

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE

Wallet-book of the Roman Wall.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HE who contemplates a pilgrimage *per lineam Valli*, if he be imbued with a thorough love of antiquity, and duly appreciate the importance of the great structure which invites his attention, will not lightly enter upon his enterprise. Before attaching the scallop-shell to his hat and adjusting his Equipment. wallet, he will probably wish to review the earliest chapter of our British history, and ascertain the state of things in this land before King Arthur ruled. Perchance, too, he may wish to carry with him upon his journey, in the form of *memoranda*, some of the results of his reading. To direct him in his earlier inquiries, and to supply him with some materials for subsequent reference, the following sections of this chapter are set before him.

I.—WORKS UPON THE SUBJECT.

Camden, in his *Britannia*, besides describing the in- Camden's
Britannia. scriptions under the various localities where they were

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2

THE WALLET-BOOK

found, has a short chapter headed “*Vallum, sive Murus Picticus.*” The last edition printed in the author’s life time is that of 1607. The *Britannia* was translated by Dr. Philemon Holland under, as is understood, the supervision of the author. The edition of 1637, contains the cuts and plates of the last Latin edition. Bishop Gibson published in 1695 a new translation of Camden’s *Britannia*, with “additions and improvements.” A fourth edition appeared in 1772. The Bishop’s additions unhappily are not always improvements. The work contains a chapter on the Wall, written by a person who surveyed it in 1708. This writer is the earliest who having traversed the whole length of the structure, has given us an account of it. The editions of Camden most in vogue at present, are those by Richard Gough, the one published in 3 vols., fol., 1798; the other in 4 vols., fol., 1806.

Gordon. The *Itinerarium Septentrionale, or a Journey through most of the Counties of Scotland*, and those in the North of England, was published by Alexander Gordon, 1727. He is the Sandy Gordon of Scott’s *Antiquary*. Gordon traversed portions of the Wall in company with Horsley.

Horsley’s *Britannia Romana*, published in 1732, is still the great store-house of information on the Roman Antiquities of Britain. He has treated of the Wall and its inscriptions largely and lucidly. Unfortunately, his engravings, for the most part, do great injustice to the altars and sculptures which they represent.

Warburton. Warburton’s *Vallum Romanum*, published in 1753, consists of those portions of Horsley’s work which bear directly upon the Wall, transferred to his own book, with the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wall-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF THE ROMAN WALL.

3

smallest possible acknowledgement. It has the advantage over the *Britannia Romana* of being portable.

In 1776, some years after the death of its author, Stukeley's "*Iter Boreale*" was published. It contains the memoranda of a journey taken in 1725, in the company of Mr. Roger Gale, over the western and northern parts of England. His account of the Wall is interesting—many of his remarks being as original as they are just.

Brand, in an Appendix to the first volume of his *History of Newcastle*, published in 1789, gives a brief account of the Wall.

William Hutton, of Birmingham, in the year 1801, at the age of 78, traversed the great Barrier on foot, and gave to the world the result of his observations in a work entitled *The History of the Roman Wall*. Though the work betrays some of the characteristics of the advanced age of the writer, yet a fine vein of enthusiasm runs through it.

The Rev. John Hodgson, who was at the time incumbent of Jarrow and Heworth, published, in *The Picture of Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (1812), a comprehensive and useful account of the Wall.

The fourth volume of the *Magna Britannia* of the Messrs. Lysons (1816), contains an article on the Roman Wall from the pen of Dr. Bennet, Bishop of Cloyne; and a good account of the Roman Inscriptions of Cumberland.

The Rev. John Hodgson, M.R.S.L., devoted nearly the whole of the last volume which he lived to publish of his *History of Northumberland* to the Walls of Hadrian and Antoninus. This volume was also published separately, under the title of *The Roman Wall and South Tindale, in the*

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims
 Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus
 John Collingwood Bruce
 Excerpt
[More information](#)

Counties of Northumberland and Cumberland, 1841. This work, as well as Horsley's *Britannia Romana*, is indispensable to all who wish to study the subject thoroughly.

Abbat. *A History of the Picts' or Romano-British Wall*, by Richard Abbat, Esq., one of the author's brother-pilgrims along the line of the Roman Wall, in June, 1849.

Bruce's *Roman Wall*, first edition, 1851.

Bruce's *Roman Wall*, second edition, 1853.

C. R. Smith. In the *Collectanea Antiqua*, Vols. II. and III., Mr. Charles Roach Smith gives a graphic account of the journeys he made to different parts of the Barrier, some of them in the company of the author.

In *Once a Week*, for July and September, 1861, are some interesting papers, entitled "An Artist's Ramble along the line of the Picts' Wall," by J. W. Archer. These papers are well illustrated.

Survey of
the Wall.

To the munificence of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, antiquaries are indebted for two works of the greatest importance—*A Survey of the Watling Street from the Tees to the Scotch Border*, made in the years 1850 and 1851,* and *A Survey of the Roman Wall*, made in the years 1852—1854. Mr. Henry McLauchlan, to whom the responsible task was committed, has performed it with great skill and the most scrupulous fidelity. Whoever possesses the *Survey of the Wall*, and its accompanying *Memoir*, may not only prepare advantageously for his pilgrimage, but when it is over, can easily retrace upon its accurately engraved plans, every step of his journey.

* Published by the Archæological Institute, by His Grace's generous permission, on the occasion of their Congress at Newcastle.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

II.—HISTORICAL DATA.

Julius Cæsar landed in Britain B.C. 55. The legions which he brought on this occasion were the seventh and the tenth. He withdrew the same year. The next summer he made a second descent, bringing five legions with him. One of these legions, the seventh, is specified by Cæsar; the others are not. This army was likewise withdrawn before the approach of winter.

Julius Cæsar

The Emperor Claudius visited the island in person, having previously sent over, A.D. 43, a considerable army, consisting of the second, the ninth, the fourteenth, and the twentieth legions, together with a proper proportion of auxiliary troops. Most of these legions had an important part to perform in the history of Roman Britain. The second continued in the island until it was finally abandoned by the Romans. The ninth was surprised and nearly cut to pieces by Boadicea, and afterwards, when in Scotland, under the command of Agricola, it met with a similar misfortune. A slab found in York in 1854, commemorating the erection of a building in the reign of Trajan, by the ninth legion, furnishes us with probably the last trace of them. Horsley conjectures that the remains of this legion were incorporated with the sixth legion, which Hadrian brought over with him. The fourteenth legion was recalled by Nero; it was sent back again to Britain by Vitellius, and finally withdrawn in the reign of Vespasian. The twentieth must have remained until nearly the close of the period of Roman occupation. It had the city of Chester, the Deva of the Romans, for its head quarters.

Claudius.

The legions.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6

THE WALLET-BOOK

Caractacus. It was in the year 50 that Caractacus and his family fell into the hands of Ostorius Scapula, Claudius' Proprætor in Britain; they were heavily ironed and sent to Rome.

Boadicea. In the reign of Nero, A.D. 61, when Suetonius Paulinus, the Roman general, was upon an expedition in Anglesea, the Britons, commanded by Boadicea, arose and destroyed the Roman colonies.

Agricola. By command of the Emperor Vespasian, Julius Agricola repaired to Britain as commander-in-chief. On his arrival, late in the summer, A.D. 78, he subdued the Ordovices, and reduced the Isle of Anglesea. The next year he brought into subjection the inhabitants of the lower peninsula of Britain. The year 80 saw him ravaging the country as far north as the Firth of Tay. The year 81 he spent in securing his conquest, especially by the establishment of forts in the district of the Upper Isthmus. Having done this, he overran the country northwards; and in A.D. 84 he gave battle to 30,000 Caledonians under Galgacus. Shortly after this, from motives of jealousy, he was recalled by Domitian, who, on the death of Titus, had assumed the purple.

His forts.

**Battle of the
Grampians.**

Hadrian. During the reigns of Nerva and Trajan we hear little of Britain. Hadrian became Emperor in the year 117; and in 120, in consequence of the turbulent state of the island, visited it in person. It was on this occasion that the sixth legion, which had previously been stationed in Germany, came to our shores. (Horsley, p. 79.) It remained here until nearly the close of the period of Roman occupation, having York for its head quarters.

The Wall. To this period the Wall of Hadrian must be referred.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF THE ROMAN WALL.

7

The Emperor did not remain in the country long enough to see the works complete; but he left behind him Aulus Platorius Nepos as his legate and proprætor, under whom they were carried forward.

Antoninus Pius succeeded Hadrian A.D. 138. During his reign the Barrier extending between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde was reared; the management of the work was committed to Lollius Urbicus, Imperial Legate and Proprætor.

Antoninus Pius.

Whilst Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, styled the "Philosopher," held the reins of government, Britain was in a turbulent state; Calpurnius Agricola, of whom some memorials remain in the inscribed stones of the Wall, with difficulty repressed the excited passions of the people. In the reign of Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, the warlike tribes burst into open insurrection. Dion Cassius gives us the following account of the affair:—"Commodus was also engaged in several wars with the barbarians. . . The Britannic war, however, was the greatest of these. For some of the nations within that island having passed over the wall which divided them from the Roman stations, and, besides killing a certain commander, with his soldiers, having committed much other devastation, Commodus became alarmed, and sent Marcellus Ulpius against them." (*Monumenta Historica Britannica, p. lix.*) The Wall, its guard chambers, and stations, bear to this hour extensive marks of devastations which were committed, as is supposed, at this period. The name of Ulpius appears upon the fragment of a stone at Chesters, the ancient Cilurnum. Other legates—Perennis, Pertinax, Albinus, and Junius Severus, came

M. Aur. Antoninus.

Calpurnius Agricola.

Commodus.

Ulpius Marcellus.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

in succession to Britain, during the reign of Commodus; but their efforts were not successful in establishing permanent peace, or even in preventing occasional seditious and insurrectionary movements in the army itself.

Severus.

Commodus died A.D. 192. When Lucius Septimius Severus found himself, A.D. 197, firmly established on the throne, he turned his attention to the state of Britain. His legates being unable either to purchase peace or compel the submission of the natives, he came over in person in the year 208, bringing with him his sons, Caracalla and Geta. He spent some time in making preparations. He gathered his troops from all quarters; improved the roads, restored the ruined stations, and repaired the Wall.

The Caledonian Conquest.

At length, A.D. 209, all being ready, he advanced against the Caledonians. He spent three years in his enterprise, and lost fifty thousand men. Worn out with disease and vexation, he returned to York to die. His body was removed with much ceremony to Rome. His two sons,

Severus died

Geta murdered.

Caracalla and Geta succeeded him A.D. 211; but in the year following, the younger fell a victim to his brother's ambition.

Caracalla.

A.D. 217, Caracalla was assassinated, when Opilius Macrinus was declared Emperor; to be assassinated in his turn, next year.

Elagabalus.

A.D. 218, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, commonly called Elagabalus (of whom there are some lapidarian memorials in Britain), was proclaimed Emperor.

Severus Alexander.

In the year 222 Elagabalus was slain, and Severus Alexander became Emperor. Severus Alexander's assassination took place in the year 235.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OF THE ROMAN WALL.

9

Maximinus, who succeeded him, met with the usual fate of emperors, A.D. 235. Gordian (III.) became Emperor in 238, and was slain A.D. 244. Marcus Julius Philippus was next chosen Emperor; and he associated with himself in the management of the Empire his son Philip. On their assassination, A.D. 249, Quintus Trajanus Decius was proclaimed Emperor, and died two years afterwards.

Gordian and others.

Trebonianus Gallus became Emperor A.D. 251; and in the year following, associated his son Volusianus with him in the Empire.

Publius Licinius Valerianus and his son Gallienus became joint Emperors A.D. 254.

In the year 260, Gallienus became sole Emperor. During his reign a large number of usurpers arose, who are commonly denominated the "Thirty Tyrants;" of these Victorinus, Postumus, the two Tetrici, and Marius, are supposed to have been acknowledged in Britain, as their coins are frequently dug up here. M. Aurelius Claudius became Emperor A.D. 268; L. Domitius Aurelianus A.D. 270; M. Claudius Tacitus A.D. 275; M. Annianus Florianus A.D. 276, (he reigned only 88 days); Aurelius Probus A.D. 276; M. Aurelius Carus A.D. 282, (who associated his sons, Carinus and Numerianus with him as Cæsars); and Aurelius Diocletianus A.D. 284. Diocletian associated with himself in the Empire M. Aur. Valer. Maximianus.

The Thirty Tyrants.

In A.D. 287, Carausius, who had charge of a fleet to repress piracy in the English Channel, revolted, and assumed the sovereignty of Britain, which he retained until A.D. 293, when he was treacherously slain by Allectus, who assumed

A British Admiral.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08066-8 - The Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall: A Guide to Pilgrims

Journeying along the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus

John Collingwood Bruce

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the government of the island. In A.D. 296, Constantius Chlorus repaired to Britain, slew Allectus, and recovered the island to its allegiance. Constantius and Galerius, who had for some years acted as subordinate Emperors or Cæsars, obtained the sovereign authority A.D. 305. In the following year Constantius died at York; and his son

Constantine. Constantine, afterwards surnamed the Great, obtained the purple. In the same year (306), Maxentius, son of Maximianus, was proclaimed Emperor at Rome.

Transference of Empire.

In the year 330, Constantine transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium, which henceforth took the name of Constantinople. Constantine died A.D. 337; and his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans were proclaimed Emperors. Magnentius, whose father was a Briton, claimed, A.D. 350, the imperial purple; but he died by his own hands the following year. Julian, called the Apostate, became Emperor A.D. 361; and was succeeded by Flavius Jovianus, A.D. 363. Flavius Valentinianus assumed the purple A.D. 364; and took his brother Valens as a colleague; he afterwards further associated with himself his sons, Gratianus and Valentinianus the younger. At this period

The Picts.

Britain was in a deplorable state; Picts, Saxons, and Scots, made it the object of incessant attacks. Gratian having become, A.D. 379, by the death of his colleagues, sole Emperor, he chose as his partner in the Empire, Theodosius, afterwards styled the Great. In the year 383, Theodosius shared the Empire with his son Arcadius. At this time Clemens Maximus, who had been sent to Britain to repel the incursions of the Picts and Scots, was proclaimed Emperor by the soldiers; in order to support his claim, he