation was the best way to engage with the Wall led him to organize the first Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage in 1849 and to publish *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* in 1863 as a guide to prospective visitors to the Wall. In his lectures and writing, Bruce conceived of Hadrian's Wall as a site locating Roman imperial achievement within the landscape of northern Britain from which the British Empire could take inspiration. He transformed tourism of the Wall and drew unprecedented public interest to the monument, leaving the ongoing Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimages and the *Handbook to the Roman Wall* as his legacy.

First Pilgrimage (1849)

Bruce, a Newcastle schoolteacher and preacher, had planned to visit Europe in the summer of 1848, but revolutions on the continent led him to turn his attention to Hadrian's Wall instead.[204] He took a journey of the length of the Wall, conducting a survey of the visible remains accompanied by two local artists, whom he tasked with illustrating scenes along the journey.[205] In the autumn of that year he lectured on his findings to an audience of members of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society, who were surprised by Bruce's description of the Wall's grandeur.[206] He offered to lead a tour of the Wall the following summer so they could see the

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[204] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 110.
[205] G. Bruce, 114.
[206] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 17 (1886): 135.

Wall for themselves, and this became the first Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage, a tradition that David Breeze calls "probably the oldest [...] continuing archaeological tour in the world."[207] Taking inspiration from Chaucer's descriptions of pilgrimage, Bruce placed an advertisement for the tour in the May 1949 issue of the literary magazine *The Athenaeum*.[208] He aimed to attract a wide multidisciplinary audience, reaching out with partial success to friends in other parts of the country and advertising the Pilgrimage's appeal to "the botanist and the geologist as well as the antiquary."[209] Among the group that Bruce's advertisement brought to the Wall in the summer of 1849 were three women attending with their husbands.[210] Local papers remarked on these "three ladies" as a novelty, because antiquarianism had always been a predominantly male field, and likely also because the Pilgrimage was a somewhat physically demanding outdoor endeavour.[211] Bruce noted that parts of the tour's terrain "caused some consternation to the ladies" but that equally "the crossing of the Irthing and the clambering up its western bank gave trouble to some of the gentlemen who insisted upon attempting it."[212] His account suggests that rather than finding the women a hindrance to his large-scale walking tour, he saw their presence on the Pilgrimage as evidence of the Wall's universal appeal. Reflecting on the 1849 Pilgrimage in preparation for the second journey in 1886, Bruce argued that the attention of "gentlemen of education, and especially cultivated ladies" to the Wall would increase local appreciation of the monument.[213] The earlier decades of the 19th century had seen rare instances of women participating in antiquarianism–for example, John Clayton's grandmother had been an honourary

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[207] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014) 3.
[208] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 17 (1886): 135.
[209] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 135.
[210] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 135-6.
[211] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 135-6.
[212] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 139-40.
[213] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 142.

member of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne at its founding in 1813, and Clayton's sisters shared his expertise in Roman artifacts–but the latter half of the 19th century saw an increase in female participation in antiquarian activity in keeping with Bruce's encouragement of general interest in Hadrian's Wall.[214]

The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne distributed Bruce's itinerary for the trip, which included his remarks on the Wall's significance: "The great barrier line itself is, without doubt, the noblest Roman work in Britain, and although many centuries have elapsed since its first erection, its remains yet bear ample witness to the greatness of the power and the sternness of the resolve of the mighty people who erected it."[215] His characterization of the Wall as still "bearing witness" to Roman power resonates with Pierre Nora and Jay Winter's work on *lieux de mémoire*, as throughout his life Bruce envisioned the monument as a physical location of Roman imperial achievement within the landscape of northern England. For Bruce, visiting the Wall to experience it within its landscape provided an opportunity to appreciate and learn from the Roman imperial example, in keeping with the foundation of 19th-century British imperial methods on classical models.[216] This vision is still relevant today, as within the conceptual framework of *lieux de mémoire*, the ongoing tradition of the Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimages appears as an "act of collective remembrance," initially of the Roman past but in subsequent years also of each past Pilgrimage.[217]

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[214] Frances McIntosh, *The Clayton collection: an archaeological appraisal of a 19th-century collection* (Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2017) 46.
[215] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 115.
[216] Mark Bradley, "Introduction: Approaches to Classics and Imperialism," in *Classics and imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), viii.
[217] Jay Winter, *Remembering War: the Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) 5.

Bruce led the 1849 Pilgrimage along the full length of the Wall from east to west, with a core group of 24 travelers joining Bruce for the week's journey.[218] They returned to Newcastle by train, but made their journey out on foot accompanied by a "wheeled conveyance" to carry their baggage.[219] Along their way, the Pilgrims stopped to examine sites of interest, including Cilurnum and Chesters, where John Clayton hosted the whole party for dinner and provided beds for many of them that night.[220] The next morning, the Pilgrims visited Clayton's "Antiquity House," where he stored many of his excavated finds.[221] Over the course of the journey the party picked up more travelers, and the spectacle of the Pilgrimage coupled with Bruce's enthusiastic lectures drew additional spectators at several points of interest. For example, Bruce recorded that at Langley Castle the Pilgrims "found that many of the workmen in the neighbouring smelt mills had commenced their daily labour at four o'clock, in order to be present at the expected lecture."[222]

Bruce's lectures drew on Hodgson's research and his own experience surveying the Wall the previous year.[223] His speech at the temple of Mithras at Housesteads apparently proved especially inspirational, as one of the Pilgrims recorded his experience at the *Mithraeum* in verse. The poem, written by a Mr. J. Ridley and titled "A day with the pilgrims along the Roman Wall," suggests that Bruce evoked a vivid image of the Roman past as well as complicating the Pilgrimage's veneration of the Romans:

> Yet here, within that murky cave,
> The blood of bulls and men has flowed;

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[218] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A History of Archaeological Thought* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2014) 4.
[219] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 117.
[220] G. Bruce, 119.
[221] G. Bruce, 119.
[222] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849." *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 17 (1886): 141.
[223] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 150.

> Whilst to the sun the heathen gave
> The homage due alone to God.[224]

The poem also describes Bruce's leadership of the group, assigning him the significant title "Evangelist-Interpreter."[225] This epithet reflects the deep feeling of his Mithras lecture, which "[drew] a direct comparison between the fallen empires of Rome and the contemporary domestic and imperial condition of Great Britain."[226] Bruce made reference to "the down-trodden condition of Britain at the time these walls were reared," pointing out that the British Empire had now surpassed that of the Romans in extent and number of subjects, and cheers for Queen Victoria followed his speech.[227] Coupled with the image of Christian religious superiority in Ridley's poem, Bruce's image of the relationship between past and present at the *Mithraeum* and at Hadrian's Wall as a whole presents a view of Britain as not merely imitative of Rome but even as improving on its classical example. For Bruce and the Pilgrims of 1849, the British Empire had successfully surpassed Rome, so admiring Roman achievement praised Britain's own imperial endeavour by extension and presented a narrative of progress.

The Roman Wall **(1851)**

Local newspaper accounts of the Pilgrimage also spread news of it to both popular and antiquarian audiences, and after the tour Bruce was invited to read a paper at the Sixth Annual Congress of the British Archaeological Association.[228] There he met London-based numismatist Charles Roach Smith, with whom he began a friendship and long correspondence similar to John

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[224] Qtd. in Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 120.
[225] Qtd. in G. Bruce, 121.
[226] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 150.
[227] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 121.
[228] G. Bruce, 123.

Clayton's relationship with Smith.[229] Afterwards, Bruce began to work on a book compiling knowledge about the Wall, which was published in 1851 as *The Roman Wall*. During this time he wrote and visited the Wall when he had time between teaching school, and he also drew on his newly-established peer networks in his research. In particular, Clayton's assistance–providing access to his collection of artifacts and financing illustrative woodcuts for the book–proved so vital that Bruce dedicated the volume to him.[230] Accurate and beautiful illustrations, especially of the Wall's inscriptions, were one of Bruce's pressing concerns for the book, so much so that he suffered "some pecuniary loss" procuring woodcuts and lithographs despite assistance from Clayton and other contributors.[231] *The Roman Wall* was well-reviewed in local papers, which called it "a credit to Newcastle," and well-received by both antiquarian and public audiences, who praised it as unprecedentedly accessible.[232]

Bruce's preface to the 1851 first edition of *The Roman Wall* makes clear that he is writing to fill a lack of work on the Wall that might "arrest the attention of the general reader."[233] John Horsley's influential *Britannia Romana* (1732) was outdated, and John Hodgson's treatment of the Wall was persuasive but less "condensed and well-arranged" than his other work.[234] Specifically considering the comprehension of an uninformed reader, Bruce began his project with a general history of Roman Britain, and went on to describe the condition of sites along the Wall with reference to his own observations and material evidence from excavations. His final

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[229] G. Bruce, 123.
[230] G. Bruce, 125; John Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall: A Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, Extending from the Tyne to the Solway* (London: John Russell Smith, 1851) iii.
[231] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 126.
[232] G. Bruce, 128-30.
[233] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall: A Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, Extending from the Tyne to the Solway* (London: John Russell Smith, 1851), v.
[234] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, v.

chapter repackages arguments from Hodgson attributing the Wall to Hadrian for the benefit of an audience "not assumed to be acquainted with the technicalities of archaeology."[235]

Bruce maintained an interest in the question of who built the Wall throughout his four decades of involvement with the monument. Excavations by Clayton had revealed archaeological evidence that supported Hodgson's attribution of the Wall to Hadrian, but debate would persist until the early 20th century. Expressing his lifelong belief in the importance of looking to the remains themselves to clarify the ambiguity of the ancient sources, Bruce's written work and lectures contributed greatly to popularizing the Wall as Hadrian's construction.[236] His treatment of the question in the 1851 edition of *The Roman Wall* articulated the significance of attributing the Wall to Hadrian within a belief system that took Rome as a model for British imperial ambition. The dominant theory prior to Hodgson's 1840 *History of Northumberland* had ascribed the Wall to Severus, and some writers had also suggested that the Vallum, the stone Wall, and the forts and milecastles along the Wall were the work of different builders, either Severus, Hadrian, the governor Agricola, or post-Roman Britons.[237] Bruce argued that the parallel courses of the Vallum and the Wall indicated that both must have been the work of a single engineer, pointing to other examples of ancient fortifications of different periods crossing over each other.[238] This evidence contradicted the theory that Agricola had built the northern rampart of the Vallum, and it left the question to the "relative claims of Hadrian and Severus."[239] On this basis, Bruce also challenged the theory that the Vallum was Hadrian's work and the Wall Severus' a century later: "if Severus [had found] that the earth-works of Hadrian had fallen into decay, or were no longer sufficient, [...] would he not have mapped out its track without any reference to the former

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[235] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, vi.
[236] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 370.
[237] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 370.
[238] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 370.
[239] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 370.

ruinous and inefficient erection?"[240] Bruce cites Hodgson for the observation that the distance between the Vallum and the Wall decreases near river crossings, presumably to protect the crossings and require only a single bridge.[241] Having established the Vallum and Wall as a single, coherent system, Bruce turns to the comparatively large body of ancient sources that suggest that Severus built the Wall. These tend to draw on Spartian, one of the *Historia Augusta*'s biographical personas, whom Bruce dismisses as "a weak writer, who lived in an ignorant age, and nearly a century after the time of Severus," compared to the contemporary accounts of Cassius Dio and Herodian.[242] Neither of these authors contemporary with Severus describe him building a wall, and the later Roman authors who mention a Severan wall wildly mistake the length of the monument.[243] Bruce came to the conclusion that the ancient sources for Severus are unreliable and that the physical evidence suggests that the entire system is the work of Hadrian. Compared to the later Antonine Wall, Hadrian's Wall boasts relatively few inscriptions, and Bruce points out that the custom of inscribing works was new during Hadrian's reign, only reaching its height with later emperors, so it would be strange for Severus to have built the Wall and left little mark of himself on it.[244] The milecastle at Cawfields excavated by Clayton is one of many places where inscriptions point to Hadrian and his legions.[245] This chapter of *The Roman Wall* is one of many places where Bruce connected his arguments for the Wall's attribution to Hadrian to the necessity of surveying the Wall's physical remains, especially with unreliable and ambiguous ancient sources. Traveling the Wall reveals that its various features are "so many

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[240] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 371.
[241] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 389.
[242] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 375.
[243] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 375.
[244] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 381-2.
[245] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 383; John Clayton, "Account of Excavations at the Mile Castle of Cawfields, on the Roman Wall," *Archaeologia Aeliana* IV (1855): 59.

parts of one great design, essential to each other, and unitedly contributing to the security of a dangerous frontier."[246]

For Bruce, conceiving of the separate parts of Hadrian's Wall as one united system, rather than "a series of after-thoughts," enforced the image of the Wall as an embodiment of "the mighty conceptions and energies of imperial Rome."[247] Attribution of the entire system to Hadrian, rather than to Severus, Agricola, or the post-Roman era, made it a monument to the power of the Roman Empire at its height, and Bruce concluded *The Roman Wall* by encouraging his readers to consider the Wall as an instruction "to emulate the virtues that adorned [Rome's] prosperity, and [...] to shun the vices that were punished by her downfall."[248] He envisioned Britain as the direct inheritor of Roman imperialism, writing that "the sceptre which Rome relinquished, we have taken up. Great is our Honour–great our Responsibility."[249]

The success of *The Roman Wall* led Bruce to publish a second edition in December 1852, once again receiving assistance from Clayton in revising the text.[250] Bruce's involvement in the British antiquarian community increased with these publications: he attended the Centenary Anniversary Dinner of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1851 and led the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland's 1852 visit to Housesteads.[251] A third edition followed in 1867, and one review of it called Bruce "as truly a builder of the Wall as the emperor Hadrian himself," going on to say that he "[had] built it up once more in his work absolutely unique in

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[246] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Roman Wall: A Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, Extending from the Tyne to the Solway* (London: John Russell Smith, 1851) 387.
[247] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 391.
[248] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 449.
[249] J. C. Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 449-50.
[250] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 133.
[251] G. Bruce, 131.

literature."[252] Evidently, Bruce's work, and his attribution of the Wall to Hadrian in particular, had begun to add layers of meaning to popular and scholarly understandings of the Wall.

The Wallet-Book (1863) and *The Handbook to the Roman Wall* (1884, 1885)

The 1849 Pilgrimage and the publication of *The Roman Wall* drew visitors to the Wall, and Bruce became a sought-after guide to the monument's points of interest.[253] He drew on his experience leading tours along the Wall to compose *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, a guidebook published in 1863 for an audience of prospective visitors. *The Wallet-Book* came as a direct response to the rapid increase in antiquarian and general interest in the Wall, and Bruce declared that it was "intended for the field, not the library table."[254] It proved very popular, and he published a second edition in 1884 and a third in 1885, both under the name *The Handbook to the Roman Wall*, to keep up with demand for him to address the most recent developments in excavation and scholarship.[255] After Bruce's death in 1892, subsequent scholars took up the duty of revising the *Handbook*, and it survives today in a total of fourteen editions with the most recent published in 2006 by David J. Breeze.[256] It holds the distinction of being "the oldest continuing archaeological guide-book."[257]

The Wallet-Book condensed the material from *The Roman Wall* for an audience that shared Bruce's understanding of the Wall as a site for pilgrimage.[258] The third edition of *The*

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[252] Qtd. in Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 161.
[253] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905) 131.
[254] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1863), iii.
[255] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall: A Guide To Tourists Traversing The Barrier Of The Lower Isthmus.* London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1885), v.
[256] David J. Breeze, "The Making of the Handbook to the Roman Wall," *Archaeologia Aeliana* series 5, vol. 36 (2007): 1.
[257] David J. Breeze, *The Pilgrimages of Hadrian's Wall, 1849-2019: a history* (United Kingdom: Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 2020), 3.
[258] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1863), i.

Handbook in 1885 took different levels of walking ability into greater consideration and added an appendix outlining points of interest for visitors interested in day trips.[259] In the preface to *The Wallet-Book*, Bruce wrote that the book aimed not "to describe the various objects visited, but to inform the traveler what he is to look for, and to assist him in examining it."[260] As well as guiding the reader on a journey along the Wall from east to west, the book reviews the ancient sources, later Wall scholarship, and physical evidence.[261] Bruce included his own assessments of the evidence, but encouraged readers exercise their own curiosity, writing that "the pilgrim will find it an agreeable exercise, whilst pursuing his journey, to ponder upon these subjects."[262] He also engaged with changing understandings of the Wall's purpose and claimed that it was "intended to act not only as a fence against a northern enemy, but to be used as the basis of military operations against a foe on either side of it."[263] Similarly, he challenged the popular understanding of the Wall as the "northern limit of the Roman Empire," pointing out the openings in the north side of the Wall as well as the existence of Roman stations north of the Wall.[264]

Like his previous work, *The Wallet-Book* and its later editions as *The Handbook* included a discussion of evidence attributing the Wall to Hadrian. Here, Bruce reiterated his argument from *The Roman Wall*, pointing to the coherence between different elements of the Wall's system to argue that it presents an impressive image of Roman engineering that must have been accomplished under a single builder. He also quotes one of his contemporaries on Hadrian's appeal as builder of the Wall: "He reminds us more than any Roman before him of what we

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[259] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall: A Guide To Tourists Traversing The Barrier Of The Lower Isthmus.* London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1885), 265.
[260] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1863), iv.
[261] J. C. Bruce, *The Wallet-Book*, 3-4.
[262] J. C. Bruce, *The Wallet-Book*, 223.
[263] J. C. Bruce, *The Wallet-Book*, 16.
[264] J. C. Bruce, *The Wallet-Book*, 16-17.

proudly style the thorough English gentleman."[265] Here, Bruce finds a quality of "Englishness" in Hadrian, rather than tracing a quality of "Romanness" to the Englishman. This reversal of the usual connection drawn between Roman and British cultures foregrounds Britain as the primary empire in the equation, and makes a claim to British stewardship not only of Hadrian's Wall, but of Hadrian himself.

In an amusing but instructive interlude, several years after *The Wallet-Book* was published, reports of the death in 1869 of London antiquary John Bruce led members of the northern antiquarian community to believe that John Collingwood Bruce had died, prompting early reflections on his legacy.[266] One of his peers wrote to Clayton to suggest a monument to Bruce, "some column at the terminus of the Roman Wall or other appropriate spot," citing the value of his work to both the academic community and the general public.[267]

The 1884 and 1885 editions of *The Handbook to the Roman Wall* provided an update to *The Wallet-Book*'s archaeological information, as well as a changed title to increase understanding of the book's purpose.[268] In the preface to the 1884 edition, Bruce wrote at length of the virtues of Roman governance, and directly connected English national identity with the inheritance of the "blessings of order and civilization" that the Romans spread throughout their empire.[269] He understood Roman imperialism as a unifying force, bringing peace and industry to "all the nations of the then known world."[270] For Bruce, the tendency to look to monuments of Roman presence for guidance and inspiration was inherent to the identity of the "Englishman." However, in keeping with the narrative of progress that praised British improvement on the

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[265] Qtd. in J. C. Bruce, *The Wallet-Book*, 233.
[266] Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905), 177.
[267] Qtd. in G. Bruce, 177.
[268] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall: A Guide To Tourists Traversing The Barrier Of The Lower Isthmus* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1885), iii.
[269] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall*, iii.
[270] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall*, iii.

Roman imperial project, Bruce also pointed out that the Britain ruled a Christian empire and acted as a Christianizing force over a much larger extent of land than Rome had ever known.[271] For him, Hadrian's Wall had symbolic resonance both as an example of the character of imperial success, and as a reminder of British progress.

The preface to the 1885 *Handbook*, a new edition resulting from great demand for the second edition, indicates that Bruce had begun to consider the need to preserve the Wall. Over decades of observing the monument, he had begun to notice the deterioration of excavation sites that had recently "been divested of the covering which [had] protected them for centuries."[272] Bruce thought of the issue in terms of "the tourist, half-a-century hence" finding the Wall less majestic (and therefore perhaps less instructive) than he described it in *The Handbook*.[273] Preservation of the Wall on a more formal level than Clayton had achieved with his purchases was becoming a concern for many antiquarians at around this time: at an 1882 meeting, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne had discussed scheduling the Wall for protection as per the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of that year.[274] Bruce, now the society's vice-president, spoke at the meeting about the need to preserve the Wall–"the grandest remains of Roman power north of the Alps"–for future generations.[275] By this point, approaching the advent of "scientific archaeology" in the 1890s, Bruce was not alone in considering the detrimental effects of excavation on the remains of the Wall.

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[271] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall*, iii.
[272] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall*, v.
[273] John Collingwood Bruce, *The Handbook To The Roman Wall*, vi.
[274] "Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 27 (1886): 261.
[275] "Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882," 261.

Second Pilgrimage (1886)

Amid increasing enthusiasm for visiting the Wall, and recalling the success of the first Pilgrimage in 1849, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne proposed a second Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimage to take place in the summer of 1886.[276] Bruce was formally appointed the Chief Pilgrim and Expounder General.[277] Now in his eighties, he brought with him nearly four decades of interpretive experience and a strong reputation: groups of visitors to the Wall had sought him out as a guide and praised his "extreme courtesy, attention, and kindness … [his] store of invaluable information, instruction, and amusement."[278] The Social Science Congress's thanks to him for a September 1870 tour of the Wall suggest that Bruce's lectures drew particular attention to the Wall within its landscape: they praised "the novelty of the excursion, the striking character of the Northumbrian hills and valleys, their extensive prospects, and the interest thrown over them by your references to bygone times" and referred to him as the Wall's *genius loci*.[279] In planning the second Pilgrimage, Bruce reflected on the Pilgrimage of 1849, noting that the route would need to be updated because the pace of archaeological discovery had increased the amount to see along the way, in particular between Newcastle and Chesters.[280] He also recommended finding local "subsidiary guides" to benefit from their knowledge of the terrain.[281]

Some 40 Pilgrims assembled at the starting point in Wallsend, almost twice the number of the first journey's core group, and many of them identified themselves formally by wearing the

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[276] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 24 (1886): 188.
[277] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 183.
[278] Qtd. in Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905), 174.
[279] Qtd. in G. Bruce, 174-5.
[280] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 17 (1886): 142.
[281] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," 142.

silver badge distributed by the Society of Antiquaries.[282] This group formed a new generation of Pilgrims, with Bruce one of only two participants returning from the 1849 Pilgrimage.[283] Unlike the first Pilgrimage, unmarried women were among the participants in 1886, including the "Misses Clayton" (presumably John Clayton's sisters), who joined the group at Housesteads.[284] Once again, Bruce found that the presence of the women proved the Wall's appeal, which he aimed more than ever to promote to a wider audience. He reflected that at that moment in history a wider segment of the population had the ability to "become directly the makers of our country's history" and would therefore benefit from being "mindful of the great memorials which distinguish each era" through pilgrimage.[285]

Bruce's remarks to the group at Wallsend drew emphatically on his decades of work envisioning the Wall as an embodiment of Roman power and a model for British imperialism. He declared that "the Roman Empire was an empire of strength," and that the Pilgrims would "be stimulated to follow the example of [the Romans'] patience, perseverance, and their indomitable vigour" by traveling the Wall.[286] Stressing the imagery of pilgrimage, he hoped that "like the pilgrims of old … [they would] profit by their journey mentally, physically, and spiritually also."[287] Evidently, Bruce's decades of engagement with the Wall had affirmed his belief in the potential for its sites to help British visitors consider the monument's Roman historical significance and by extension to understand their own cultural and national identities.

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[282] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 24 (1886): 188.
[283] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 191.
[284] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 204.
[285] "The Roman Wall 'Pilgrimage' of 1849," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 17 (1886): 139-41.
[286] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 24 (1886): 188-9.
[287] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 188.

However, especially in comparison with Bruce's 1849 speech at the Housesteads *Mithraeum*, these comments also evoked the less optimistic implications of comparing the British Empire to fallen Ancient Rome. Bruce reiterated his earlier casting of Britain as the inheritor of Roman imperial dominance, but he also touched on the fall of the Roman Empire more diffidently than before. Where in 1849 he had "aimed to reconstruct ancient glories in the service of modern progress," he now announced that "as Englishmen" the Pilgrims should consider "how was it that the nation [of Rome], so mighty, so vast, possessing qualities so enduring, should have perished?"[288] The following decade's resurgence of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which greatly influenced the work of Francis Haverfield (one of the early 20th century's most authoritative scholars of Roman Britain), reflects a similar growing attention to imperial decline within British archaeological discussions.[289]

In several places with ongoing excavations, the Pilgrims were some of the first to witness new finds–for example, near Birdoswald they viewed an altar that had been unearthed only two days before their arrival.[290] As with the first journey, the Pilgrimage picked up additional travelers at each stop, and the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne's official account of the journey noted the "most picturesque appearance" of the group as it traversed difficult ground near the Cawfields milecastle: it had formed "a long, straggling line" that "looked the very ideal of a pilgrimage."[291]

The more formal organization of the 1886 Pilgrimage is apparent from the society business that the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne conducted at various stops

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[288] Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 153; "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 24 (1886): 189.
[289] Adam Rogers and Richard Hingley, "Edward Gibbon and Francis Haverfield," in *Classics and imperialism in the British Empire*, ed. Mark Bradley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 203.
[290] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 24 (1886): 216.
[291] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 209.

along the way, including the election of honourary members at Poltross.[292] Speeches from Bruce and others at this meeting emphasized the communal aspect of the Pilgrimage, highlighting the importance of collaboration between individuals and societies in advancing knowledge of antiquity.[293] The 1849 Pilgrimage had predated the 1866 founding of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, but in 1886 the western part of the Pilgrimage fell under their jurisdiction starting at the boundary of Cumberland.[294] In this stretch of the journey, the society had used coloured flags to mark different parts of the Wall and its surroundings, red to indicate the line of the Wall, olive for the Vallum, white for Roman roads, and red and white for military camps.[295] This flag system made identifying parts of the Wall more accessible and signified the heritage value of the Wall as a site to be seen and studied. It also allowed the group to divide based on walking ability in some places, with those who preferred to drive able to reunite with the walking party by following flags.[296] After the Pilgrimage, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne advertised that members who had not already received a silver Pilgrimage badge could purchase one if they wanted "a memento of the Pilgrimage."[297] Taking home pieces of the Wall itself as souvenirs had once been an unremarkable practice—among them the piece of the Wall that Bruce had broken off and taken home "as a great curiosity" on one of his first visits to the Wall as a child—so purchase of these badges may also point to a change in mindset regarding souvenirs and the importance of preservation.[298] Certainly the Society of Antiquarians of Newcastle upon Tyne was concerned

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[292] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 215.
[293] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 236.
[294] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 214.
[295] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 206.
[296] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 233.
[297] "Pilgrimage of the Roman Wall," 241.
[298] Qtd. in Gainsford Bruce, *The Life and Letters of John Collingwood Bruce* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1905), 113.

with the Wall's preservation at this time, as their discussion of the 1882 Ancient Monuments Protection Act demonstrates.[299]

Conclusions

After his death in 1892, Bruce's civic and antiquarian contributions to Newcastle were celebrated in an elaborate funeral that took place outside to allow for the size of the crowd, and in 1896 the Church of England placed a marble monument to him in Newcastle's Cathedral of St Nicolas.[300] The monument depicts Bruce lying on a bier with a copy of *The Roman Wall* open at his feet. Bruce's death, only two years after John Clayton's, marked the end of the era of amateur excavation on Hadrian's Wall. Younger experts, including Francis Haverfield, a student of great German expert Theodor Mommsen, would bring professional archaeology to the Wall with careful excavation targeted to answer specific questions replacing Clayton's indiscriminate digging.[301] Although Bruce's reputation in archaeological circles suffered in the early decades of the 20th century, his work was immensely valuable in increasing general understanding of the Wall, especially of the Wall as the work of Hadrian. In his lectures and books, he expressed a vivid and assertive interpretation of the Wall as a physical embodiment of Roman imperial strength and an encouragement to British imperialism, and he drew visitors to sites along the Wall for walking tours that anticipated modern forms of tourism. His contributions to Hadrian's Wall studies endure today in the *Handbook to the Roman Wall*, now in its 14th edition, and in the ongoing tradition of the Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimages.

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[299] "Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* II, no. 27 (1886): 261.
[300] David J. Breeze, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study in Archaeological Exploration and Interpretation* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2019), 28.
[301] Francis Haverfield, "Five Years excavation on the Roman Wall," *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society* 15, (1899): 337.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the contributions of John Clayton and John Collingwood Bruce, prominent 19th-century antiquarians, to the study of Hadrian's Wall within the context of the Wall's accumulated layers of historical meaning and with reference to present-day scholarship on history, memory, and heritage. 19th-century antiquarian work on Hadrian's Wall, particularly Bruce's use of Clayton's excavation findings in support of the "Hadrianic Theory" as first posited by John Hodgson, demonstrates a clear shift in the Wall's academic and popular significance from previous centuries. Applying the conceptual frameworks of Pierre Nora and Jay Winter's work on *lieux de mémoire*, I have shown that in every period of its history, the Wall has acquired layers of symbolic meanings through both archaeological study and mythmaking informed by contemporary social and political developments. The medieval writers Gildas and Bede saw it as a place around which to locate their discussions of early British Christianity, and early modern humanist writers engaged with it through their interest in classical texts. Taking a chorographical approach that combined ancient geographical texts with his present landscape, William Camden produced a very influential account of the Wall as a boundary to keep Picts and Scots out of Britain by visiting some of its sites in 1599. John Horsley's 1732 analysis of the Wall anticipated the scientific spirit of the early 20th century, and he found in the monument a lesson about human decline that was unusual among his contemporaries.

It was in the 19th century, however, that the Wall as a *lieu de mémoire* began to add archaeological layers to the textual layers of collective memory and imagination. John Hodgson's efforts to excavate and examine the Wall's remains, including inscriptions, resulted in his attribution of the entire Wall complex to Hadrian in 1840. Hodgson's theory began the 19th-century transformation of inherited imaginings of the Wall into a form more closely

resembling the 21st-century understanding of the monument's origins. Clayton's excavations provided further evidence for the Hadrianic theory, and Bruce's publications brought it to a wide popular audience. The intense debate of the 19th century resolved in the early 20th century, when Hadrian's Wall, known throughout the 18th and 19th centuries as the Roman Wall, acquired its present name.

The 19th century also witnessed a dramatic increase in general access to the Wall and its artifacts. Clayton's purchases of estates containing sections of the Wall allowed him to protect those areas from stone robbing and to rebuild stretches of the curtain wall, and he encouraged study of his extensive collection of Wall-related antiquities. Bruce led the first walking tours of the Wall–the Hadrian's Wall Pilgrimages of 1849 and 1886, with the intention of drawing a wider audience to the site, which included increased participation on the part of women. The Pilgrims' Victorian experiences contrast with Camden's 1599 journey along the Wall, when bandits and thieves made the central section dangerous and difficult to access. After the first Pilgrimage, Bruce began to write about the Wall with a general audience in mind, aiming to make the discoveries of Horsley and particularly Hodgson accessible to the wider public. *The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall* (1863) and its subsequent editions as *The Handbook to the Roman Wall* (1884, 1885) promoted pilgrimage and other forms of visit to the monument and continued to be released in new editions throughout the 20th century and into the 21st.

Bruce's lectures and publications show that his influential interpretation of Hadrian's Wall placed it within contemporary imperial discourses as the British Empire approached its height. For him, as for many of his peers, the Wall embodied the imperial legacy that the Roman Empire had left in the British landscape. Bruce saw Hodgson's Hadrianic theory of the Wall, which broke with earlier hypotheses by taking all the site's structures as a single complex, as

further evidence of the Romans' skill and strength, and he emphasized this image in his explanations. That he contributed substantially to constructing the Wall for a public audience is apparent from contemporary mentions that, humorously but admiringly, conflate him and his work with the Wall itself and Hadrian as its builder.

Alongside the debate surrounding the Wall's origins, archaeological engagement with the Wall became increasingly professionalized over the 19th century. It also began to be conducted on an unprecedented scale, beginning with Clayton's excavations at Cilurnum on his estate in the late 1840s and culminating in the development of a new kind of "scientific" archaeology that eclipsed previous ways of excavating in the 1890s and early 20th century. Francis Haverfield and his student R. G. Collingwood were among the early scientific archaeologists who discounted Clayton and Bruce's amateur contributions, expressing optimism that newly rigorous archaeological methods would provide definitive answers to the questions at the centre of 19th-century antiquarian debate.

Between the 1920s and the 1960s, archaeologists divided the Wall's Roman history into "Wall-periods" intended to be based on important historical events that contributed to the structure's Roman development.[302] The later decades of the 20th century saw this designation fall out of favour, as it did not account for the individual developments of each site along the Wall, and the 1970s began "the age of the only really big, modern excavations on Wall sites."[303] Today, Hadrian's Wall is one of the most prominent heritage sites in Britain, and it attracts tourism essential to the economy of northern England. In 2022, on the occasion of the Wall's 1900th anniversary, the National Geographic reported that the site of Housesteads, where Bruce

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[302] *Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall, Part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. Vol. I. Research Assessment*, ed. M. F. A. Symonds and D. J. P. Mason (Durham: Durham County Council, 2009), 1.
[303] Frontiers of Knowledge, 1.

addressed a core group of 24 Pilgrims plus onlookers in 1849 and Camden avoided going in 1599 for fear of thieves, receives 100,000 visitors a year.[304] Another project might examine the character of 21st-century imaginings of Hadrian's Wall through the lens of tourism, drawing on modern understandings of heritage to see what meanings the site offers to various audiences today. As a *lieu de mémoire* par excellence, the Wall is certain to continue its accumulation of meanings as our century unfolds.

[304] Joe Sills, "Along Hadrian's Wall, ancient Rome's temples, towers, and cults come to life," National Geographic, National Geographic Society, 7 January 2022, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/along-hadrians-wall-ancient-romes-temples-towers-and-cults-come-to-life.

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