

HADRIAN'S WALL:  
ROMANIZATION ON ROME'S NORTHERN FRONTIER

by

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father who always was there for me, and who never gave up on me and taught me the things I needed to know, whether I wanted to know them or not, my mother who has been one of the most understanding people in my life, and my wife who was the soft voice of encouragement who helped me with this momentous task.

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## ABSTRACT

Hadrian's Wall stretches across the isle of Britain, crossing some of the most dramatic and harsh terrain in *Britannia* and cutting the island in half. Hadrian was concerned with consolidating and defining the Empire he received in AD 117, unlike his predecessor Trajan, who had continued the policy of unbridled expansion of Rome's borders. The building of the wall defined the limits of the Roman Empire. *Britannia* was one of the newest provinces in the Empire, conquered for less than a century. The island was not completely subjugated by Rome and rebellions were common. Hadrian saw the wall as an opportunity not only to solve the problem of northern incursions, but also to send a message to those living below the wall in the province. Hadrian intended that the province would become part of the Empire and embrace the Roman culture that the Britons up to this point had avoided accepting.

By building the wall, Hadrian created not only a defensive line that separated the barbarians beyond it from the civilized, but also created a symbol. The wall symbolized the disassociation of the province of *Britannia* from the northern portion of the island. It showed the permanence of the Romans in *Britannia* and the power of the Roman state. Hadrian wanted the Britons to see themselves as Romans, not Britons. It was his hope that the wall would be not only a physical barrier but also a psychological barrier for those in the south as well as the north. The wall became part of a larger strategy of symbols used by Hadrian, including coins he produced commemorating the province and the military stationed in it as well as building projects through out the Empire.

Hadrian's Wall was dynamic, filling more than a single role. It was a defensive structure, a porous barrier that controlled commerce, a symbol of Roman might to intimidate those who would dare oppose her, an attempt to exclude those who were not civilized, and protection and provision for those who were within the wall.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER I: HISTIOGRAPHY .....	8
CHAPTER II: HADRIAN'S STABILIZATION OF BRITANNIA .....	22
Breaking the Cycle of Rebellion .....	22
Britannia, the Rebellious Province .....	24
Hadrian .....	32
Coins of Hadrian .....	37
CHAPTER III: CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL .....	44
CHAPTER IV: HADRIAN'S WALL: ROMANTIZATION .....	70
CONCLUSION .....	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	89



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Map of Roman Britannia along Hadrian's Wall.....	ix
Figure 2.	Modern map of Hadrian's Wall .....	x
Figure 3.	Map of Northern Britannia .....	12
Figure 4.	Pre-Roman tribes of Britannia .....	23
Figure 5.	Celtic coin of the Atrebates, King Epillus .....	25
Figure 6.	Wall course along the Crag Lough .....	36
Figure 7.	Roman coin depicting Hispania .....	39
Figure 8.	Roman coin depicting Britannia .....	39
Figure 9.	Roman coin depicting Dacia .....	40
Figure 10.	Roman coins depicting the arrival of Hadrian in the provinces of Britannia and Judaea .....	40
Figure 11.	Roman coins depicting Hadrian as the restorer of the provinces of Gaul and Hispania .....	41
Figure 12.	Roman coin depicting Hadrian as the Restorer of the whole world ...	42
Figure 13.	Roman coins depicting Hadrian in military motif .....	43
Figure 14.	Map of Hadrian's Wall .....	45
Figure 15.	Turf wall cross section .....	48
Figure 16.	Stone wall cross section .....	49
Figure 17.	Roman gates .....	50
Figure 18.	Final layout of the wall, cross section .....	52

Figure 19.	Fort layout .....	53
Figure 20.	Principia .....	50
Figure 21.	Principia ruins .....	55
Figure 22.	Praetorium .....	55
Figure 23.	Praetorium ruins .....	56
Figure 24.	Barrack .....	57
Figure 25.	Barrack ruins .....	57
Figure 26.	Granary .....	58
Figure 27.	Granary ruins .....	59
Figure 28.	Latrine .....	60
Figure 29.	Latrine ruins .....	61
Figure 30.	Bathroom floor plan .....	62
Figure 31.	Bathroom ruins .....	63
Figure 32.	Vicus ruins .....	64
Figure 33.	Stone mile castle .....	66
Figure 34.	Turf mile castle .....	67
Figure 35.	Turret floor plan .....	68
Figure 36.	Amphora jar .....	74
Figure 37.	Roman tools .....	77
Figure 38.	Pottery .....	78
Figure 39.	Temple pediment of Sulis Minerva .....	79
Figure 40.	Villas .....	82

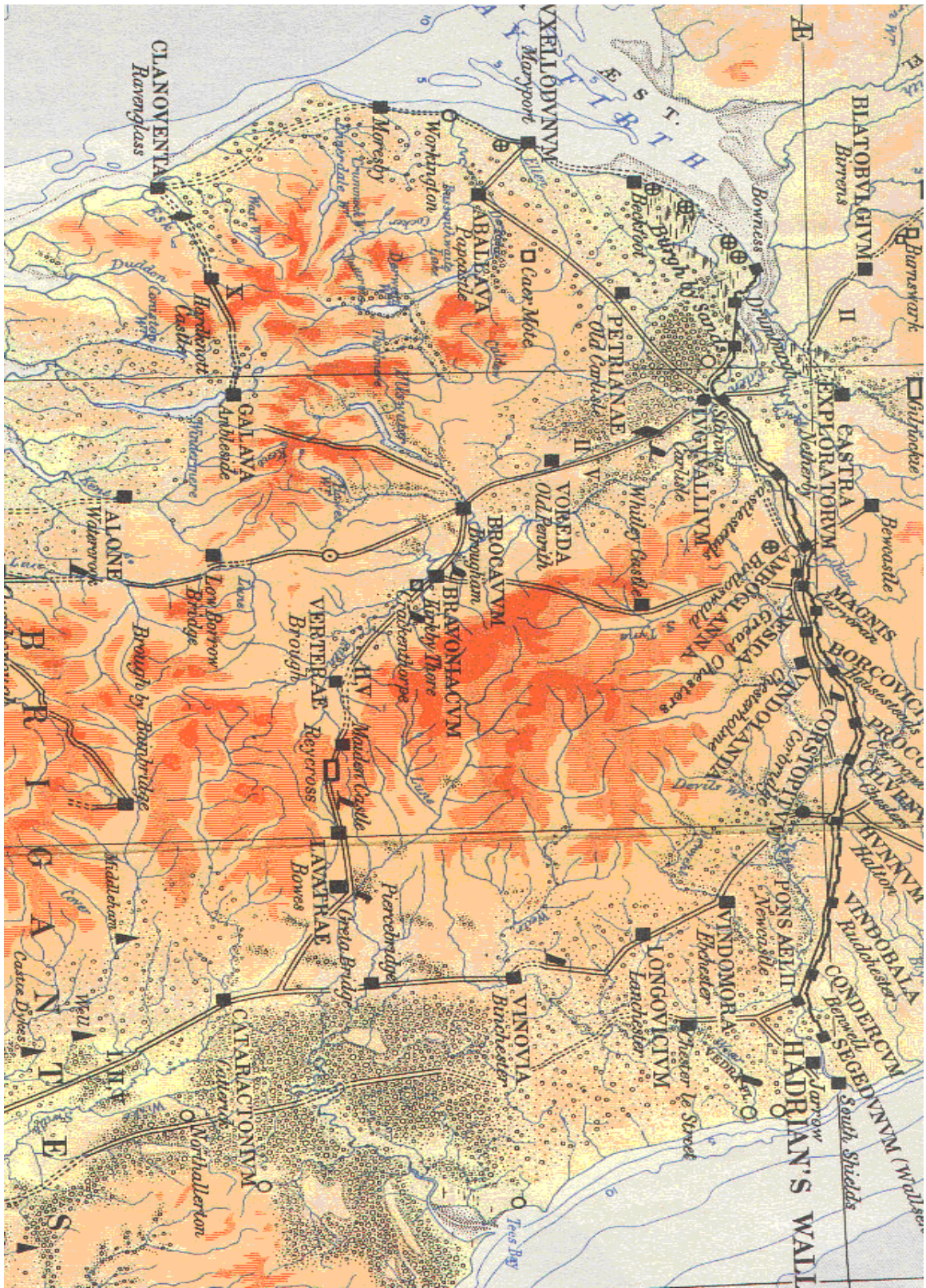


Figure 1: Map of Roman *Britannia* along Hadrian's Wall.  
<http://www.bibliographics.com/MAPS/BITAIN/M-1.htm>

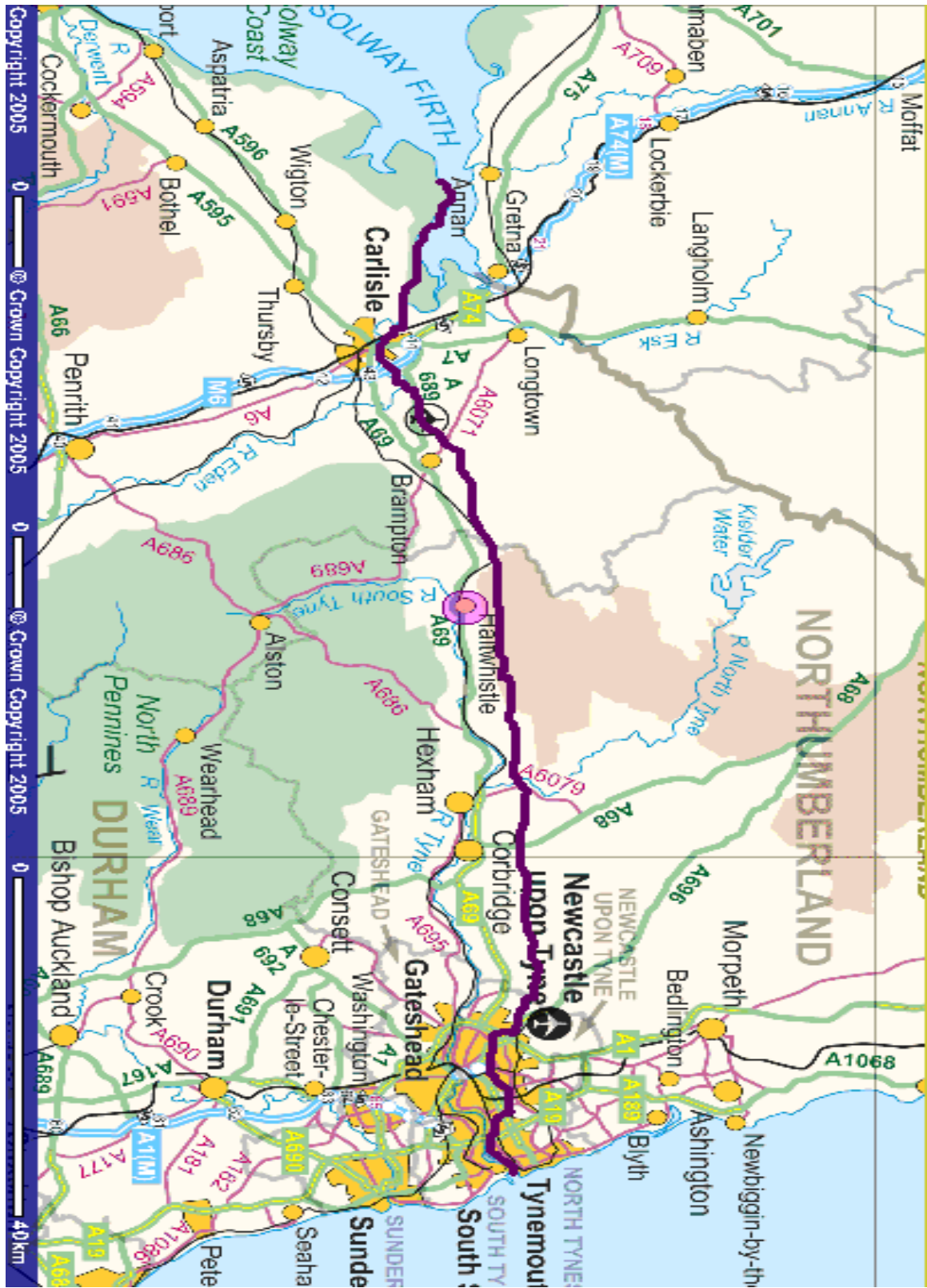


Figure 2: Map of Hadrians Wall course modern

[http://www.macsadventure.com/Assets/images/Maps/HWP\\_map.png](http://www.macsadventure.com/Assets/images/Maps/HWP_map.png)

## INTRODUCTION

Hadrian was given Roman imperial power by his cousin Trajan, who declared him his heir upon his deathbed in AD 117. Trajan was the greatest conqueror since Augustus Caesar, adding many provinces in the east and expanding the *limites* of the empire. Although Trajan expanded the empire to its farthest extent ever, the speed with which he did this spread the legions so thin that revolts broke out in almost every province he created. Hadrian unlike his adoptive father was aware that the empire could not expand forever. He relinquished control of the newly conquered provinces that had rebelled, knowing that many of them could not be subdued again. These strategic retreats allowed him to consolidate his forces and strengthen the more realistic borders of the empire. He began to mark out the edges of the empire and solidify them. In the east, he used natural borders such as the Sahara Desert, the Caucasus Mountains, and the Danube River. In *Germania*, Hadrian built a wooden palisade along the Danube River. In *Britannia*, he built another wall that cut across the entire island, a much more complicated bulwark than the wooden palisade built in *Germania*. The wall in *Britannia* was not static like the wooden palisade in *Germania*, but with its eighty gates allowed people through. It was built of more lasting materials and heavily garrisoned.<sup>1</sup> The wall in *Britannia* was stone and turf, and had forts, mile castles, and turrets that made it a

formidable barrier to those behind it. Hadrian's Wall was not only a defensive wall, but had a multitude of purposes. The emperor wanted the wall to help Romanize the Britons. It was his desire to protect the province as well as express the power of Rome and the permanence of its presence in *Britannia* to those on both sides of the wall. Also, it was meant to remind those living below the wall that they were Romans. It symbolized all this to both the empire and to the Britons. More than a symbol; it served as a defensive fortification, a customs border, and a center for Romanization of those in the northern part of the province and others. Hadrian used the wall in conjunction with other means of Romanization, such as coins, Roman goods, religion, and trade.<sup>2</sup>

*Britannia* broke into revolt in AD 117. While Hadrian was in *Dacia*, he knew *Britannia* must be dealt with, and so he sent Falco, one of his generals, to restore order in the province while he dealt with other matters. In AD 121, Emperor Hadrian, ruler of the Roman world, landed on *Britannia*. While there, he changed the governorship of the province and corrected other abuses taking place; what these abuses were is not known with any certainty, as the ancient text that the passage was from does not specify. As part of reforming the province, Hadrian decided to build a wall crossing the island to separate the northern barbarians from the Romans. The ancient sources contain little information on Hadrian's tour of *Britannia*, and only a single source mentions the wall that bears his name. The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* reads: "And so, having reformed the army quite in the manner of a monarch, he set out for Britain, and there he corrected many abuses

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony Birley, *Hadrian, the Restless Emperor* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 115-117; Bernard Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Hadrian* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1923), pp. 146-147.

<sup>2</sup>Guy De la Bedoyere, *Architecture in Roman Britain* (Ricksburgh: Shire Publications Ltd., 2002), pp. 27-28; Stewart Perowne, *Hadrian* (Beckenham: Croom Helm Ltd, 1960), p. 86; Nic Fields, *Hadrian's Wall AD 122-410* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000), p. 12.

and was the first to construct a wall, eighty miles in length, which was to separate the barbarians from the Romans.”<sup>3</sup> The remaining written evidence on his construction of the wall is located in epigraphic sources. The question remains of Hadrian’s intentions in the building of the wall. This is not an easy question to answer as the wall served many purposes other than simply separating the barbarians from the Romans.

The obvious answer was that the wall was built for purely defensive purposes as the *Vita Hadriani* suggests, separating and protecting the civilized from the barbarous beyond the wall.<sup>4</sup> However, this is not necessarily the case. While the wall did give the people who lived behind it the feeling of protection, it was not designed to be a defensive platform. It was not tall enough and most likely did not have ramparts or a crenellation along most of the wall. The forts along the wall, as well as the mile castles and turrets, allowed for soldiers to move quickly out beyond the wall; but these forts were not originally part of the wall’s plan. It is likely the forts were added, as the Stanegate forts were not close enough to respond quickly should an attack be made. This wall was porous with a door at each fort and every mile castle—eighty doors into and out of the province. The number of gates seems to indicate that passage between the province and the lands beyond the wall was not meant to be severed completely, but rather controlled and monitored.

The wall defined the border of the Roman Empire, built to show the limits of the empire. Trajan had not concerned himself with the west as much as the east. This allowed the Caledonians and other tribes in *Britannia* to move down out of the highlands and

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<sup>3</sup> *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vita Hadriani* 11. 2: “Ergo conversis regio more militibus Britanniam petiit, in qua multa correxit murumque per octoginta milia passuum primus duxit, qui barbaros Romanosque divideret.” Eng. tr. David Magie (London: W. Heinemann, 1922-32).

<sup>4</sup> *Hist Aug, Vita Had* 11.2.

back into the lowlands, pressing ever farther south. The *legiones* and *auxillia* stationed in the province had become undisciplined and sedentary. The creation of a border such as the wall stopped the further incursion of the barbarians and gave the soldiers work to do creating and maintaining this line; it kept the troops on the frontier fit and ready for action even though Hadrian did not continue expanding the Roman world. Hadrian was a military man, coming up through the ranks of the Roman army; he did not see himself as better than the troops and would often eat and live with the soldiers he commanded.<sup>5</sup>

The wall could have acted much like a customs border through which people were screened and goods controlled. The *vallum*<sup>6</sup> made it impossible for passage of a large amount of goods or people to pass over the wall easily, and without the notice of the sentry in the turrets spaced about one every third of a mile. The location of the wall gave the sentries complete observance of the country to the north and south. However, the height of the wall made it possible for small parties or even individuals to slip into the province without too much trouble, especially if the wall lacked ramparts upon which the sentries could patrol. Though the height and construction of the wall allowed for the possibility of an individual to cross without notice, the wall kept large groups out and stopped most goods from leaving or entering the province without Roman approval.

Hadrian marked what he considered to be the *limites* of the Roman world with the wall in *Germania* as well as the wall in *Britannia*.<sup>7</sup> This shows the symbolic nature of both walls; they were not just walls, but demarcations of the end of the civilized world.

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<sup>5</sup>A. Birley, *Hadrian*, p. 117 ; Cassius Dio, *Historiae* LXIX. 5. Eng. tr. by Earnest Cary (London : William Heinemann, 1982-1995).

<sup>6</sup> This was an earthen structure located on the southern side of the wall that consisted of two mounds on each side of a ditch running the length of the wall. For more on this structure see p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall* (London: BT Batsford, 2004), p. 57; H.E. Priestley, *Britain Under the Romans* (London: F. Warne & Co. Ltd.,1967), p. 46; Henderson, *The Life and Principate*, p. 153.



They solidified something that had been fluid since the time of Claudius. They showed the Britons actually and the rest of the Roman world symbolically who was civilized and who was not. The wall allowed those living within the province to identify themselves as Roman and played an important role in forcing the Romanization of the Britons. Not only did the wall place a physical barrier between the different Britons, but it was a daunting sight to come upon, an eighty mile long stone and turf snake rising along the most rugged terrain that northern *Britannia* had to offer, demonstrating the immense power of the Romans.

The symbolic nature of the wall and its intended role in the Romanization of the Britons were part of a larger strategy employed by Hadrian to bring peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire through the Romanization of the provinces by the use of symbolic gestures. As a politician, he understood the power of symbols. Notably, Hadrian is known for the rebuilding of the Pantheon in Rome and the construction of the temple to Venus and Roma. Both these temples symbolized the grandeur and supremacy of the Roman people. He named many cities and aqueducts after himself. Doing so was an attempt to identify himself to the provincials and symbolize that he was concerned about them and cared enough about the province to name one of its cities after himself.

Hadrian used the symbolism of coin motifs to express the importance of the provinces to the empire. Many of the coins he minted depicted him raising the provinces from their knees. This showed that the provincials were important, that Rome was not the only important place in the empire. Hadrian spent most of his rule outside of Rome in the provinces as part of the campaign to consolidate the Empire and to establish this imperial identity throughout the empire. The building of the wall in *Britannia* was a continuance

of a larger strategy to define the boundaries of the province, bring safety and security to the province, and Romanize the provincials.

The province of *Britannia* was rich in natural resources, fertile lands, and abundant forests. However, it was second only to *Judea* in rebellion.<sup>8</sup> After Caesar's invasion and subjugation in 55-54 BC, *Britannia* interacted with the Romans in the role of client kingdom. They were not ruled directly by the Romans until the conquest by Claudius in AD 43. Like *Judea*, Roman rule was imposed on them after the end of client kings and like *Judea*, there had been problems in *Britannia* from the outset. The rebellion of Boudica in AD 60 and the subsequent uprisings were finally crushed in AD 84 after the arrival of Agricola in *Britannia*. However, he was not allowed to finish his conquest of Caledonia, leaving a remnant of the Britons and Caledonians unconquered. Emperor Domitian recalled Agricola and some of the legionary forces, allowing the unconquered to regroup and reassert themselves, pressing down onto the lowlands of Caledonia. By 117, they had begun to attack the *vici*<sup>9</sup> located around the forts along the Stanegate road. The Brigantes tribe, who controlled the Caledonian lowlands as well as northern *Britannia*, had been rising up against the Romans. The rebellious province had to be dealt with, and Hadrian personally set the province right. Upon Hadrian's arrival in 121 he decided where the course of the wall would run. There are sources showing that he personally went to the north to choose the wall's path and possibly was the architect of the wall as well. Hadrian used the wall to divide the Brigantes tribal territory, placing a portion of their territory within the province. The design of the wall changed several times during its construction. The original design did not include the forts located in the

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<sup>8</sup> Perowne, *Hadrian*, p.81

<sup>9</sup> Small towns that grew up around the military forts throughout the empire.

wall, and it was originally intended to be wider and include turrets. The forts along the Stanegate provided the garrisons for the turrets and mile castles. However, the distance from the forts to the wall must have been a problem as the design was changed and forts added. These changes to the building of the wall did not change its purpose; they were needed to make the wall practical and functional.

The wall was a tool that Hadrian used in a much larger strategy to change the view of the provinces and to secure the borders of the empire. Hadrian's idea that provincials needed to feel important and to identify with Rome is seen in his actions in *Britannia*. He did much for the people of the province before leaving. Because of his belief that the empire needed to be solidified and defined, Hadrian used many tools to spread Romanization through the provinces. The only way to secure the future of Rome was to secure the provinces and have them see themselves as not only provincials of the Roman Empire, but as Romans within the Roman Empire.

Hadrian's Wall ensured the security of the province, as well as sending that message to those within the province. The forts garrisoned along the frontier provided the interaction needed between the Romans, Romanized provincials, and the un-Romanized Britons. Hadrian desired *Britannia* to be a peaceful province, and for the Britons both to accept Roman rule and integrate themselves into the Roman Empire. The presence of the wall and the military forces located in the northern portion of the province allowed the Romanization of all *Britannia*.

## CHAPTER I: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Academics share many diverse and contradictory theories addressing the purpose and reasons Hadrian built the wall. For the most part, the theories are not defined by a specific period, and few academics base their entire interpretation of the wall's purpose on a single justification for its construction. Rather, they combine theories to create a more functional and complex picture of the reasons behind the wall's construction. The most common theory is that the wall had a defensive nature, as it is obvious that walls were usually built for protection. Other theories state that the wall was a symbol for the limit of the Roman Empire, that the wall was a border for tax purposes and trade restrictions, and that the wall was a customs border for keeping undesirables out. Additional theories assert that the wall was meant to convey the permanence of the Romans in *Britannia*, to show their strength to the Britons on both sides of the wall, to keep the soldiers stationed in *Britannia* occupied, and to give a sense of security from the raiding parties of the northern tribes. Another theory is that the wall was built to further the Romanization of the province.

These scholars tend to disagree with each other and reject the different views of the purpose of the wall. This limiting of the role and purpose of the wall is where I disagree with the previous scholars and their assertions on the purpose for the wall. While each theory explains a particular facet of the wall's construction, I make the new argument that the best explanation of the wall is a compilation of them all. In addition,

looking at Hadrian and his overall aspirations for the Roman Empire, the symbolic importance of the wall and its Romanizing effects become more apparent. Hadrian did not commission this wall for a singular purpose, but as a well-thought-out instrument to promote his plans for the province and the empire. Hadrian was looking at the needs of the province in its entirety, and to understand the Romanization of the province, the intricate strategy employed in both the north and south of the province must be examined. That idea is the basis for this thesis.

Unfortunately for students of Hadrian and his wall, there are no written sources contemporary to its actual building. All mentions of the wall in ancient texts were written much later and are summaries of the texts by prior writers. The original texts have been lost. Because of this, many primary sources that scholars use are identical. There are references to the building of the wall in the *vita Hadriani* and the writings of Cassius Dio. Another written record used by scholars are the more recently discovered letters at Vindolanda, which have been excavated in four separate periods from 1970-2001. These letters give an account of life on the wall and the military situation on the wall. The epigraphic sources and letters from Vindolanda give insight to the more common person's life in that period. Epigraphs, texts, and other archaeological artifacts that discuss Hadrian and Hadrian's Wall can be found throughout the former Roman Empire. Epigraphic texts offer insight into Hadrianic *Britannia* and are used by some scholars, but not all. The use of both epigraphic and ancient texts is the best way to look at the wall and the reasoning behind it. To rely on one and not the other would ignore information that is pertinent to the discussion, so this thesis incorporates both types of texts.

Nearly every scholar discussing the construction of the wall includes the defense of the province in their argument, and rightfully so, as it was a military wall the Romans garrisoned for nearly 300 years. They often cite the revolt that took place in AD 117, in which the ancient sources said the Britons could hardly be kept under Roman control, as the primary reason for the wall. In this rebellion, one of the legions stationed in *Britannia* was lost, as well as many Roman lives. The wall therefore was built to keep the barbarians out of the province and keep them from rising against the Romans again. The forts built into the wall provided the necessary strength to prevent a large scale invasion into the province.

Most scholars acknowledge the importance of the wall as a defensive structure, yet it is not always the central theme. Authors such as Anthony Birley, Plantagenet Somerset Fry, Stewart Perowne, David Breeze, Sheppard Frere, and H.E. Priestly use the *Historiae Augustae*, as well as some epigraphic sources, as a basis for this theory and focus much of their analysis on the defensive nature of the wall. These scholars view the wall as a way to divide the Brigantes to lessen their strength, and isolate those below the wall from their allies beyond it. It also prevented the raids that commonly took place along the border of the province.<sup>1</sup> Perowne paints the Britons as a people who lacked Romanization and never fully Romanized:

Throughout the whole...empire, there was no nation which had given so much trouble as the Britons, except the Jews. These two people, so different in situation and outlook, never seemed able to see that submission was better than revolt, assimilation by Rome preferable to the stubborn maintenance of their own peculiar customs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Birley, *Hadrian*, p. 130; Plantagenet Somerset Fry, *Roman Britain* (Totowa NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1984), pp. 91-93; Perowne, *Hadrian*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>2</sup> Perowne, *Hadrian*, p. 81.

The Britons' refusal to conform and comply prior to Hadrian shows how unsuccessful the previous attempts at pacifying and Romanizing the Britons had been, and how troublesome the province could be to the Romans.

Another point that some of these scholars argue is the defensive purpose of the wall. It was not meant to function as a defensive battle platform from which the garrisoned soldiers defended. Instead, the wall in conjunction with the forts, mile castles, turrets, and the military way running behind the wall allowed for the rapid deployment of soldiers anywhere needed along the wall. The troops could be deployed beyond the wall quickly making the wall an excellent defensive barrier; it allowed the use of offensive tactics in a defensive way, meeting the aggressors before they reached the wall. It was supported by forts along the Stanegate road and the legionary fortresses in York and Chester.<sup>3</sup> The garrison stationed along this frontier was much stronger than other garrisons placed in the empire. During the reign of Hadrian, forty-nine cohorts garrisoned *Britannia*.<sup>4</sup> This was an extremely large garrison for the size of the province, which shows the amount of difficulty with the provincials.

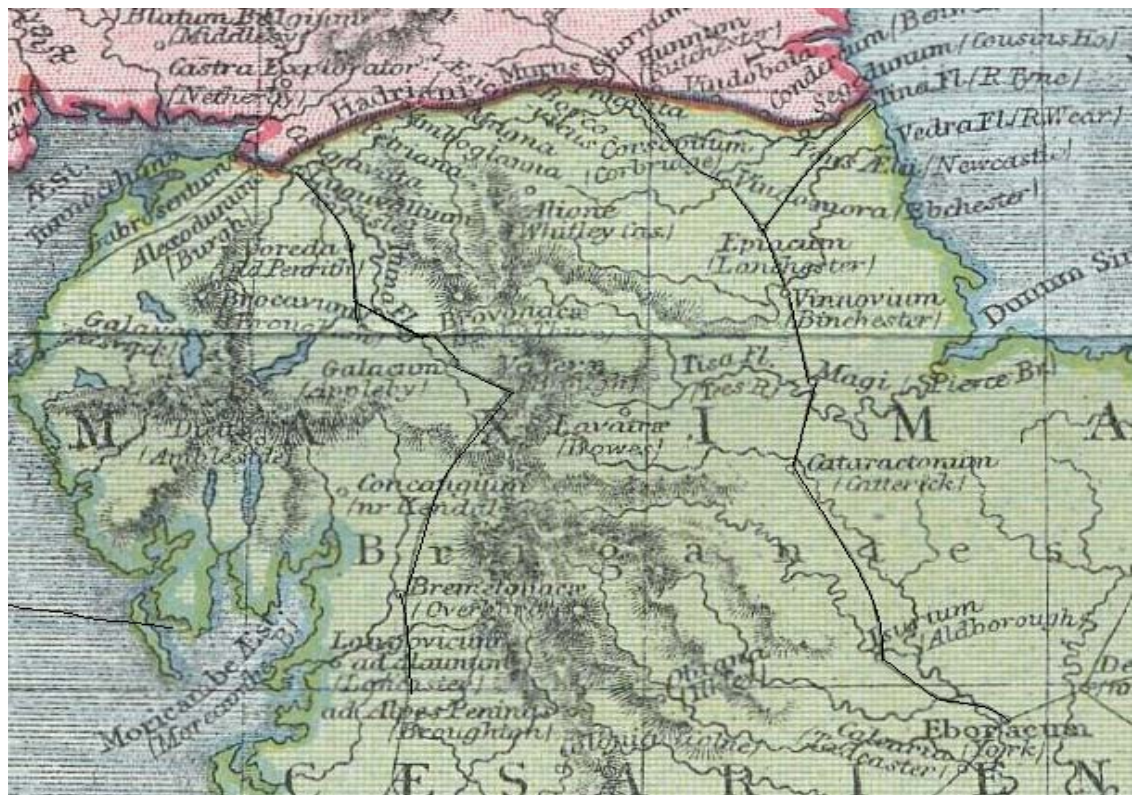
The idea of the wall being a defensive barrier is supported by the wall not originally being meant to have forts built into it. According to Frere and Priestly, these forts became part of the wall because of the need for rapid response on the part of the garrisoned troops. They were part of a six-layer defense system. The wall and the ditch that ran in front of the wall acted as the first layer. The mile castles with small detachments of soldiers were the second. The turrets that acted as watch posts between

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<sup>3</sup> Sheppard Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Todd, *Roman Britain 55 B.C.-A.D. 400: The Province Beyond Ocean* (Brighton, Sussex : Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 146-147.

the mile castles composed the third. The forts added to the design became the fourth layer, giving the soldiers the ability to answer any threat from beyond the wall more quickly. The *vallum* behind the wall made up the fifth layer of defense. The last layer was the Stanegate forts, which had detachments of both cavalry and foot soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Todd discusses the importance of the seacoast, which was also guarded by a wall. On the western coast, a palisade wall ran along the length of the shore from Bowness on Solway down to Cardurnock, most likely a defense against intruders coming from the sea.<sup>6</sup> This is different from most of the other Hadrianic defenses, which dealt with attack from land.



**Figure 3: Map of northern Britannia<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> Frere, *Britannia*, p. 114; Priestley, *Britain*, pp. 47, 50, 51.

<sup>6</sup> Todd, *Roman Britain*, p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.annourbis.com/maps/large7.html>



Another theory explaining the purpose of the wall suggests that the wall was intended to create a limit to the Roman Empire by making a permanent boundary. Most scholars who discuss the wall as a boundary give credence to the wall's defensive function. However, for them the importance of the wall as a boundary takes precedence over its defensive purpose. Birley, Henderson, and Divine argue that Hadrian used this artificial structure to mark the boundaries of the empire and to mark the limit of the province.<sup>8</sup> Luttwak, Divine, and Frere discuss the building of the wall along with the wall in *Germania*. The barrier that Hadrian built in *Britannia* was supposed to function in much the same way as his palisade in *Germania*.<sup>9</sup> It was meant to be a created frontier, something that had not often been used in the Roman world. Divine portrays Hadrian as defining the empire and creating definite borders.<sup>10</sup> Henderson states plainly that the wall was meant to define the limits of the empire, not only to confront the savages to the north of the wall, but also to pacify the Brigantes lying south of the wall: "For by it (the wall) the natives between it and the Humber, still to some extent uncivilized and unquiet, were cut off from all easy intercourse with those in Southern Scotland."<sup>11</sup> According to Henderson, the wall was built for the quicker pacification of the Britons inside the wall. The wall was a permanent limit, one that Hadrian did not intend to extend.<sup>12</sup> The Roman-controlled lands beyond the wall had been sacrificed to the barbarian tribes in the north in order to secure the safety of the rest of the province.

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<sup>8</sup> A. Birley, *Hadrian*, pp.128, 134; Henderson, *Life and Principate*, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> Frere, *Britannia*, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> David Divine, *Hadrian's Wall: A Study of the North-West Frontier of Rome* (Boston: Gambit, 1969), pp. 70, 72-73; Frere, *Britannia*, p. 111; Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp 60-61, 65-68.

<sup>11</sup> Henderson, *Life and Principate*, p. 162.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson, *Life and Principate*, pp. 162-163.

Another popular theory is that the wall was intended to act as a customs border, where the Roman authorities could control everything that came into and left the province. It controlled the influx of people in and out of the province, allowed for the collection of customs and duties on goods, and permitted only those with innocent intentions into the province.<sup>13</sup> The *vallum* inside the wall was not meant as an earthwork for defense, but as a zone into which civilians were not allowed. This militarized zone prevented any unauthorized intercourse between the Britons on each side of the wall.<sup>14</sup> The wall was not meant to be impenetrable but to act as a filter. Those entering the province could be screened and the undesirables kept from the province, while allowing commerce and movement in and out. If there was trouble within the province, the garrisons beyond the wall could be called back, the gates closed, and peace restored without fear of the tribes beyond the wall fueling the insurrection.<sup>15</sup> Customs could be collected, and in times of peace travel between the province and lands beyond was not as tightly controlled.<sup>16</sup> The wall was not the line designating the end of the Roman world, but it increased the effectiveness of the Stanegate forts.<sup>17</sup>

This idea that the Roman world did not end at the wall contradicts border theory and some portions of the defensive theory. This is one point of contention between the scholars using these different theories. Scholars who discount the porous border out of hand fail to examine all the evidence. If the wall was strictly a solid border, it would not make sense to have eighty gates throughout the wall. Conversely those who do not accept

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<sup>13</sup>Fry, *Roman Britain*, p. 92; Perowne, *Hadrian*, pp. 87-88; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>14</sup>Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp.104-105; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 120-121; David Breeze, *Northern Frontiers of Roman Britain* (London: Batsford, 1982), pp. 73, 87; Priestley, *Britain*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> Priestley, *Britain*, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> Priestley, *Britain*, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> G. M. Durant, *Britain, Rome's Most Northerly Province: A History of Roman Britain A.D. 43-A.D. 450* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), p. 50.

the idea of a border or a defensive structure do not take note of the multiple layers of defense and the large size of garrisons on the wall. Despite this, they are not mutually exclusive, as will be explained later.

The most recent theory explaining the wall's intended purpose has been put forth by Stephen Johnson. For Johnson, the wall carried much more symbolic importance and provided psychological benefits for the soldiers and those living on the frontier. The wall was a separation, not only physically but also mentally between barbarian and Roman.<sup>18</sup> The combination of wall and *vallum* gave the Romans control over the movement in and out of the province, as well as protection for the soldiers from the troublesome tribes to the south of the wall.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the wall enabled the Britons to identify themselves with the Romans rather than the wild Britons beyond the wall, and allowed for the speedier Romanization of the Britons below the wall. It made the might of the Roman military visible to those within and beyond the province.<sup>20</sup> The defensive purpose of the wall was obvious, but not paramount. Johnson's arguments differ from all the other authors in that the symbolic nature of the wall is stated, as well as the desire for the Romanization of the Britons. The symbolism was most important, and the Romanization that took place was secondary. However, I argue that both the symbolism of the wall as a border and the Romanization of the province were equally important to Hadrian. He wanted every province in the empire to Romanize and see themselves as Romans rather than provincials. The importance of Romanization is evident through the symbolism of the wall.

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<sup>18</sup> Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 52, 59.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 56-58.

The theory that the wall was built to increase the Romanization of the province is one that can be found in the works of Johnson and Durant, and is one of the more creative theories put forth for the purpose of the wall. I suggest this idea of the province being Romanized is central to explaining the wall most accurately. It is an important addition to the previous theories that focused on the military purpose of the wall. This theory places the Romanization of the province and its welfare at the heart of Hadrian's actions.<sup>21</sup> Hadrian wanted the native communities to become more self-sufficient and yet still be Roman. Since new colonies were no longer being added, the control of towns and urban centers in the province was in the hands of the tribal oligarchs who reported to Imperial Legates.<sup>22</sup> The Romanization of the province is the most important part of the pacification of the province.

Combining the various theories, even those that seem to contradict each other, shows that the wall was defensive in that it was a warning to those on both sides of it, and it also symbolized the strength of the Roman Empire by erecting a wall across the island. Because the garrisoned troops controlled the wall completely, the control of the influx of provincials and trade with those beyond the wall could continue without difficulty from the tribes north or south of the wall. It obviously functioned as a permanent border and was designated the immovable border of the Roman Empire. It was the end of the Roman province, but that does not mean the end of the Roman sphere of influence, which extended beyond the wall.

In order to understand the wall, it is first imperative that Hadrian's actions are understood. Hadrian was the second emperor not born in Italy, but in the province of

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<sup>21</sup> Durant, *Britain*, p. 48.

<sup>22</sup> Todd, *Roman Britain*, p. 139.

*Hispania*, and identified with the provincials as he was from the edges and not the center of the Empire. He knew the importance of the provinces and the need for peace within them. The most efficient way to ensure this was to Romanize the provincials and keep the legions prepared for war while making them a defensive force, thus consolidating the empire into a defensible entity. This is why the Romanization of the provinces was so important to Hadrian. The different arguments on the progression of Romanization in *Britannia*, specifically, can be condensed into four basic approaches. While none of these approaches can explain the Romanization of the province by themselves, a new approach of combining these theories creates a more accurate representation of the process.

The first approach explores the role of the military as the primary Romanizing force in the province, and it is often used by scholars such as Peter Salway, David Divine, and Guy De la Bedoyere. While they use ancient epigraphic texts and archeological artifacts, their interpretations of these sources differ from the other Hadrian scholars. For them, the military and the interaction of the military with the Britons caused the Romanization of the Britons, and it was quick and fairly superficial.<sup>23</sup> The contact was not limited to personal interaction, but included the use of military architecture and other Roman services to educate the Britons on the benefits of becoming Roman. This form of Romanization was found mainly in the north, where the bulk of the Roman garrison was stationed. The lack of centralized northern tribal governments and the tribes' propensity to rebel against Roman institution made the military presence there necessary.

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<sup>23</sup> Peter Salway, *Oxford History of England: Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 185-190; Guy De la Bedoyere, *Eagles Over Britannia: The Roman Army in Britain* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2003), pp. 105-120; H.H. Scullard, *Roman Britain: Outpost of the Empire* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 48-52; Divine, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 16-17.

The second approach is used by scholars such as Martin Millet and Haverfield to explain the Romanization of the Britons through commerce. These scholars look mainly at epigraphic and archaeological sources when creating their theory of Romanization. Trade took place between the Britons and the Romans, transforming the Britons into Romans through the replacement of the traditional material culture with that of the Romans.<sup>24</sup> This process was much slower than the militaristic one, and more applicable to the more peaceful southern portion of the province. Trade increased and became much safer with the construction of the wall. It ended raids on the province by those in the north and assisted in the control of the trade. According to this theory, the nobility of the Britons took on Roman characteristics in order to maintain their positions of power.<sup>25</sup>

The use of administrative structure is the third approach, combining easily with the second approach, and is used by Millet in conjunction with the second form of Romanization. In this approach, Romanizing the nobility of the Britons was the first step in creating the provincial administration, and it played an essential role in the continued Romanization of the Britons. The Romans often used existing tribal leadership in controlling new provinces.<sup>26</sup> In the south of the province, the governmental structure of the Romans overlaid the centralized tribal structure. The governor of the province was still a Roman, but the Romanized Britons carried out more day-to-day functions of the administration. The rights of provincial and Roman citizens also increased the appeal of Romanization. The laws used in the province showed preferential treatment to citizens of

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<sup>24</sup> Robin Birley, *Civilians On Rome's Northern Frontier* (Carlisle: Roman Army Museum Publications, 2000), pp. 23-28; Martin Millett, *The Romanization of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-8; F. Haverfield, *The Romanization of Roman Britain*, 4th ed. rev. by George Macdonald. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1979, c1923), pp. 36-47.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Millett, *Roman Britain* (London: B T Batsford Ltd., 2005), p. 70; Millett, *Romanization of Britain*, pp. 68-69; Haverfield, *Romanization of Britain*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Millet, *Romanization of Britain*, pp. 68-70; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 126-127.

the empire. This made citizenship in the Roman Empire more desirable, and thus increased the Romanization that was taking place in an attempt to receive citizenship.

The final approach focuses on religion. Scholars such as Cunliffe place emphasis on the religious Romanization of the Britons. The Romans did not replace the gods of the Britons with their own, but rather synthesized their own gods with the gods of provincials.<sup>27</sup> An example of this is the deity Sulis-Minerva, whose temple was located in what is now Bath. Sulis, the Celtic god of healing and sacred waters, was combined with Minerva, the Roman god of wisdom. This use of religion allowed the Romans to integrate the Britons into the Roman worship of the gods and other Roman rituals while allowing the Britons to keep their deities. This approach to Romanization allowed for the gradual integration of the Britons. It introduced other religions to the Britons such as the cult of Mithras.<sup>28</sup>

While it is true that each one of these approaches is significant by itself, when used together they more fully explain the Romanization of the province in its entirety. The military approach explains the northern portion of the province; the commercial approach is suited for the southern portion. Hadrian's Wall assisted in the Romanization by ensuring that not only were the people of the north safe and secure, but that also trade and commerce could be carried out with little interference from the barbarians to the north. The wall placed troops in the north, and thus the Romanization of the north increased through the interaction between the provincials and the soldiers. The religious

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<sup>27</sup> Millet, *Romanization of Britain*, pp. 114-117; T. W. Potter, Catherine Johns, *Roman Britain* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1992), pp. 121-122; Barry Cunliffe, *Roman Bath Discovered* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2000), pp.62-64.

<sup>28</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Eagles*, p. 167; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp.259-261; Joan Liversidge, *Britain in the Roman Empire* (New York, F.A. Praeger, 1968), pp. 448-451.

and administrative approaches to the Romanization of the province were not as localized as the former two. Soldiers brought with them religions such as the cult of Mithras and Christianity to the northern frontier, as well as the administration structure of the military.

The reasons for building Hadrian's Wall were not limited to a single one and should not be thought of as such. All these theories are important to the meaning of the wall. Not only does Hadrian's biographer state that the wall was built to separate the barbarians from the Romans, but Hadrian's other wall built along the border in *Germania* became the set limit of the Roman Empire. By combining the previously discussed theories with the theory of Romanization as the main theme, Hadrian's Wall becomes a complex and effective instrument used by Hadrian and the Romans to bring the province of *Britannia* under control and make it peaceful. The wall is emblematic of how Hadrian functioned as emperor of the Roman world.

Hadrian portrayed himself as the emperor of the common person and showed his love for them in the ancient sources of the *Historiae* by Cassius Dio, and the *Vita Hadriani*.<sup>29</sup> In addition to writings, many epigraphic and archeological sources show his devotion to the provinces and common people. The coins he put into circulation often pictured the province, or Hadrian saluting the army, greeting the province, or lifting the province from its knees. Most of his reign was spent touring the provinces. It is not improbable to think that Hadrian used the construction of a wall as a way to improve the quality of life for those in the province of *Britannia*. He wanted the Britons to see themselves as Romans and to identify themselves with the Romans. The wall functioned

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<sup>29</sup> *Vita Had.* 17.8-10; Dio, *Hist* LXIX. 10



not only as a symbol for the limits of the empire, but displayed the separation of the barbarians from the civilized. It marked the security of the civilized and assisted in the Romanization of the Britons.

## CHAPTER II: HADRIAN'S STABILIZATION OF *BRITANNIA*

### **Breaking the Cycle of Rebellion**

The reasons behind the construction of the wall are as complex as the history of the province of *Britannia*. This province had never been peaceful and was in a state of almost constant upheaval. From the first contact between Julius Caesar and the Britons to the time of Hadrian's ascension to the throne, the Britons fought against Roman rule. When Hadrian came to the throne in 117, another insurrection was taking place. In this revolt, an entire legion, the IX *Hispana*, was lost or at least so decimated that the VI *Vitrix* was needed to replace it.<sup>1</sup> After the building of the wall, the province became peaceful and secure. It broke the cycle of constant rebellion that plagued the province through the combined utility of the wall as a defensive structure and its symbolic importance for the Romanization of the province.

Hadrian was not concerned with the expansion of the empire, but rather the security of the borders and peace in the empire. He focused on consolidating the empire and restoring peace. He traveled through the land, visiting most of the provinces in the Roman Empire. On the frontiers, Hadrian placed military preparation above all else. The importance of the provinces to Hadrian can be seen in the multitude of public works done for the cities as well as the frontier works he commissioned. Many of the coin motifs

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<sup>1</sup> A. Birley, *Hadrian*, p. 123; Salway, *Roman Britain*, p. 173; Perowne, *Hadrian*, p.85.

used during Hadrian's reign featured the provinces on the reverse, and the *Restitutor* coins depicted Hadrian lifting the personified province from its knees. Hadrian used these public works, coins, travels, and his frontier works to show the provinces that they were important to the Roman Empire. They were not simply subjects, but Romans themselves participating in the Roman world. It was with this idea and the need for defense that Hadrian built his wall in *Britannia*.

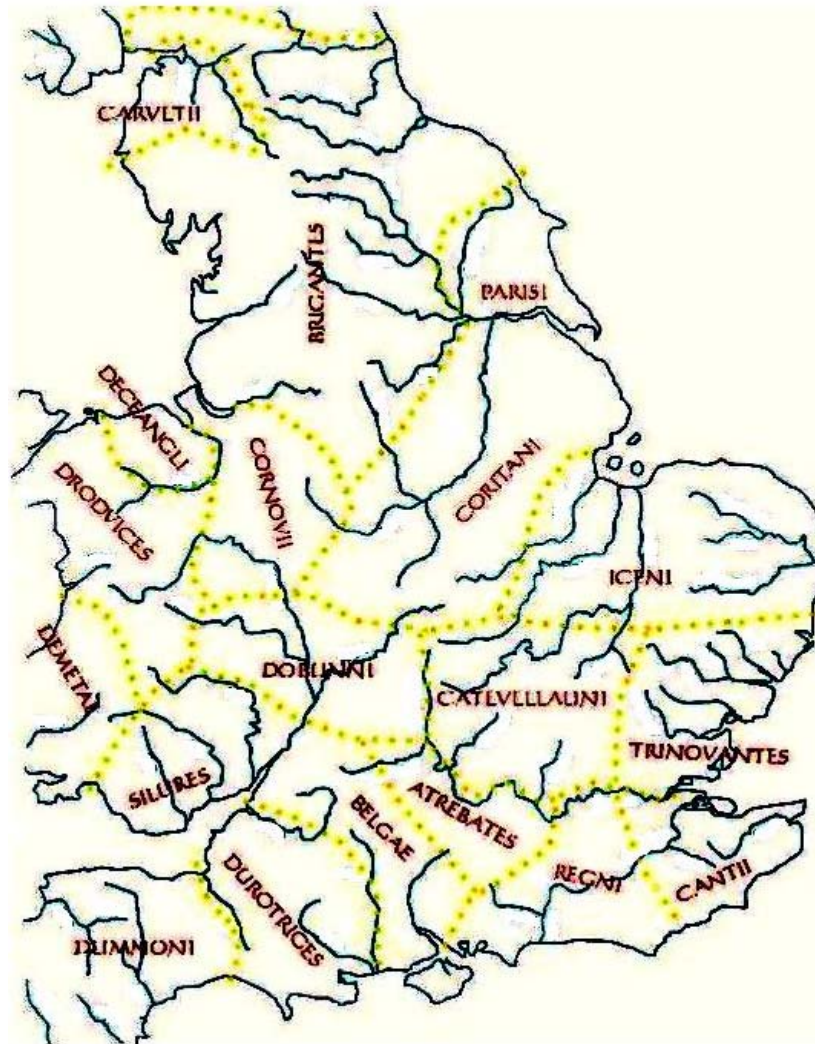


Figure 4: Picture of the pre-Roman tribes of  
*Britannia*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.jimwallman.org.uk/brit/cia-smallmainmap.jpg>

### ***Britannia, the Rebellious Province***

*Britannia* began with Julius Caesar and his invasion of the isle in 55 BC.

Caesar's accounts portrayed the Britons as a savage people who painted themselves blue for battle. In his first crossing of the English Channel, Caesar had several difficulties; he could not find a suitable landing place, and unfamiliarity with the ocean and the tide made the landing and the defeat of the Britons more difficult. In addition to this, the Britons used chariots in battle that were difficult for the Roman legions. In the primary contact, after defeating the Britons once, Caesar had to defeat them a second time when they learned of the small number of Roman soldiers and attacked again. In retribution for this, Caesar invaded Britain again the following year, using an immense army to subdue the Britons. With this army, Caesar beat back the Britons, imposed tributes, and demanded hostages.<sup>3</sup> Caesar portrayed the Britons throughout his text as savage and unyielding:

The most civilized of all these nations are they who inhabit Kent, which is entirely a maritime district, nor do they differ much from the Gallic customs. Most of the inland inhabitants do not sow corn, but live on milk and flesh, and are clad with skins. All the Britons, indeed, dye themselves with woad, which occasions a bluish color, and thereby have a more terrible appearance in fight. They wear their hair long, and have every part of their body shaved except their head and upper lip. Ten and even twelve have wives common to them, and particularly brothers among brothers, and parents among their children; but if there be any issue by these wives, they are reputed to be the children of those by whom respectively each was first espoused when a virgin.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* 5. 23-27 (London : W. Heinemann, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917).

<sup>4</sup> Caesar, *de Bello Gallico* 5. 14: Ex his omnibus longe sunt humanissimi qui Cantium incolunt, quae regio est maritima omnis, neque multum a Gallica differunt consuetudine. Interiores plerique frumenta non serunt, sed lacte et carne vivunt pellibusque sunt vestiti. Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horridiores sunt in pugna aspectu; capilloque sunt promisso atque omni parte corporis rasa praeter caput et labrum superius. Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes et maxime fratres cum fratribus parentesque cum liberis; sed qui sunt ex his nati, eorum habentur liberi, quo primum virgo quaeque deducta est.

From this point on, the Britons in the south of the island had contact with the Romans. Beginning with Caesar, they signed treaties with the Romans, and even used Latin on the inscriptions of their coins, which had a picture of the king of the Britons with REX inscribed on the coin.<sup>5</sup> Caesar stated that the British isle produced much tin, a small amount of iron, and had many trees of many types.<sup>6</sup> The Britons traded these raw materials for Roman goods they did not have the technology to produce. This trade was the first interaction of the Romans with the southern portion of *Britannia*. The kings and those in charge were the vassals of the Romans. *Britannia* was allowed to rule itself, and was asked only to give a yearly tribute to the Roman Empire and to have their kings approved by Rome. At this period, the administration of *Britannia* was left to the various tribes. It was not directly under the rule of the Roman Empire, as it was a client kingdom.

The occupation of *Britannia* did not begin until AD 43, during the reign of Claudius. During this time the Romans placed a Roman-style administrative structure on top of the tribal structure already in place within the province.

Suetonius gave an account of the conquest of *Britannia*, in which Claudius invaded Britain to receive a triumph that befitted an emperor, but the account was very short and limited in



**Figure 5: Celtic Britain. Epillus. Mid-late 1st century B.C. AR Unit<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> Haverfield, p. 29; Fry, *Roman Britain*, p.27.

<sup>6</sup> *Caesar, de Bello Gallico* 5. 12.

<sup>7</sup> <http://wildwinds.com/coins/celtic/britain/atrebates/epillus/i.html>

scope.<sup>8</sup> This account did not even discuss the capture of one of the leaders of the Britons.

The later account of Tacitus showed the spirit of the Britons and their rebellious nature:

Meanwhile, in Britain, Publius Ostorius, the propraetor, found himself confronted by disturbance. The enemy had burst into the territories of our allies with all the more fury, as they imagined that a new general would not march against them with winter beginning and with an army of which he knew nothing... The army then marched against the Silures, a naturally fierce people and now full of confidence in the might of Caractacus, who by many an indecisive and many a successful battle had raised himself far above all the other generals of the Britons. Inferior in military strength, but deriving an advantage from the deceptiveness of the country, he at once shifted the war by a stratagem into the territory of the Ordovices, where, joined by all who dreaded peace with us, he resolved on a final struggle.<sup>9</sup>

Even after the Romans captured Caractacus, and the Britons had been defeated, they rebelled again:

When Caractacus was out of the way, our discipline was relaxed under an impression that the war was ended, or because the enemy, out of compassion for so great a king, was more ardent in his thirst for vengeance. Instantly they rushed from all parts on the camp-prefect, and legionary cohorts left to establish fortified positions among the Silures, and had not speedy succour arrived from towns and fortresses in the neighbourhood, our forces would then have been totally destroyed.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the loss of their leader and the defeat of their forces, they did not bend to the will of the Romans.

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<sup>8</sup> *Suetonius, de Vita Caesarum, Vita Claudii* 14 1-3, Latin text and Eng. Tr. by J. C. Rolfe (London: W. Heinemann; New York: Macmillan Co., 1914).

<sup>9</sup> Tacitus, *Annales* XII. 31,33: At in Britannia P. Ostorium pro praetore turbidae res excepere, effusis in agrum sociorum hostibus eo violentius quod novum ducem exercitu ignoto et coepta hieme iturum obviam non rebantur.... Itum inde in Siluras, super propriam ferociam Carataci viribus confisos, quem multa ambigua, multa prospera extulerant ut ceteros Britannorum imperatores praemineret. sed tum astu locorum fraude prior, vi militum inferior, transfert bellum in Ordovicas, additisque qui pacem nostram metuebant, novissimum casum experitur, sumpto ad proelium loco, ut aditus. (London : W. Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925-37).

<sup>10</sup> Tacitus, *Annales* XII. 37: Ostorio triumphi insignia, prosperis ad id rebus eius, mox ambiguus, sive amoto Carataco, quasi debellatum foret, minus intenta apud nos militia fuit, sive hostes miseratione tanti regis acrius ad ultionem exarsere.

The Britons did not see the benefit of joining the Roman world, but they traded with the Romans and began to use more Roman items. Through the trade of these items, Romanization of the Britons began; however this form of Romanization was slow and arduous. The Britons, while they may have enjoyed Roman goods, did not yet feel accepted by the Romans. They were controlled for only nine years before they launched a great revolt to push the Romans off the isle and out of the lives of the Britons. This revolt, too, was put down by the Romans, and *Britannia* was again under Roman control. The Britons used Roman cultural goods and dress for political reasons after being conquered by the Romans. This use of goods and the Roman administrative model continued the slow Romanization of the Britons.

Under the direct rule of Rome, the upper class of the Britons took on Roman customs, so that they could continue to maintain power. The nobles used Latin and Roman coins for their money and their taxes and began to live in the Roman fashion. They lived in Roman homes, used Roman goods, and adopted the Roman style of dress.<sup>11</sup> However, this did not mean they were becoming Roman. Their acceptance of the culture gave the Romans a false sense that the Britons' Romanization was happening more quickly than it actually was. The Romans often used the preexisting rulers in their provincial governments, with the exception that the higher officials such as the governor and prefects were from Rome. The Britons did not wish for Roman control, and Roman characteristics were abandoned just as quickly as they had been adopted. This rejection of the Romans was seen in the subsequent revolts in *Britannia*. The rejection of Roman

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<sup>11</sup> Millett, *Roman Britain*, p.46; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 81-84.

culture exhibits the need for the multiple strategies for Romanization that Hadrian used in the province.

The ineffectiveness of Romanization by trade alone can be seen in one of the biggest revolts by the Britons. This revolt took place in AD 60, when the Britons, under the leadership of Boudica, took up arms against the Romans and attempted to drive them out. The rebellion was sparked by the ill treatment of the noble families of the Iceni. The massive size of the rebellion, and the destruction of soldiers and cities, showed British hatred for the Romans and the deaths of women and children reinforced it. They did not want to become Roman; they wanted the Romans driven from the island just as in the time of Claudius and Caesar. During this rebellion, Tacitus reported that 70,000 Romans died at the hands of Boudica and her army. In addition to this, four Roman cities, Camulodunum, Verulamium, Lindum, and Londinium, were razed<sup>12</sup>. The governor of the province, Suetonius Paulinus, could not reach Londinium with the troops necessary to protect it, so he moved into a position favorable to the Roman forces. At the final battle between Suetonius Paulinus and Boudica, the Romans numbered only 10,000 strong, while Boudica had mustered a large army of an unknown number. The Romans were outnumbered greatly according to Tacitus. According to Dio, Boudica commanded an army of 230,000.<sup>13</sup> This rebellion was crushed by the Romans, with the Roman legions slaughtering not only the warriors of the Britons, but the women as well, killing nearly 80,000 Britons.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Colchester, St. Albans, Lincoln, and London.

<sup>13</sup> Dio, *Hist* LXII 8; Guy De la Bedoyere, *Defying Rome* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2003), pp. 61-70.

<sup>14</sup> *Tacitus, annal* XXXVII.



Even after quelling Boudica's rebellion, Wales and the lands beyond the Trent River were not subdued and continued to cause problems for the Romans through to the reign of Titus. During the reign of Domitian, Agricola conquered almost all the island to bring the rest of the Britons under Roman control. Agricola had served in the army in *Britannia* during the Boudican revolt under Seutonius Paulinus and was appointed to the governorship in 77. During his governorship, all of Wales was conquered as well as all the lowlands of Scotland.<sup>15</sup> He did more than just conquer the island; he built many public works and improvements to the province in the southern portion of the island to help keep the Britons from rebelling and to assist in the Romanization of the Britons, much like what Hadrian did later during his reign over the Empire:

The following winter passed without disturbance, and was employed in salutary measures. For, to accustom to rest and repose through the charms of luxury a population scattered and barbarous and therefore inclined to war, Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice and dwelling-houses, praising the energetic, and reproofing the indolent. Thus an honourable rivalry took the place of compulsion. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the industry of the Gauls that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the *toga* became fashionable. Step by step they were led to things which dispose to vice, the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this in their ignorance, they called civilization, when it was but a part of their servitude.<sup>16</sup>

Agricola attempted to bring the Britons Roman civilization, and in the southern portion of the province these practices did begin to take root. However, in the northern portions,

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<sup>15</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola*, 40. Eng. Tr. by M. Hutton (London : W. Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Tacitus, *Agri* 21: Sequens hiems saluberrimis consiliis absumpta. Namque ut homines dispersi ac rudes eoque in bella faciles quieti et otio per voluptates adsuescerent, hortari privatim, adiuuare publice, ut templa fora domos extruerent, laudando promptos, castigando segnibus: ita honoris aemulatio pro necessitate erat. Iam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent. Inde etiam habitus nostri honor et frequens toga; paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus et balinea et convivorum elegantiam. Idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.

where the Brigantes, Caledonians, and others resided, the organization of the tribes did not allow the conversion of the preexisting governmental structure into that of the Romans. They did not have a centralized government, but rather small, clan-like tribes.<sup>17</sup> Without the nobility to Romanize through administration and trade, the north did not receive the same Romanizing influence that their counterparts in the south had.

Under Agricola, *Britannia* came almost entirely under the sway of the Romans through sheer military might. The tribes in the north were subdued, but not Romanized, and Agricola pushed the Caledonians into the highland mountains with the final battle at *Mons Graupius*. Although the Caledonians were defeated at this battle, they did not become subjugated to the Roman state. Rather, the conquest of the island was halted by the emperor just before it had been brought under Roman sway, leaving two thirds of the Caledonian forces intact.<sup>18</sup> The emperor, Domitian, was jealous and fearful of Agricola's success and did not allow him to continue as the governor of *Britannia*.<sup>19</sup> Domitian removed Agricola and the *Legio II Adiutrix*, leaving only three legions, the *Legio II Augusta*, the *Legio IX Hispana*, and the *Legio XX Valeria* to maintain the province. Even though Agricola had built a complex fort system in the province to control those tribes he considered barbarous, the removal of the *II Adiutrix* made it impossible to hold the northern portion of the province. With the legion removed, the Caledonians were able to reassert themselves in the north and begin to press down from the highlands.

When Trajan took the throne (98-117), he was concerned with expansion and the eastern portion of the empire. He did nothing to stave off the loss of the lands in the

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<sup>17</sup> Tacitus, *Agri*, 11, 21; Millett, *Romanization of Britain*, pp. 99-101.

<sup>18</sup> Divine, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 57-58; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 148-151; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 84-87.

<sup>19</sup> Tacitus, *Agri*, 41; R.G. Collingwood, J.N.L. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p.119; Todd, *Roman Britain*, p.115.

northern part of *Britannia*. The Caledonians became a threat to the Roman citizens that had been settled in *Coloniae* throughout the southern province. The Romans, short of forces to maintain the garrisons in the north, began a systematic withdrawal from the north.<sup>20</sup> The reassertion of the Britons over the lowlands of Caledonia allowed them to see that the control of the Romans was not unassailable. By the time of Hadrian, the northern tribes had pushed the Romans out of the lowlands of Caledonia to the Stanegate forts. The Brigantes and their Caledonian allies often raided further south beyond the forts, wreaking havoc in the province. In 117, the Brigantes and other tribes rebelled again, and “the Britons could not be kept under Roman sway.”<sup>21</sup>

On Hadrian’s return journey from Antioch to Rome, he was informed of the revolt in *Britannia* and he sent a new governor, Pompeius Falco, from the Danube front to retake control of *Britannia* while he reinforced the province of *Dacia*. Though the amount of time it took to quell rebellion in the province is unknown, it was at least three years, since Falco was still fighting the Britons while Hadrian was in Rome.<sup>22</sup> Those in the southern portion of the province had been pacified since the time of Agricola, and the Romanization of those in the south had progressed, but the province as a whole was far from pacified and Romanized when Hadrian reached *Britannia*. Hadrian understood that the methods for pacifying and Romanizing the north would be different than what had worked in the south. With that in mind he had public works built in *Britannia*. The wall allowed the Britons to benefit from trade with the Romans living in the *vici* around the

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<sup>20</sup> Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 105-110; Fry, *Roman Britain*, p.86; Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, pp. 120-122; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 115-120.

<sup>21</sup> *Vita Had* 5.3: ...Brittani teneri sub Romana dicione non poterant...

<sup>22</sup> A. Birley, *Hadrian*, pp. 90, 102; Salway, *Roman Britain*, p. 173.

new forts and made possible the installation of a military administration that controlled the small tribal clans.

### **Hadrian**

To understand Hadrian's reasons for building the wall, the kind of emperor that Hadrian was must be understood. He had a new approach for the empire, and unlike Trajan and other emperors of the first and second centuries, Hadrian was not concerned with fighting wars but with securing the provinces.<sup>23</sup> He was concerned with the stability of the entire empire and devised an intricate strategy that enabled him to transform the military and the provinces themselves into what was needed for this stability:

On taking possession of the imperial power Hadrian at once resumed the policy of the early emperors, and devoted his attention to maintaining peace throughout the world. For the nations which Trajan had conquered began to revolt; the Moors, moreover, began to make attacks, and the Sarmatians to wage war, the Britons could not be kept under Roman sway, Egypt was thrown into disorder by riots, and finally Libya and Palestine showed the spirit of rebellion. Whereupon he relinquished all the conquests east of the Euphrates and the Tigris, following, as he used to say, the example of Cato, who urged that the Macedonians, because they could not be held as subjects, should be declared free and independent.<sup>24</sup>

The internal security of the Roman state could not be maintained with the number of troops needed to subjugate these newly acquired provinces. While Hadrian gave up many of the provinces, he remained as loyal to the Roman people as possible in his decisions on which provinces to give up. His choice not to abandon the province of *Dacia*

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<sup>23</sup> *Vita Had* 5.1-4; Henderson, *Life and Principate*, pp. 137-141.

<sup>24</sup> *Vita Had* 5.1-4: Adeptus imperium ad priscum se statim morem instituit tenendae per orbem terrarum paci operam intendit. Nam deficientibus his nationibus, quas Traianus subegerat, Mauri lacescebant, Sarmatae bellum inferebant, Brittani teneri sub Romana ditione non poterant, Aegyptus seditioibus urgebatur, Libya denique ac Palaestina rebelles animos efferebant. Quare omnia trans Eufraten ac Tigrim reliquit exemplo, ut dicebat Catonis, qui Macedonas liberos pronuntiavit, quia tueri non poterant.

stemmed from this allegiance to the Roman citizens of the provinces, who had moved into and settled the newly acquired lands.<sup>25</sup> It was this allegiance to the provincials and the desire for them to view themselves as part of the Roman Empire rather than simply its subjects for which Hadrian strived. He wanted the provincials throughout the empire to identify with him as if he were one of their own and not simply the emperor. Coming from a province, Hadrian understood that he needed to balance the importance of Rome, and the importance of the provinces. If the provincials felt that they were Romans, then they would not be as likely to rebel, and the empire could prosper. Hadrian wanted the provinces to see him as emperor and as a fellow provincial and so he did not wear the regalia of the emperor outside of Rome. Some were given Roman citizenship,<sup>26</sup> others were given public works. Hadrian built cities, amphitheatres, aqueducts, bathhouses, and other public works for the provincials. He held games and gave many gifts to the provincial cities,<sup>27</sup> to show their importance to him. Both the *Historiae Augustae* and Cassius Dio present Hadrian as an emperor more concerned with the common person and the provinces than with the city of Rome and those of noble birth. However, he also understood the importance of Rome and the need to keep the senators and citizens of Rome happy, so Hadrian gave much to Rome. He built great structures within the city, symbolizing its greatness.<sup>28</sup>

Hadrian believed he should lead his legions by example, and throughout the empire he marched with the soldiers in full armor, toiling with them. He had been a

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<sup>25</sup> A. Birley, *Hadrian*, p. 85; Perowne, *Hadrian*, p. 49.

<sup>26</sup> *Vita Had* 21.7; Mary Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Oxfordshire: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp 37-41

<sup>27</sup> Dio, *Hist* LXIX. 10; Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, pp. 4-8; Dan Danziger , Nicholas Purcell, *Hadrian's Empire: When Rome Ruled the World* (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), pp. 136-138.

<sup>28</sup> Dio, *Hist* LXIX. 9-10; *Vita Had*, 8.6.

soldier under Trajan and wanted the legions to identify with him not just as the emperor, but also as a fellow soldier who knew what it was to live the life of a soldier. To this end, he ate their food, took part in drills, and made them into a strong and well-disciplined corps. He often removed the amenities of the soldiers, requiring them to live in conditions that were more basic. He wanted his soldiers to be prepared for war, although he did not wish to wage any:

Hadrian traveled through one province after another, visiting the various regions and cities and inspecting all the garrisons and forts. Some of these he removed to more desirable places, some he abolished, and he established some new ones. He personally viewed and investigated absolutely everything, not merely the usual appurtenances of camps, such as weapons, engines, trenches, ramparts and palisades, but the private affairs of every one, but of the men serving in the ranks and of the officers themselves, — their lives, their quarters and their habits, — and he reformed and corrected in many cases practices and arrangements for living that had become too luxurious. He drilled the men for every kind of battle, honouring some and reproving others, and he taught them all what should be done. And in order that they should be benefited by observing him, he everywhere led a rigorous life and either walked or rode on horseback on all occasions, never once at this period setting foot in either a chariot or a four-wheeled vehicle. He covered his head neither in hot weather nor in cold, but alike amid German snows and under scorching Egyptian suns he went about with his head bare. In fine, both by his example and by his precepts he so trained and disciplined the whole military force throughout the entire empire that even today the methods then introduced by him are the soldiers' law of campaigning. This best explains why he lived for the most part at peace with foreign nations; for as they saw his state of preparation and were themselves not only free from aggression but received money besides, they made no uprising.<sup>29</sup>

This desire to bring the military into shape as well as to provide the provinces with protection from those beyond, combined with the need to define the *limites* of the empire, makes the wall in *Germania* and the wall in *Britannia* an understandable result. The wall in *Germania* was a wooden palisade running along the course of the Rhine River. This wall did not have a rampart or gates built into it. Its purpose was to state the

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<sup>29</sup> Dio, *Hist* IX. 1-5.

limits of the Roman world.<sup>30</sup> Beyond this wall, like the wall in *Britannia*, were barbarian tribes. In *Germania*, Hadrian used the building of the wall as a tool; it required the soldiers to work together and increased the physical fitness of the troops. Those soldiers on the frontiers were not mobile and had become soft and undisciplined. They had luxuries that distracted from their duties. Hadrian destroyed these comfortable forts and required basic forts built to replace them. Despite this, the soldiers of the empire loved him, as he commanded nothing that he himself did not endure.<sup>31</sup> The walls built along these borders gave his men respite from the fear of raiding parties and the small attacks of the barbarians.<sup>32</sup>

As for Hadrian's visit to *Britannia*, there is not much description in the *Historiae Augustae*, and only a small portion of the text was devoted to Hadrian's actions there. It deals with the same abuses of the soldiers that he was setting right in other provinces, making changes to the legions that he felt were necessary and building a wall across the frontier. There is epigraphic evidence, such as a letter found in Vindolanda and other epigraphic texts, that Hadrian himself chose the route the wall would take. He made use of the natural terrain of the province to make the wall a formidable and intimidating object, marking the outermost limit of the Roman Empire in *Britannia*.<sup>33</sup> The wall runs along some of the most rugged areas in *Britannia*. Much of the wall stands aloft on a high ridge, giving a perfect view for miles into the north.

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<sup>30</sup> Henderson, *Life and Principate*, pp. 58, 80-81; A. Birley, *Hadrian*, pp. 115, 128; Danziger, *Hadrian's Empire*, pp. 177, 179; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, p. 71.

<sup>31</sup> Dio, *Hist*, LXIX. 9 ; *Hist Aug*, *Vita Had*, 9.1-8.

<sup>32</sup> Danziger, *Hadrian's Empire*, p. 180; Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>33</sup> Potter, *Roman Britain*, pp. 58-59; Henderson, *Life and Principate*, p. 152; A. Birley, *Hadrian*, pp. 131-133; Priestley, *Britain*, p. 46.



**Figure 6: Northern England, course of wall along Crag Lough<sup>34</sup>**

The actual building of the wall did many things to encourage the Romanization of the province, as Hadrian had intended. The importance of the wall for defense and keeping the province peaceful was an important part of his overall strategy. An inscription placed in the wall stated:

Son of all deified emperors, the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, after the necessity of keeping the Empire within its limits had been laid upon him by divine precept... thrice consul...: after the barbarians had been dispersed and the province of *Britannia* recovered, he added a frontier line between either shores of the Ocean for eighty miles. The army of the province built this defense work under the charge of Aulus Platorius Nepos, the emperor's propraetorian legate.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Picture taken by author.

<sup>35</sup> [Diuorum] omnium fil[ius | imp(erator) Caesar Trianus] Hadr[ianus | Augustus imposit]a necessitat[e imperii] intra fines conser]uati [diu]ino pr[aecepto] ... c]o(n)s(ul) II[I...| (about seven lines have been lost) | diffusis [barbaris et] | Provinc[ia reciperata] | *Britannia* ad[didit limitem inter] | utrumque O[ceani litus per m(ilia) p(assuum) LXXX] | esercitus pr[ovinciae opus valli fecit] | sub cur[a A(uli) Platori Nepotis leg(ati) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)] R.G. Collingwood, *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1051a, 1051b.



This inscription plainly states that the wall was needed to keep the empire within its limits and as defensive in purpose. Hadrian used the terrain in *Britannia* much like he used the Rhine in *Germania*. However, the wall in *Britannia* was much more fortified. This could be for various reasons. It is possible that the lack of lumber and turf on the eastern section of the wall and the abundance of stone and limestone in this area made it more economical to build the wall of stone. The possible need for a more secure border able to withstand an attack could explain the stone structure. It is likely that Hadrian wished the barrier to be a permanent one, an unchanging line that would express the division of the Romans from the barbarians. They possibly painted the wall with a lime-base whitewash. The original plan simply called for a wall with multiple entry points.<sup>36</sup> This wall was essentially the end of the Roman world. It removed those whom Hadrian felt needed to be removed from the province and kept in the Romanized Britons. Hadrian used symbols throughout the empire, and the wall was no different. The wall was a border, and Hadrian intended it to stop the expansion of the empire and set its limits.

It also symbolized the inclusion of the Britons below the wall in Roman society. Hadrian's design meant to show the Britons, particularly those closest to the wall, that they were not barbarians but part of the civilized world. The permanence of the wall showed those in the north that the Romans were not leaving, and they were no longer simply Britons but Roman provincials. Hadrian removed any doubt the Romans were a permanent addition to the province. This wall was a statement to everyone in the province that the Romans had the power to change the very landscape and could designate who was Roman and who was not.

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<sup>36</sup> Durant, *Britain*, p.49; R.G Collingwood, and Sir Ian Archibald Richmond. *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*. (London: Methuen, 1969), pp. 73,75; Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 25-27.

### Coins of Hadrian

Hadrian had a large strategy to bring Romanization to the provinces, and he used more than building projects to convey his desire for the provinces to become part of the empire. He used coin motifs to show the importance of the provinces, the army, and his role as emperor. Roman emperors used coins to acquaint those living in the empire with the current emperor and with other important individuals. They used coins as a means of disseminating information and ideas. These coins were distributed through commerce, to pay the soldiers, and for trade throughout the empire. Coins were used daily and came into contact with a majority of the population in the empire. Hadrian's coins can be found throughout Great Britain in a multitude of coin hoards.<sup>37</sup>

These coin motifs often served to show the greatness of the emperor, to commemorate events, or to honor someone or something.<sup>38</sup> Hadrian minted coins commemorating the provinces of the empire. These motifs carried Hadrian on the obverse with the province personified on the reverse. Such coins often depicted the province with an object or animal. The coin representing the province *Aegyptos* shows the province reclining on a bed with a stork in front of it. It shows the province at peace, in a leisurely state. These provinces had been under Roman rule and Romanized for some time. The coin of *Hispania*, Hadrian's home province, shows the province in a reclined position with an olive branch in the reverse motif.

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Abdy, *Romano-British Coin Hoards* (Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications Ltd., 2002), pp. 10, 25-26, 30, 32, 35, 38.

<sup>38</sup> Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp.48-49; De la Bedoyere, *Eagles*, 142-143.



**Figure 7: Hadrian AR Denarius HADRIANVS AVG COS III P P, HISPANIA<sup>39</sup>**

The coins of more rebellious provinces such as *Dacia* and *Britannia* both contain items that are connected with conflict. On the *Britannia* coin, a woman seated with a cloak, holding a spear, with a shield lying at her right side, represents the province.



**Figure 8: Hadrian AE Sestertius, BRITANNIA PONT MAX TR POT COS III S C<sup>40</sup>**

*Dacia* is presented as a woman seated on a rock, holding a *vexillum*<sup>41</sup> in her right hand and a curved sword in her left. Both *Dacia* and *Britannia* had recently been theaters of conflict, and this could explain the inclusion of the spear, shield, and sword.

<sup>39</sup> RIC 305h

<sup>40</sup> RIC 577a

<sup>41</sup> Roman flag or standard.



**Figure 9: Hadrian AE Sestertius, DACIA S C<sup>42</sup>**

For the provinces he personally visited, he minted coins commemorating his arrival, the *adventus*. On these coins, the provinces are shown greeting him. Hadrian visited many provinces and the reverses of these *adventus* coins have similar aspects. On all these coins, an altar stands between emperor and province, and the province is giving an offering, symbolizing the provinces offering their fidelity to the emperor. The *Britannia adventus* coin is much the same. The emperor and the personified *Britannia* stand on each side of the altar.



**Figure 10: (left) Hadrian AE Sestertius, ADVENTI AVGVSTI BRITANNIA S C<sup>43</sup>; (right), Hadrian AE Sestertius, ADVENTVI AVGVSTI IVDAEAE<sup>44</sup>**

<sup>42</sup> RIC 849

<sup>43</sup> RIC 882

<sup>44</sup> RIC 890

For the provinces where Hadrian made reforms, he minted coins commemorating the restoration of order. The reverse of one such coin portrays Hadrian lifting the province from a kneeling position. Hadrian again shows himself as the emperor of the provincials, helping those provinces in need, but also that he is in authority over them. Although a coin of this type has not been found for the province of *Britannia*, it does not remove the possibility of such a coin's existence. In building the wall, Hadrian declared he had restored the province of *Britannia*.<sup>45</sup> If he restored the province and declared so, it would make sense that he minted a coin commemorating the event.



**Figure 11: (top), Hadrian AE Sestertius, RESTITVTORI GALLIAE<sup>46</sup>;**  
**(bottom), Hadrian AE Sestertius, RESTITVTORI HISPANIAE<sup>47</sup>**

<sup>45</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *RIB*, 1051a, 1051b.

<sup>46</sup> RIC 950

<sup>47</sup> RIC 955

Another coin that dealt with restoration is inscribed on the reverse with “Restorer of the whole world.” This coin shows that Hadrian is restoring the empire to its former glory. Hadrian’s intention to use such coins as a means of transmitting his message is clear. He is bringing order to the Roman Empire and expressing the generosity and care of the emperor for the province.



**Figure 12: Hadrian AE Sestertius, RESTITVTORI ORBIS TERRARVM, SC<sup>48</sup>**

To show his dedication to the army, Hadrian minted coins commemorating the armies of the empire. When he visited the legions, he gave them their pay in these coins. The motifs honored the armies of the provinces, such as *Britannia*, *Dacia*, and *Syria*, and even the Concord (Harmony) of the army. Hadrian wished the army to feel important and honored. In the military motif for *Britannia*, the reverse shows Hadrian addressing the troops in the province standing on a low plinth, and clearly depicts the Roman soldiers with their standards. In the motif for *Dacia*, Hadrian is on horseback, saluting the Roman soldiers displaying the legionary standards. Hadrian was a man of the military, which was

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<sup>48</sup>RIC 594

the base of his power in the empire. He required them to be fit and prepared for war, but he also honored the legions in general and the individual soldiers who deserved it.<sup>49</sup> As coins were handled every day by any person doing business, the use of them as a means for delivering his messages to the common people would have had some success.



**Figure 13: (left) Hadrian AE Sestertius, EXERC BRITANNICVS S C<sup>50</sup>; (right) Hadrian AE Sestertius, EXERCITVS DACICVS<sup>51</sup>**

Hadrian's actions in the rest of the provinces make clear his desire to designate the boundary of the province and remove undesirable elements from *Britannia*. The Britons, primarily those in the north, needed a representation of Roman power and permanence. The Britons had been a province of the empire for eighty years. In that period, three major campaigns were undertaken to save the province from rebellion. The constant retreat of the legions showed the Britons that the Romans could be defeated. For Hadrian, a stone wall was a perfect solution to the problem. It was a permanent structure that guaranteed the safety of the provincials below the wall from the harassment of raids

<sup>49</sup> Dio, *Hist* IX. 3 He drilled the men for every kind of battle, honouring some and reproving others, and he taught them all what should be done...

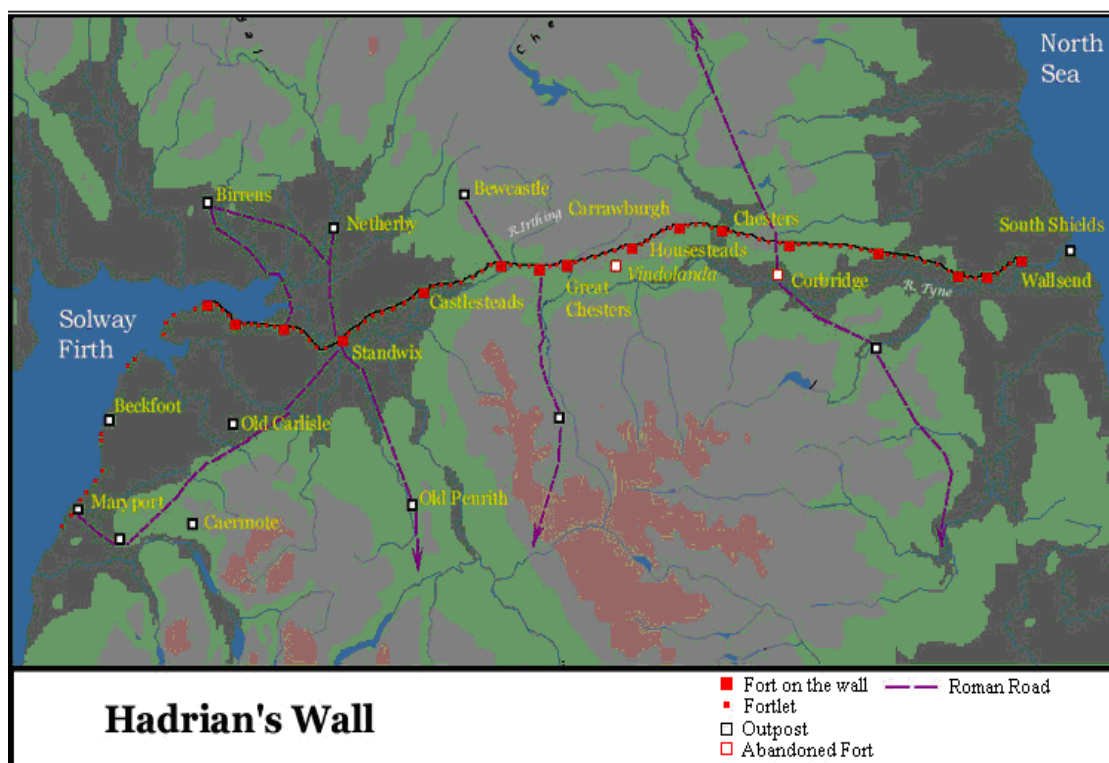
<sup>50</sup> RIC 913

<sup>51</sup> RIC 919

by those in the north. It divided the troublesome Brigantes and allowed the Romanization of those in the south to continue. It assisted in the creation of a province that identified itself as Roman rather than provincial. This fit into his overall plan for the empire.



## CHAPTER II: CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL



**Figure 14: Map of the Course of Hadrian's Wall, showing roads and forts<sup>1</sup>**

The construction of the wall, in its methods and materials, alludes to the purpose of the wall. The course the wall ran is intimidating in itself, running across some of the most rugged countryside that *Britannia* had to offer. Hadrian chose to locate the wall between the Tyne and Solway Rivers. It was built quickly, it was built of permanent material, and it was built to secure the province and Romanize the Britons. The construction of the wall was part of a larger plan for the province and the empire.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/map-hadrianswall.htm>.

The building of Hadrian's Wall started in 122 during the visit of the emperor to the province. Hadrian brought with him the VI<sup>th</sup> *Victrix* to replace the XI<sup>th</sup> *Hispana*. The VI<sup>th</sup>, II<sup>nd</sup>, and XX<sup>th</sup> legions carried out the construction of the wall.<sup>2</sup> The wall's plan called for it to cross the island, creating a stone barrier eighty Roman miles long,<sup>3</sup> with fortifications along the wall at regular intervals. A large fort was built every five Roman miles as well as a smaller mile castle every Roman mile. Between each of the mile castles, two turrets were placed about 560 yards apart. Each of these fortifications, including the turrets, had a portion of the garrison placed within them.<sup>4</sup> The wall basically cut the island of Britain in half, running from sea to sea from the west at Kirkbride, on to Carlisle and through the valleys of the Tyne, Irthing, and Eden Rivers. It was built on the highest ground along its line to give the clearest view into northern territory.<sup>5</sup>

The original plan was for a linear barrier that did not include forts in the wall, but a system of mile castles and turrets along the wall. The garrison for the wall was originally supposed to be stationed in the Stanegate forts. The dimensions of the wall were ten feet wide and fifteen feet tall. A gate was placed in each mile castle, allowing controlled access beyond the province. On the south side ran a parallel road for quick military transport. This road was used for patrolling along the frontier and for the movement of troops and goods.<sup>6</sup> The soldiers providing the garrisons were furnished by Stanegate forts.<sup>7</sup> The original wall was similar to the wooden palisade of *Germania*, rather than the fortified barrier that it eventually became.

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<sup>2</sup> Scullard, *Roman Britain*, p. 59; A. Birley, *Hadrian*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>3</sup> 73 English miles.

<sup>4</sup> Nic Fields, *Hadrian's Wall AD 122-410* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000), pp. 15-18; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 115, 117.

<sup>5</sup> Henderson, *Life and Principate*, pp. 156-157; Potter, *Roman Britain*, p. 58, Frere, *Britannia*, p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Perowne, *Hadrian*, pp. 86-87; Frere, *Britannia*, p. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 76-77; Salway, *Roman*, p.179; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 117-118.

The plan of the wall changed several times during construction for a variety of reasons. While some of them are known, others are simply deductions. The Romans reduced the thickness of the wall to eight feet in certain portions and six at others. The reasoning behind this could be attributed to time constraints or to the lack of materials. Another change in the plan was the incorporation of seventeen large garrison forts, spaced every five miles along the wall. These large forts could have been added for several reasons. First, the building of the wall was met with hostility from the south, where the Brigantes did not like being divided in half and being cut off from their kin and allies in the north. Second, the response time from the Stanegate forts to the wall may not have been quick enough for soldiers to make their way beyond the wall before the hostile enemies to the north reached it. In addition, the requirement of providing the wall with supplies and men from the Stanegate forts was more costly than the building of the forts within the wall.<sup>8</sup> The garrisoned forts built into the wall allowed for quick disbursement beyond the wall and created a barrier and fortified structure that could survey those residing both north and south of the wall. Since the wall was not meant to be a fighting platform in its original plan, the parapet may or may not have been present along the entire wall.

The wall to the west of the Irthing River was built of turf rather than stone, most likely because of the speed with which a turf wall could be completed.<sup>9</sup> The replacement of the turf wall with one composed of stone began immediately after its completion.<sup>10</sup>

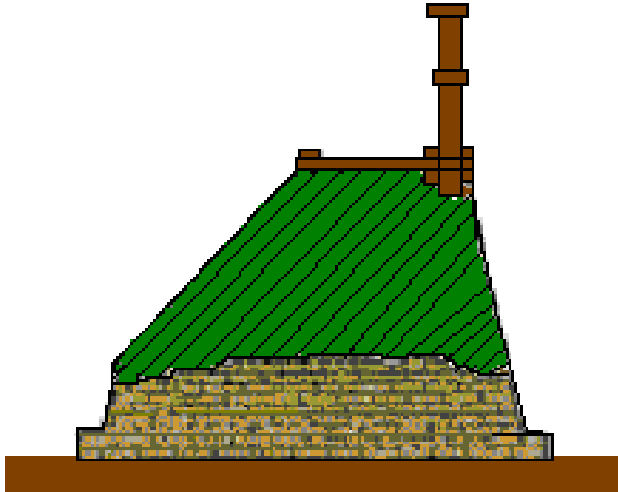
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<sup>8</sup> Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 179-182; Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 57; Durant, *Britain*, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 35-36; Frere, *Britannia*, p. 115.

<sup>10</sup> Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 94-95; J. Wachter, *Roman Britain*. (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1978), p. 43; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 178-179.

This indicates that the turf wall was a temporary defensive wall, and its replacement with stone shows the permanence that Hadrian felt this border should have.



**Figure 15: Turf wall cross section.**<sup>11</sup>

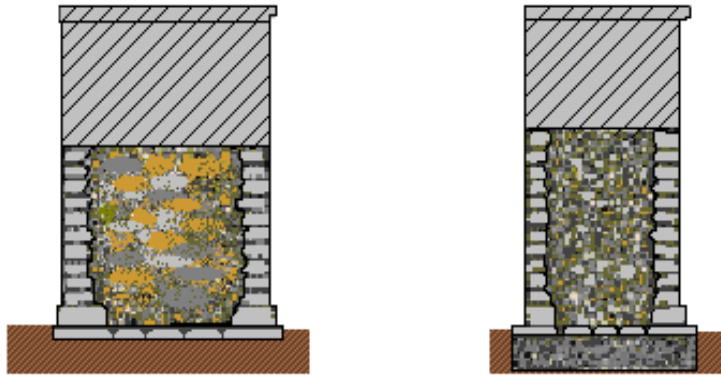
The entire wall eventually was to be composed completely of stone, with a core of lime cement and rubble from the construction of the wall. The exterior of the wall consisted of small, quarried square stones, which the soldiers carried by hand from nearby quarries and used lime mortar or padded clay to secure them.<sup>12</sup> The wall was built similarly to the building of a fence. Each of the stone turrets was built first; even the turrets in the turf wall were composed of stone. Between these turrets, the various cohorts of the Roman military constructed the wall. Since the turrets had been built first, the thickness of the wall that they were prepared for was the original ten-foot wall and possibly whitewashed.<sup>13</sup> This whitewashed wall gleamed as it cut across the landscape,

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article\\_hadrianswall-thewall.htm](http://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article_hadrianswall-thewall.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Breeze, *Northern*, pp. 76-77; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 77-83; Frere, *Britannia*, p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Architecture*, p. 29; Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 35.

dividing the Roman world from that beyond. As a symbol of Roman power the structure made a lasting impression on both those beyond the wall and those behind it.



**Figure 16: (Left) Broad wall, with a puddled clay and rubble core; (Right) Narrow wall with lime concrete core.**<sup>14</sup>

The wall contained eighty gates, spaced across the wall at mile castles and forts. The gates allowed movement for the garrisoned forces as well as for the goods and merchants. These gates had two stories, with accommodations above the gate for storage, lodging for sentries, and an excellent view of the road approaching the gate. The gates could be closed and secured quickly in times of need. Doors were constructed of reinforced timber and hung on iron pivots placed in holes in the stone and secured with lead. The stone above the entrance of the gates had carvings and inscriptions on it, giving Hadrian credit for the construction. The large forts had a double door, allowing more traffic to pass through. The mile castles had a single gate.<sup>15</sup> These gates were the portals to the Roman world. If needed, travel into and from the province could be halted

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article\\_hadrianswall-thewall.htm](http://www.odysseyadventures.ca/articles/hadrian-wall/article_hadrianswall-thewall.htm)

<sup>15</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Architecture*, pp. 29-30; Robin Birley, *Garrison Life on the Roman Frontier* (Carlisle: Roman Army Museum Publications, 1994), pp. 6, 8.

immediately. This gave the Romans the ability to isolate the province from those beyond the wall and control the goods leaving the province. The barrier that the wall created was not impenetrable. These gates did not all have roads running through them to the north and if a person wished to cross beyond the wall, they were forced either to pass through one of the mile castles or through the large forts. By controlling this movement, the province could Romanize without interference from beyond.



**Figure 17:** (left) **Ruined Fort gate at Birdswold.** (Right) **Rebuilt Gate near Newcastle**<sup>16</sup>

During the construction of the wall, the Brigantes in the south resented being cut off from their relatives and allies in the north. Part of the strategy Hadrian had implemented was to divide and isolate the Brigantes from their allies in the north and stabilize the area, keeping the Brigantes from becoming a problem again as they had been in 117. A *vallum* was placed on the south side of the wall. The *vallum* created a militarized zone that kept the Brigantes in the south away from the wall and served as a defensive barrier should they rebel. On the north side, a trench was added to create

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<sup>16</sup> Pictures taken by author.

another barrier before reaching the wall. The *vallum*, wall, and trench created three layers of the six-layered defense system.

The *vallum* consisted of a broad, flat-bottomed trench that was sixteen to twenty feet wide at the top, nine to ten feet deep, and seven feet wide at the bottom. The sides of the *vallum* rose at a sixty-degree angle on both sides. On each side of the *vallum* ditch, the Romans placed compacted earthen mounds. The north side of the wall consisted of a trench with a large mound that dropped into a trench running in front of the wall, making it more difficult to approach the wall. On the south side the *vallum* had a smaller mound and a shorter berm. The overall width of the entire *vallum* was 120 feet.<sup>17</sup> The distance between the wall and the *vallum* was not specifically set, but placed at different distances from the wall depending on the geological and geographical terrain. Often the distance of the *vallum* from the wall differed from a mile away to only a few yards. The *vallum* ran around the wall fortifications and is believed to be the last portion of the wall to be completed. The *vallum* forced those who approached the wall to be raised into view of the turrets so that sentries could see them, and caused a hindrance to the approach of those who might be attacking the wall from the south.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ronald Embleton, Frank Graham, *Hadrian's Wall in the Days of the Romans* (New York: Dorset Press, 1984), pp. 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 15; Frere, *Britannia*, p.118; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 102-104.

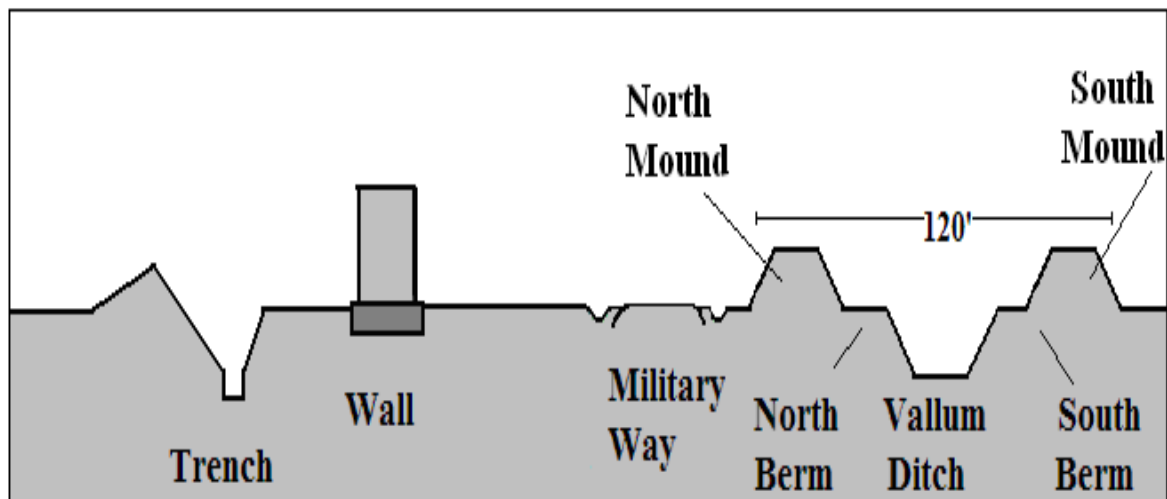


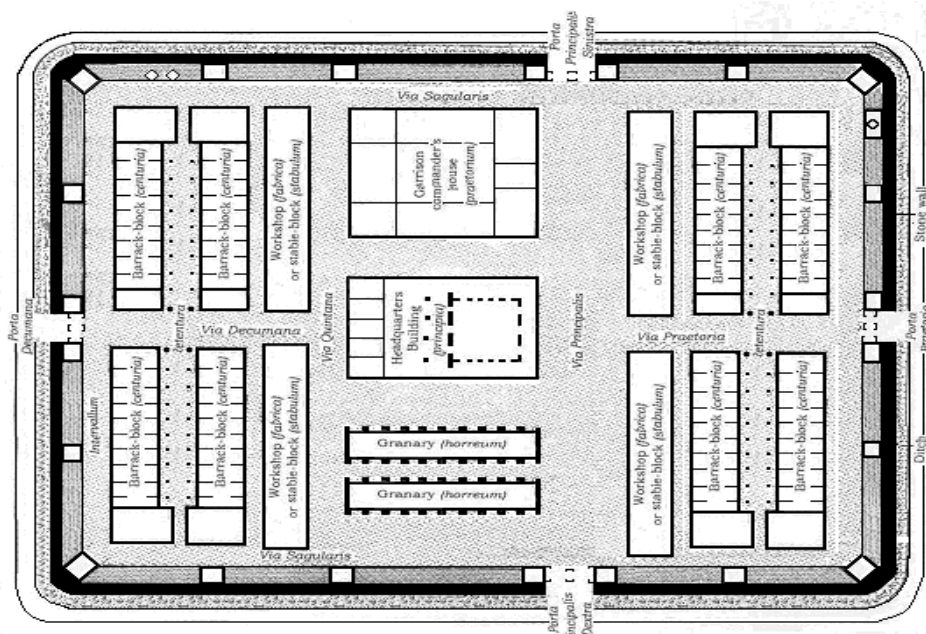
Figure 18: Final layout of the wall.<sup>19</sup>

The forts were added after the original plan of the wall was begun to allow for the quick dispersion of the troops beyond the wall. The Roman forts placed within the wall structure were the largest of the encampments, and they housed the soldiers garrisoned on the wall. While they varied in size, they were all rectangular and followed, for the most part, the standard Roman fort layout covering from three to five acres. The structures in the forts varied to fit the troops garrisoned there. If the troops were cavalry, then stables were included, and the barracks adjusted to address space issues. Certain facilities, such as hospitals, were located only in specific forts. Like the wall itself, the materials used in the construction of these forts varied from the eastern and western halves of the wall. In the east, the forts were built of stone and wood. Those on the west used earth, clay, and wood.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Drawing done by author.

<sup>20</sup> Perowne, *Hadrian*, p. 88; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 120-121; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 89-90.





**Figure 19: Typical layout of the Roman wall forts.**<sup>21</sup>

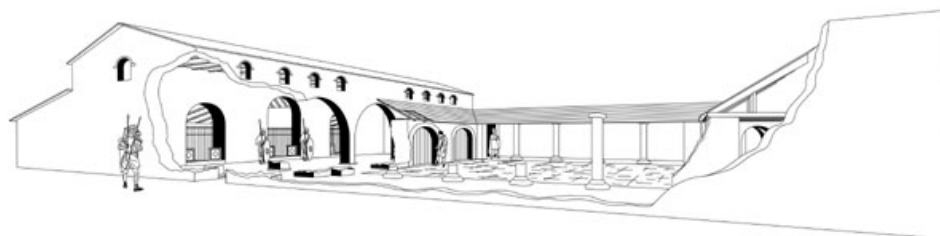
The dispersion of the cavalry and soldiers was not done arbitrarily, but in a way that a large contingent of troops could reach any place beyond the wall quickly to engage the enemy. Reinforcements from the Stanegate forts could reach the area shortly thereafter.<sup>22</sup> Seventeen of these forts were spread out over the eighty-mile long wall spaced every five miles.

The large forts, no matter the size and shape, all contained certain structures that reinforced their Roman nature. They helped with the Romanization of the Britons by bringing peace and trade to the north, bringing religions from the Roman world, and synthesizing the gods of the Britons and Rome. In addition these forts imposed the Roman militaristic administration. They followed a design that was a centrally planned grid format. The forts were built in a rectangular shape divided by two main streets; the

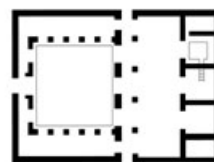
<sup>21</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 133.

<sup>22</sup> Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 121-122; Johnson, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 57.

*via principalis* would run east and west, the *via praetoria*, north and south.<sup>23</sup> Located directly in the center of the fort, bisecting the *via praetoria*, was the stone *principia* that housed the headquarters but was used for religious ceremonies as well. The building was composed of a paved courtyard that was surrounded on three sides by stone or timber colonnades. On the fourth side of the courtyard was the entrance to an aisled basilica from which the commander of the garrison dealt with the problems that might arise. Against the back wall of the basilica were five rooms. The shrine to the regiment was located in the central room. The standards of the regiment were kept here. In addition to this, the treasury for the regiment was located beneath this room. The rooms adjacent to the shrine were the offices of the administrators who were responsible for the garrisons.<sup>24</sup>



## Principia



**Figure 20: Drawing of the average Principia in a Wall fort<sup>25</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> R. Birley, *Garrison*, pp. 5, 6; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 369-370.

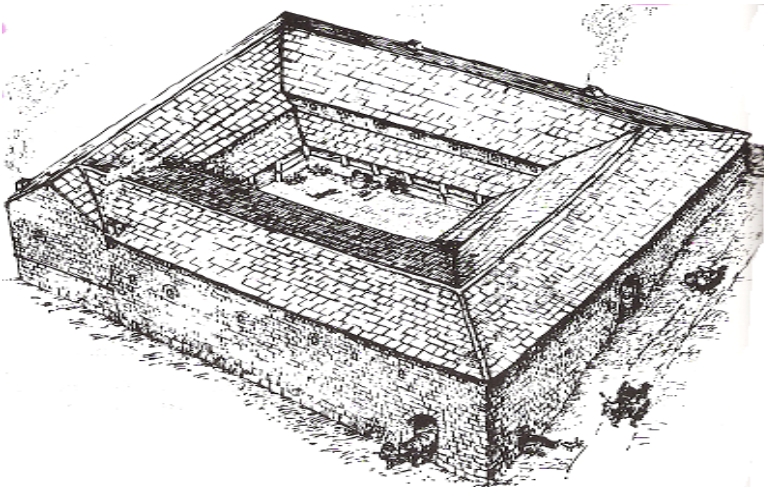
<sup>24</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 134-135; R. Birley, *Garrison*, pp. 9, 11; De la Bedoyere, *Architecture*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond\\_signage.html](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond_signage.html)



**Figure 21: Ruined principia of Vindolanda<sup>26</sup>**

The *praetorium* of the fort was located next to the *principia*. It housed the commander of the garrison. The house of the commander was more luxurious than the barracks the soldiers used. It resembled a small Mediterranean villa, again reinforcing the Romaness of the forts and the hierarchy of the administration. This villa was built with a private bathhouse, latrine, and a hypocaust heating system. Such houses often were two stories high and included multiple rooms. Unlike the soldiers that manned these forts, the commander was allowed to have his family and his house slaves live within the fort.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 22: Drawn representation of the Praetorium as it would be on Hadrian's Wall<sup>28</sup>**

<sup>26</sup> Picture taken by author.

<sup>27</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 132; R. Birley, *Garrison*, p. 12; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 26, 31.

<sup>28</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 132.



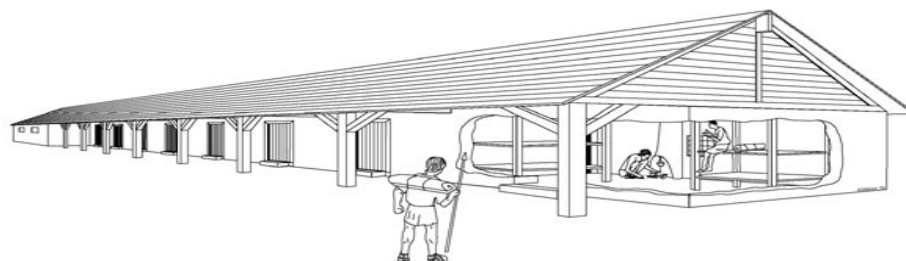
**Figure 23: Praetorium remains of Housteads fort on Hadrian's Wall.**<sup>29</sup>

The soldiers garrisoned in the large fortifications were housed in the barracks. Each barrack held one hundred soldiers, and every fort contained seven to ten of these structures. These accommodations were spartan in their furnishings, but were warm and more fortified than the homes of the Britons in the surrounding area. The barracks were usually forty to fifty yards long and ten yards wide. They were divided into ten or more two-room units, with a larger unit at the base of the barracks for housing the centurion, or officer of the unit. Each of the units held eight soldiers in one room and their gear in the other room. The rooms in which the soldiers slept did not necessarily have beds, and if they did not, mattresses were laid on the floor when sleeping. The officer's quarters had its own latrine, hearth, and washing facilities. Since the latrine and washing facilities required running water, a wood-lined drain ran from the officer's quarters to a rubble-filled pit called a 'soak away'. Running water was another Roman amenity that the

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<sup>29</sup> Picture taken by author.

Britons did not have. There did not seem to be dining facilities in the forts. The soldiers most likely used their barracks as the place to take their meals.<sup>30</sup>



Barracks



**Figure 24: Every fort would have multiple barracks, usually paired off facing each other<sup>31</sup>**



**Figure 25: Ruined remains of Housesteads barracks<sup>32</sup>**

Every fort on the wall had at least one granary inside. These granaries held several months' worth of foodstuffs for any eventuality, should the soldiers be cut off

<sup>30</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 133; Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 19-20; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 29-30.

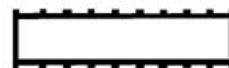
<sup>31</sup> [http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond\\_signage.html](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond_signage.html)

<sup>32</sup> Picture taken by author.

from their food supply. The large amount of food stored there supports the idea that it was not simply the tribes to the north that caused worry; the tribes from the south did as well. In order to protect the food stores from incendiary weapons fired at the fort, the granary was placed as close to the center of the fortification as possible. In addition to this, the tile or stone that was used for the roof of the granary was thick and fireproof. Massive stone slabs acting as external buttressing supported the roof, and kept the rain from running down the walls. This assisted in keeping the food stored within the granary dry. Another characteristic that assisted in the preservation of the food was a floor much like the hypocaust floors. Tile columns supported the floor, leaving a space between the granary floor and the ground, allowing for circulation of air, and keeping moisture out of the building.<sup>33</sup>



Granary



**Figure 26: Each fort would have two granaries next to each other<sup>34</sup>**

<sup>33</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 144; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 29-31, 36.

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond\\_signage.html](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond_signage.html)



**Figure 27: Ruined granaries of Housestead**<sup>35</sup>

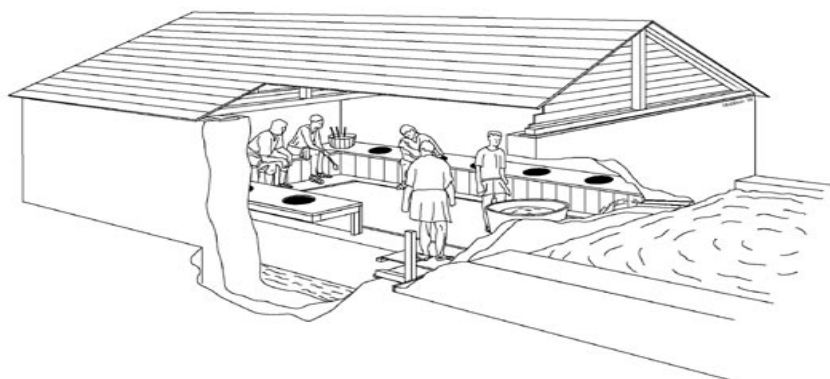
Though the Romans used wood for portions of their buildings like the walls of the granary and barracks within the forts, the fort walls were not made of wood but rather of stone and mortar or dirt and clay. The fort walls were not susceptible to fire from attackers, and the thickness was greater than that of the walls upon which they set. The walls gave the Romans a safe place for their baking ovens to cook their bread and not rely on an outside source. The walls had four to six gates used to enter or exit the forts, a narrow crenellation along the top of the wall, rampart walkways above, and a ditch below the exterior.<sup>36</sup> The fort walls did not use the greater wall as part of the fortification, but they straddled the wall, having one third of the fort on the north side of the wall. Those crossing into the province had to enter at the gate of the fort and exit on the other side. This was an efficient way to control the flow to and from the province.

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<sup>35</sup> Picture taken by author.

<sup>36</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 15; Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 16, 18.

The garrisoned fort had latrines to ensure the cleanliness, health, and hygiene of the fort. The latrines were located within the exterior wall as well. Since cleanliness was important to the Romans, the latrine was an important part of the forts. The room was rectangular in form with a paved floor, channels running down the center of the room, and two banks of benches made of wood. In these wood benches were circular holes, which allowed for the passage of excrement into the water that flowed underneath the bench in a channel. The two channels in the center of the room also had water running in them for the soldiers to dip sponges on the end of a stick, which they used to clean themselves much like with modern toilet paper. The water flowed into the sewer, and the waste was carried out of the wall of the fort and surfaced at least a hundred yards from the fort. The walls of the latrine were covered with plaster on the interior, and in the center of the room stood a basin for the soldiers to wash their hands.



## Latrine



**Figure 28: The Latrine would be along the wall of the fort.**<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond\\_signage.html](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com/Projects/Cramond/Cramond_signage.html)





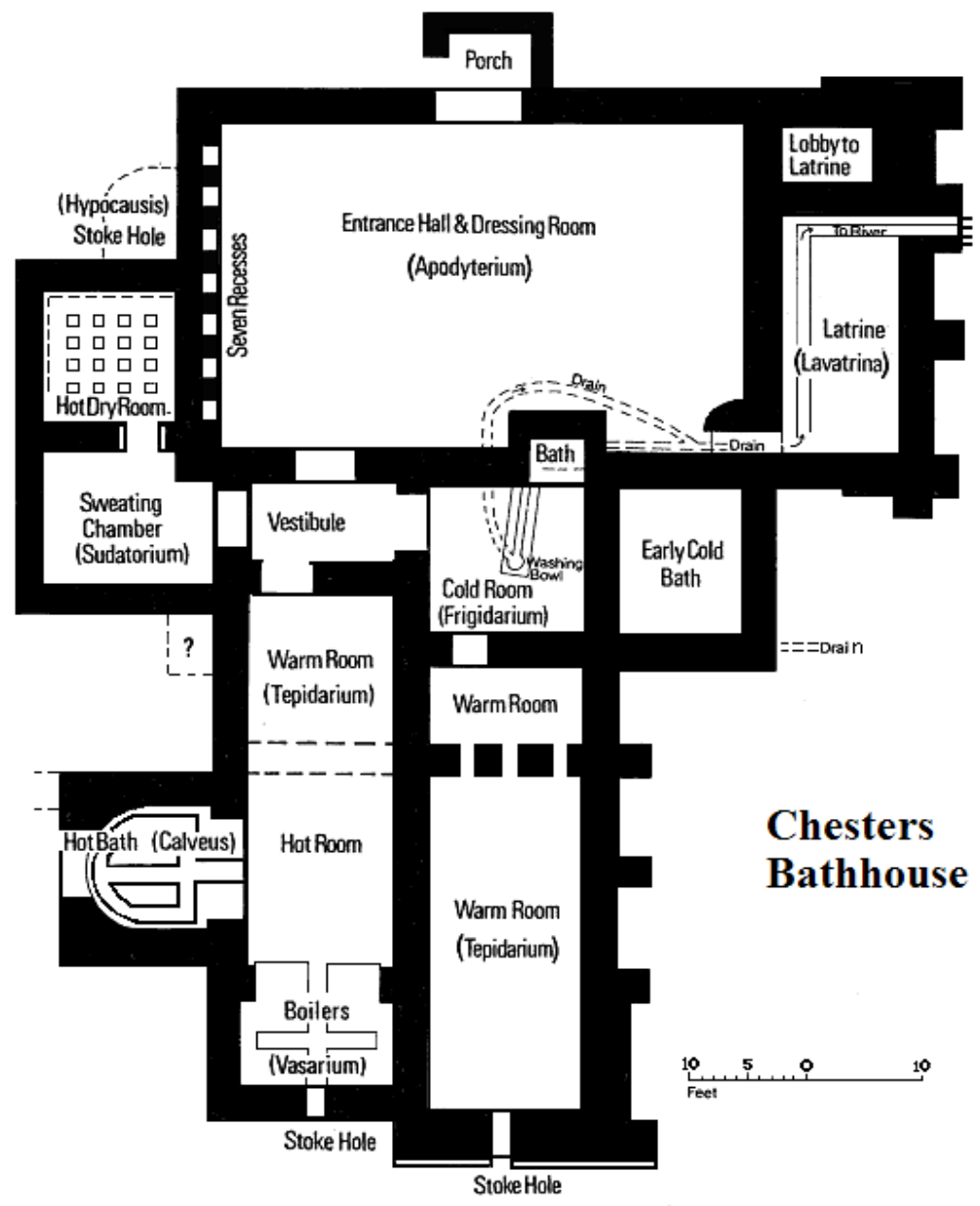
**Figure 29: Ruined Housesteads Latrine**<sup>38</sup>

The washing of the entire bodies of the soldiers took place in bathhouses that each Roman camp had located nearby.<sup>39</sup> Bathhouses were not included within the forts because of the limited space these fortifications had. They were made of stone, and had four or five rooms and a latrine. The largest room was the changing room, which served the soldiers as a meeting place or a social club of sorts. The soldiers met at the baths, enjoyed wine and food, played games, and socialized with the other soldiers. Three of the rooms held pools, a *frigidarium*, a *tepidarium*, and a *caldarium*. The first pool was filled with cold water, and was the first and last pool the bather entered. The second pool was filled with warm water, where one could relax. The third bath was filled with hot water, and the soldiers in this pool washed themselves. They returned from this pool to the *frigidarium* to close the pores of the skin. Like the houses of the garrison commander, the floors of the bathhouse had a hypocaust system that kept the rooms warm and allowed

<sup>38</sup> Picture taken by author.

<sup>39</sup> Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 24-25; Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 143; De la Bedoyere, *Architecture*, pp. 35-37.

the soldiers to walk around with little on. Some bathhouses had hot and warm rooms, sweating chambers, and a hot dry room. Not all the bathhouses contained all of these, but the three pools and the dressing room were present in all forts.<sup>40</sup>



<sup>40</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 107-111; Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 52-53; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, pp. 111-114.

<sup>41</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 111

**Figure 30: Bathhouse at Chesters<sup>41</sup>**



**Figure 31: Ruined bath at Chesters<sup>42</sup>**

The sophistication of the Roman forts and surrounding *vicus* was most likely impressive to the Britons; they did not have the same amenities, and they did not have the same understanding of hydraulics, sanitation, and hygiene. The Romans would often spread these ideas, and thus Romanize the Britons through their values, technology, and craftsmanship. The Romans stationed along the wall gave the Britons living along the wall access to all these amenities: the bath houses, latrines, and Roman goods. The Romans were effective in building safe fortifications that did not sacrifice the amenities that were standard in the Roman forts. These things helped spread Romanization in the province.

Around the forts small towns, called *vicus*, provided goods and services to the forts. While they were not part of the original plan, whenever a fort was built anywhere in the Roman Empire, a *vicus* grew around it to provide for the soldiers. These towns provided the men of the forts with wine, women, and a place to practice a trade. They

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<sup>42</sup> Picture taken by author

provided entertainment, such as wine shops and eating establishments. While the military required that only unmarried men could serve, often these soldiers took a woman as a wife, and she lived with him beyond the fort's walls even though officially he lived within them. The Britons who lived in the areas around the forts brought food and other goods to trade for Roman goods and access to the soldier's wages. The shops within the *vicus* ranged from brothels to Roman import shops. Metalworkers made everything from jewelry and farm tools to armor and weapons. The *vicus* was more than just a place where trade took place; it was a place where the Britons could access the goods and commodities of the Romans and the Romans would gain access to the raw materials of the Britons.<sup>43</sup> The Romanization of the Britons through the commerce of the *vicus* and acceptance of Roman production methods to fill the needs of the soldiers and desires of the Britons was an important part of Hadrian's conversion plan for the Britons while keeping the soldiers happy.



**Figure 32: Ruins of the *vicus* at Vindolanda.**<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Durant, *Britain*, p. 87; Divine, *North-West Frontier*, pp. 19, 119; De la Bedoyere, *Eagles*, pp. 96, 108, 179, 217-218; Millett, *Romanization of Britain*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> Picture taken by author.

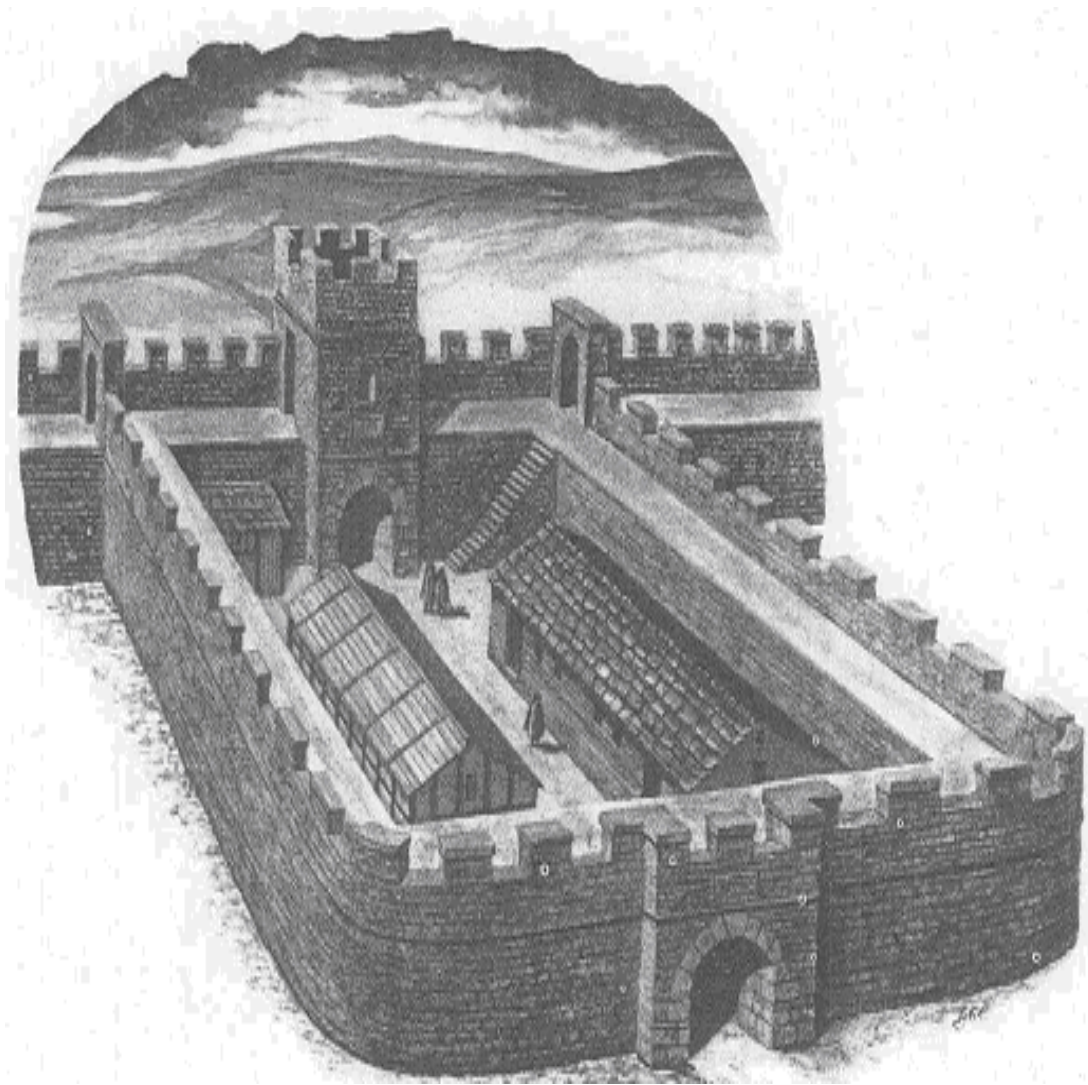
The mile castles of the wall did not have the amenities that the larger forts contained. They held only two gates, one on each side of the wall. The shape of the mile castle was rectangular with the southeast and southwest corners of the exterior wall rounded. The defensive wall that surrounded the mile castle connected to Hadrian's Wall itself, using it as the fourth wall in the defenses. The length of the mile castle from north to south was only around fifty feet, and the width was around fifty-eight feet. It was made either of earth and clay or of stone and rubble. This, like the wall itself, depended on the materials in the area for the building of the wall. In the northeast corner of the mile castle, bread ovens were located. A stairway to the ramparts of the wall was placed at the northwestern corner. Between eight and thirty-two soldiers could garrison such smaller forts. These men were housed inside one of the two long timber or stone buildings within the mile castle. In the other building equipment, food stores, stables, and other storage was kept. The latrine for the mile castles would be located within the barracks. The format of the barracks and latrines had mostly the same format as the larger forts. These soldiers were used for quick deployment if something should arise, but mostly they patrolled the wall.<sup>45</sup> The mile castles were located at intervals of one Roman mile apart. Sixty-four mile castles studded the wall.

These mile castles functioned as places for soldiers to control the gates and the influx of people into and out of the province. Their purpose was to act as that porous border and as the defensive buffer that the wall was. In addition to this, the Britons along the wall knew they could not find a portion of the wall that was not garrisoned, that a

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<sup>45</sup>Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 155; Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 15; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, p. 79; Breeze, *Northern Frontiers*, pp. 78-83.

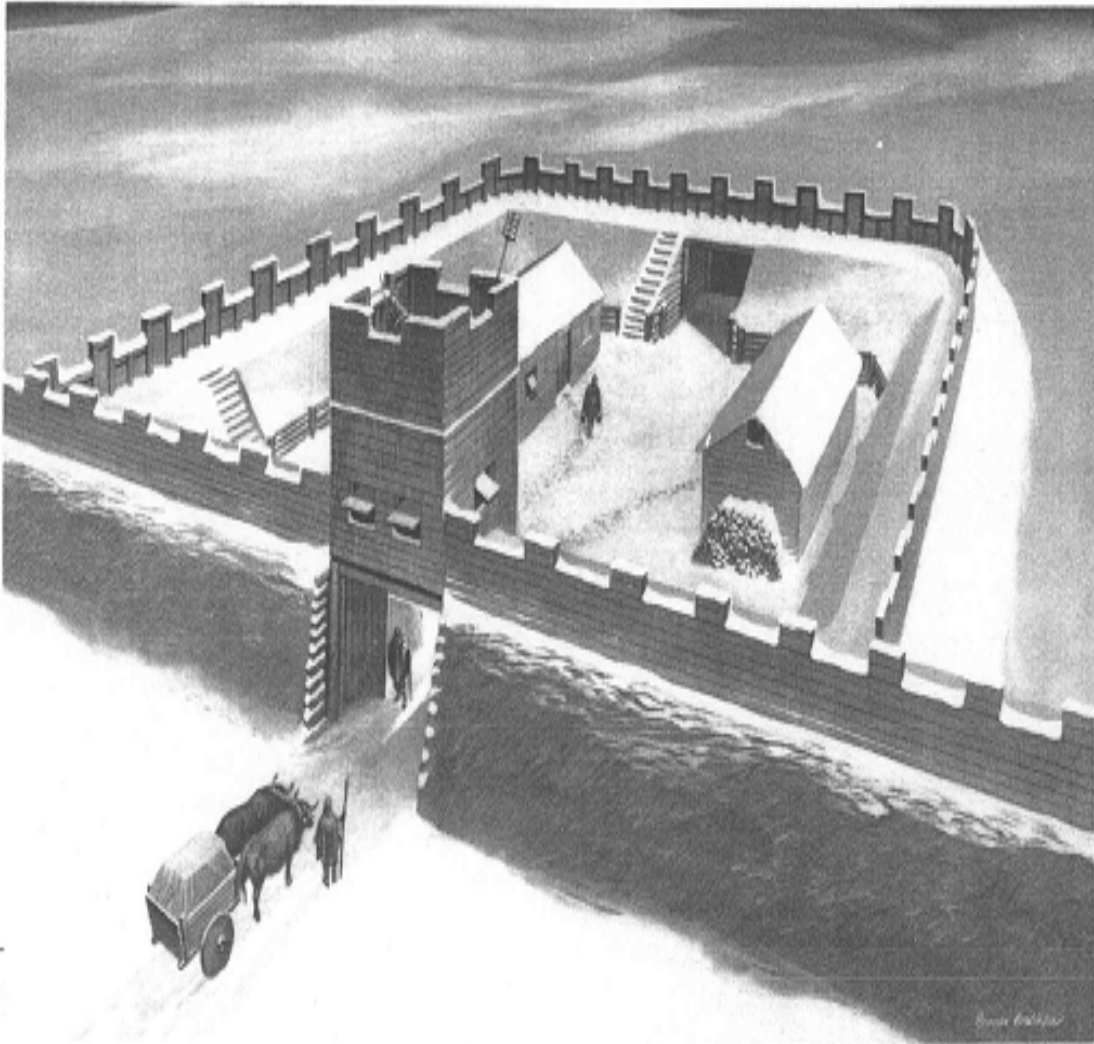
large force or illicit materials could not be smuggled into the province or out of the province. The number of mile castles along the wall ensured there was not a single point outside the garrison's reach and helped with the fluidity of the garrison. These mile castles were a symbol of the permanence and control of the province as well as an actual barrier.



**Figure 33: Stone Mile castle in east**<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 155.



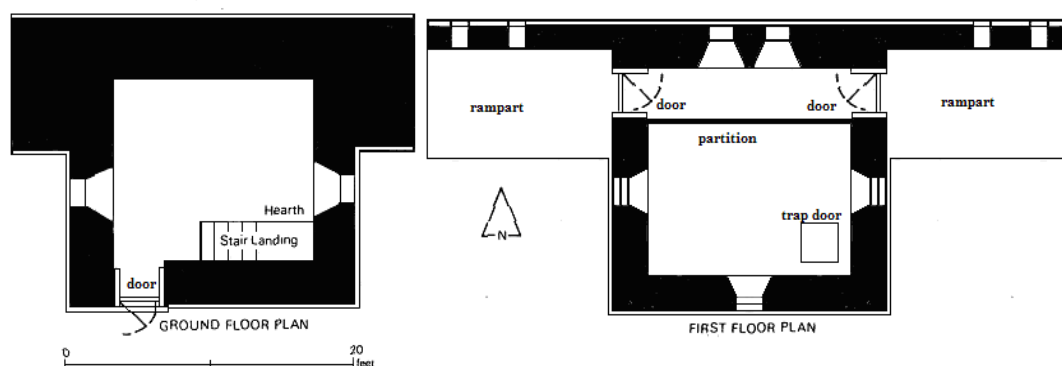
**Figure 34: Turf Mile castle in west<sup>47</sup>**

Two turrets were placed between each mile castle; these turrets were not built for the purpose of defense, but for the purpose of surveillance. The turret was a two-story fort with the second level connecting directly to the ramparts of the wall. On the first level was a hearth for cooking and a water tank in the ground. There was no chimney, so windows placed on the west and east sides of the turret allowed ventilation. Access to the second level of the turret and the rampart was by a ladder through a trapdoor in the

<sup>47</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 247.

southeast corner of the turret. The turret's floor on the second level was fifteen feet high and level with the ramparts of the wall. The second floor had windows on the south, west, and east sides. The roof of the turret needed to be gabled, as a flat roof was not suited for the wet cold climate of the northern province.<sup>48</sup> Since the turret was small without enough room for a large number of soldiers, equipment, or storage space for a large amount of food, the forts must have provided food and other supplies.

The turrets again allowed the Roman legions to observe those on both sides of the wall, thus controlling the areas around the wall. The turrets kept people and goods from leaving or entering the province without the Romans' knowledge. Soldiers in the mile castles and larger forts could be reassigned if an enemy force was seen, reminding the Britons there was nothing the Romans could not see. These turrets assisted in the symbolic and actual permanence of the Romans and asserted to the provincials that they would never again be part of the tribes beyond the wall.



**Figure 35: Turret floor plan**<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, pp. 74-74; Fields, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 16; Collingwood, *Archaeology*, p. 79-80; Breeze, *Northern Frontiers*, pp. 78-83.

<sup>49</sup> Embleton, *Hadrian's Wall*, p. 75.



This combination of forts and wall defenses allowed for the control of the northern border of the province, giving protection but not impeding trade with the barbarians in the north. Hadrian had created safety for Roman traders, the Romanized Britons, and those Britons who were being Romanized below the wall. The wall was used and rebuilt by future emperors as the northern border of the province of *Britannia*. It is a prime example of Hadrian's stratagem to fortify and solidify the borders of the empire. The wall was a symbol of the limits of the empire; to the Romans it stated unequivocally that Rome was no longer expanding. The wall allowed the province below to be safe and secure, while allowing the province to Romanize. It combined the military, trading, administrative, and religious forms of Romanization and thereby was extremely successful in quelling the province and instilling the feeling in the Britons below the wall that they were Romans as well as provincials.

#### CHAPTER IV: HADRIAN'S WALL AND ROMANIZATION

Hadrian wanted a peaceful province, where the citizens of Rome and the provincials of the Empire who did not yet have citizenship could live and be prosperous. The presence of the wall increased the speed of the Romanization of the province, and *Britannia* became peaceful for nearly 200 years. *Britannia* became one of the more Romanized provinces in the empire in a short period. Britain was not a simple matter of grafting a superior culture onto an inferior one. It required the gradual substitution of culture and synthesis and assimilation of the Britons into the Roman world.

This interaction showed the Britons the benefits available to them through Romanization and the Roman culture. Clean water, good food, new clothes, bathhouses, and wine all were things the Britons would be able to access around the forts, whether or not they chose to embrace them. In the south, trade with other Roman provinces helped Romanize the Britons. This trade gave the southern portion of the province access to the goods of the province and set up trade for goods that could be sold in other parts of the empire. The use of religion affected both the north and south in that the military brought religions to the province in addition to the Roman synthesis of Roman and Britannic gods.

Hadrian's Wall increased the Romanization of all the Britons by making the northern parts of the province secure from barbarian tribes, which allowed commercial activity to spread more to the north, with continued gradual Romanization of the southern

and middle portions of the province. The acceptance of Roman goods and culture indicated the level of Romanization in the province, as it showed they had assimilated into the Roman world. Classical art and architecture in the south showed the acceptance of Roman culture. The Britons began to become accustomed to having certain Roman goods, which brought about the acceptance of Roman practices. Soon the Britons began to create Roman trade goods that made *Britannia* a prosperous place. The wall created a secure environment that allowed this prosperity. *Britannia* became a province free of raids and attack from the north, showing Rome's commitment to the province's security.

The tribes in the north did not have kings, but were confederations of tribes that would come together against a common enemy yet quarreled among themselves at other times. This made it nearly impossible to graft a Roman version of government on top of the existing tribal government. In the north of the province, it was necessary to use the military to perform administrative duties. However, in the south of *Britannia*, the Romans used the more centralized tribal governments, as they chose one tribe that the other tribes placed their loyalty behind. The Romans used that tribal order, and placed a Roman Legate above them. The tribes retained control over the local governmental decisions, and carried out the Roman decisions sent down from the provincial seat. In the north, the military had to participate in the control of that portion of the province.<sup>1</sup> The wall brought the military presence to the north and placed the administrative responsibility upon its shoulders. The military heard civil trials and in many ways acted much like the administrative *civitates* in the south. The military carried out the punishments of those found guilty. An example of this is found in a letter in Vindolanda,

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<sup>1</sup> Alan K Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and its people*. (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 52-53; Millett, *Roman Britain*, pp. 31-32; R. Birley, *Civilians*, pp. 35-37.

where an unknown shopkeeper wrote to the emperor, or some other provincial official above the military officers, that he felt he was unfairly punished:

...he beat (?) me all the more...goods...or pour them down the drain (?). As befits an honest man (?) I implore your majesty not to allow me, an innocent man, to have been beaten with rods and, my lord, inasmuch as (?) I was unable to complain to the prefect because he was detained by ill health I have complained in vain (?) to the *beneficiarius* and the rest (?) of the centurions of (?) his unit. I accordingly implore your mercifulness not to allow me, a man from overseas and an innocent one, about whose good faith you might inquire, to have been bloodied by rods as if I had committed some crime.<sup>2</sup>

It is unlikely this letter reached who it was intended for, since it was found in a rubbish pile at Vindolanda with other correspondence, possibly confiscated by the prefect or another military individual.<sup>3</sup> The letter is dated to the period of 120s, so it is possible it was an appeal to Hadrian himself, who probably stayed at Vindolanda during the survey of the path of the wall.<sup>4</sup> This control by the military is an example of Hadrian's plan to Romanize the north through the use of the military and its role in the administrative functions of the province and its pacification.

The Romanization in the south of the province happened differently than in the north. In the south, the several stages of Romanization were more gradual in taking hold than the Romanization in the north. In the south, the Romanization took place primarily via administration, trade, and religious assimilation. In the north, the military provided the administration and the daily interaction with the Britons, as well as introducing them

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<sup>2</sup> eo magis me ca[st]igavit dum] /d(ice)[r]em mercem[nihil uale-]/r[e] / eul effunder[em. p] r[o] / [ho]mine probo tuam maies[t]atem imploro ne patiaris me [i]nnocentem uirgis cas[t]igatum esse et domine prou[.]. prae[fe]cto non potui queri quia ua[let]undini detenebatur ques[tu]s sum beneficiario [/frustra ce]nturionibu[s / certis] numeri eius[ / tu]am misericord[ia]m imploro ne patiaris me hominem transmarinum et innocentem de cuius f[ide] inquiras uirgis cruent[at]u[m] esse ac si aliquid sceler[is] commississem uacat Bowen, *Life and Letters* p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Bowen, *Life and Letters*, p. 53; Anthony Birley, *Garrison Life at Vindolanda* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 2002), pp. 116-117.

<sup>4</sup>A. Birley, *Garrison Life*, p. 117.

to the Roman goods and services upon which they began to rely. In addition to this, the military brought different religions and religious practices to the north.

The Romanization by the military came from the interaction of the soldiers and the Britons as well as from building forts and the goods that could be found in the *vicus*. The Roman soldiers brought luxuries such as the baths, drinking houses, food shops, and brothels to the Britons around the military forts. The Britons, upon whom the garrisons relied on for food and other local goods, needed to learn Latin and use Roman coinage to conduct business. In addition, the soldiers often had a family, with the wife<sup>5</sup> from *Britannia*.<sup>6</sup> This kind of Romanization took place regardless of the de-centralized tribal structure of the north. It was a less gradual Romanization, as the wife was expected to cook Roman meals, act in a Roman manner, and speak Latin to conduct the business of the household. The economic model, which had been progressing in the south of *Britannia* since the time of Claudius and the initial invasion, required years or even generations to take root. The Britons had greater access to Roman goods than prior to the wall because of the permanence of the Roman presence and the desire for many of the luxuries that the soldiers had become used to having.

The northern Romanization did not have the lasting civilian building programs since constructions such as Roman villas were not often built beyond the middle of the province.<sup>7</sup> This lack of civilian building programs in the northern parts of the province was because of the climate, which was much colder than the middle and southern

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<sup>5</sup> The right for soldiers to marry while in service was not allowed until the reign of Septimius Severus, although even in the time of Hadrian, Roman soldiers would have a woman, with whom they would have children and often marry after their enlistment was at an end.

<sup>6</sup> A. Birley, *People of Roman Britain*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.), pp. 113-114; R. Birley, *Civilians*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ken Dark, Petra Dark, *The Landscape of Roman Britain* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1997), pp. 11-12, 60-69; Millett, *Romanization of Britain*, pp. 99-102.

portions of the province, and the topography in the north was much more rugged than that of the rest of the province.

Romanization could not be successful if limited to the military and economic factors. For it to work other means of Romanization had to be utilized. One of these was the use of Roman administration. With the wall erected, the administration of the province could focus more on the internal running of the province. Use of Roman law and the rights of citizens could be alluring to provincials, since citizens were given special rights, such as, the right to defend themselves in court. The provincial administration wanted the province to be more self-sufficient, as well as to accept themselves as Romans.

The Romanized province became peaceful, and the old rebellious ways of the Britons were destroyed. Even after the garrisons had been pulled from *Britannia*, in AD 407 the people and the government was still Roman. The construction of the wall stabilized the province, making trade and the production of goods within the province more appealing to the Romans who wished to live and trade there. With the construction

of the wall, trade could spread further into the north of the province.<sup>8</sup> Goods then became available for those Britons living near the fort.



**Figure 36: Amphora. These containers would carry olive oil, fish sauce, wine, and *liquamen* for cooking Roman dishes, and were used for storage as well.<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 140-141; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 184-186; Scullard, *Roman Britain*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level3/themes/life\\_roman\\_britain/food\\_drink\\_types.asp](http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level3/themes/life_roman_britain/food_drink_types.asp)

Many of the Britons came to live within the *vicus*, some since their daughters had married Roman soldiers, others to set up shops and to make the goods the soldiers needed. The *vicus*, because of the remoteness of the wall forts, served as the place for the Roman soldiers to relax and shop. The garrisons were paid in Roman coins, which they spent in the *vicus*. Commerce and the prospect of money attracted those living around the forts to profit by selling goods to the soldiers. Those who did not move to the *vicus* and continued farming still had contact with the soldiers, since they sold their crops in the *vicus* to support the fort and the *vicus*. Similarly the Britons, who now had money, purchased Roman goods from Roman merchants. The Britons used the bathhouses and the brothels and wore the clothes of the Romans, all of which were available in the *vicus*.<sup>10</sup> This contact with the Romans spread the Roman culture and worked as a Romanizing factor in the north. Romanization through the use of trade was different than that of the south. The Britons were drawn by the wealth of the forts, bought Roman goods, and adopted customs; however, it was the military and the desire for Roman wealth that drove the Romanization of the Britons in the north, unlike in the south where it was the desire for status and the goods themselves that drove the Romanization.

Latin was the language of the Romans and in order to conduct business, the Britons had to learn Latin. As literacy was widespread in the Roman Empire, it played an important part in the Romanization of the Britons and assisted in their assimilation into the Roman culture. Those engaged in business with the Romans not only had to speak Latin, but write it as well.<sup>11</sup> The use of Latin did not replace the indigenous languages,

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<sup>10</sup> R. Birley, *Civilians*, pp. 23, 50-53; Breeze, *Northern Frontier*, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Haverfield, *Romanization*, pp. 29-32; Bowman, *Life and Letters*, pp. 88-92.

but it was an inroad into the Romanization of the province. Latin gave the Britons and Romans a common language with which to communicate. It made the daily interactions between the Romans and Britons possible without the need for translators and reduced the misunderstandings that translation could cause.

Women who lived in the province often married and had children with the soldiers. These women were not officially married to the men till after their service in the military had been completed, however they were in all other regards the wife of the soldier and required to fulfill the duties of a wife. The women would be instructed in what was required of them by their husbands or by other women who were married to Romans. The wife educated the children, teaching Latin and introducing them to the Roman ways of life. The boys prepared for service in the Roman military, learning what was needed to become a soldier.<sup>12</sup> This intermarriage, while not planned by Hadrian, resulted from the stationing of the garrisons along the wall far from any Roman towns. Once released from the military the soldier, now a Roman citizen if he had not been one before, was allowed to marry his wife officially and could retire to a *colonia* if he wished.

Once retired to the *coloniae*, the Roman veterans often used the trade they had been taught in the military as a livelihood. They began to practice their trade in order to make money, and thereby became part of the Romanization of the province through their interactions with the Britons and selling Roman goods to them. These veterans often settled in the *colonia* in *Britannia* and provided the indigenous people and the military with Roman products. Roman art and culture were incorporated into the provincial culture. Those who had been trained as architects built in the military style, and thus crossed over into the civilian sphere. The use of military architecture in civilian building



was common since the Roman legion contained architects for military construction, and they could find extra work on civilian projects. Romans had shops in which they sold furnishings, tools, metal work, and various other items that made the life of the Britons easier.<sup>13</sup> Instead of simply farming, the Britons subsidized their income with working in the quarries, shipping, pottery, and other seasonal industrial occupations. In some circumstances, the industry replaced the farming completely since production took place year round.<sup>14</sup> Military and Roman colonies interacted with the Britons on a daily basis through commerce and services, creating an intermingling of cultures.



**Figure 37: (Left) Bowsaw, wood cutting tool from 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD; (Right) Wholhammer, a stone cutting tool 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Century<sup>15</sup>**

<sup>12</sup> R. Birley, *Civilians*, p. 51; Priestley, *Britain*, pp. 78-79; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 509-512.

<sup>13</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Eagles*, pp. 129-130, 135-138; Millett, *Roman Britain*, p. 75; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>14</sup> Dark, *Landscape*, pp. 123-124, 126, 129-131; Wachter, *Roman Britain*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level2/search/search\\_results\\_risws\\_level3.asp?text\\_search=tools](http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level2/search/search_results_risws_level3.asp?text_search=tools)

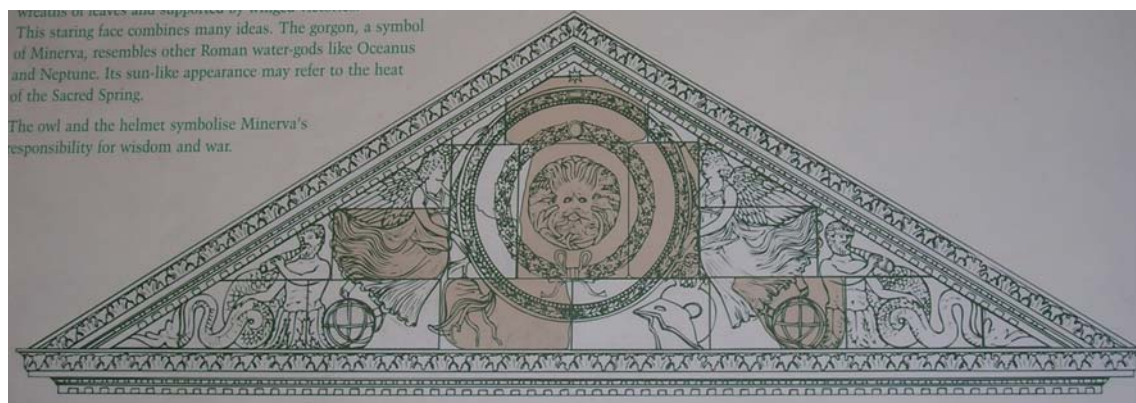


**Figure 38: These pots were attempts by the Britons to simulate the quality of (left) the Samian wares. The imitations of (middle) 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> century lacked the quality; however, the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century imitations (right) were of better quality and replaced the Samian ware trade in *Britannia*.<sup>16</sup>**

Another tactic that promoted Romanization of the province was the use of religion. The troops from other provinces throughout the Roman Empire that garrisoned the wall brought their gods with them to this frontier. The mixing of the cultures can be seen in the Celtic art that was integrated into Roman art. Combining the gods of the Romans and the Britons, and often keeping the sites of the Britons, made the change simple. At the Temple of Sulis-Minerva, the Romans took the sacred spring of Sulis and built a temple and bath complex for the worship of these gods. The temple was located near the easiest crossing point of the Avon River. The location allowed pilgrims unhampered access to the temple and the curative baths. As the number of visitors grew, a town grew up around the periphery of the temple complex. Here the combination of a Roman goddess and a Celtic god can be seen. At the temple of *Aquae Sulis-Minerva*, the god/goddess resided within the sacred spring, where the Britons and Romans could make

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level3/themes/life\\_roman\\_britain/food\\_drink\\_consumption.asp](http://www.romansinsussex.co.uk/level3/themes/life_roman_britain/food_drink_consumption.asp)

requests.<sup>17</sup> The overlay of Roman belief on the Celtic sites gave a point of commonality for the Britons and Romans.



**Figure 39: Temple pediment of the Temple of Sulis Minerva. This pediment shows the combination of the Roman goddess, Minerva, and Sulis. The carving in the middle of the pediment shows a gorgon's head, a symbol of Minerva, but carved in such a manner that the Celtic water god (Sulis) is displayed.<sup>18</sup>**

This allowed the Romans to attempt to replace the Celtic traditions with Roman ones, without completely discounting the provincial gods. The Britons were introduced to Roman forms of worship, combining them with British forms. In addition to this, the Romans synthesized the gods by combining them in the form of art. The idea of beautiful

<sup>17</sup> Cunliffe, *Roman Bath*, pp. 63-64; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 515-516; Liversidge, *Britain*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>18</sup> Pictures taken by author.

art in the Roman world was not the same as the definition of beautiful art to the Britons. However, the Britons began to integrate the classical aspects of Roman art into their own.<sup>19</sup> Though Hadrian did not initiate the synthesizing of the Roman religion and the religions of the provinces, it helped further the Romanization of *Britannia*, and acted as an inroad for the assimilation of their cultural beliefs into those of the Romans.

The uses of administrative and religious functions are connected directly with the commerce of the province as Romanizing influences. The *vicus* in the north and the towns in the south all conducted commerce. Britons bought many of these goods and took them to use as Roman symbols of power and status. The expensive imported goods were in limited supply, and they could be only purchased by those who could afford them. The desire for these goods increased as the wares started to be preferred by Britons.

This appetite for Roman goods created a situation where the artisans of *Britannia* could begin to replicate some of the Roman imports, such as pots, furniture, bronze works, and other utensils. While they were not of the quality of some of the Roman goods coming into the province, they served the purpose and filled the need that had been created. The wall allowed the increased production of goods, because the creation of a safe and more controlled province ensured that goods would not be destroyed or captured by the unruly tribes of the north. The garrisoning of the wall made trade with the Britons in the north more accessible to Roman and British traders alike. Not all the goods produced by the Romans could be produced in *Britannia*. Foodstuffs such as wine, olive oil, and other Mediterranean goods could not be grown in the colder climate of *Britannia*.

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<sup>19</sup> Millett, *Roman Britain*, pp. 90-91, 94-97; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 668-672; Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, pp. 251-256.

As the Britons began to desire these things, they had to trade the goods they could make to get these imports. This was a motivator to emulate the Roman style in what the Britons produced, so goods could be sold to other provinces. With the increase in Roman goods, either from imports or from the Britons making Roman goods, the Romanization of the province increased. By the end of the reign of Antoninus Pious in 161, *Britannia* had become self-sufficient with some exceptions (those things that could not grow in the province or were not a natural resource there), and began to export their goods to other provinces.<sup>20</sup>

A majority of the population accepted the Roman way of life, and those who could afford it built villas throughout the province, even in rural areas. Villas were not simply built by those Romans moving into the province, but by Britons themselves. While the shape of the villa was not the standard form used by the Romans in *Italia*, they nevertheless used classical materials and architecture. They filled these villas with Roman furniture and lived as Romans.<sup>21</sup> Some historians argue that these villas were not actually Roman villas, but rather Romano British farmhouses because of their form and lack of hypocaust flooring.<sup>22</sup> But this is not necessarily the case. The environment was not the same in *Britannia* as in *Italia*, and the change in the shape could be an adjustment to allow for the variation in use and environment. The building of villas by the Britons is an example of the Romanization of the province. Though they were not always shaped as a Mediterranean villa, the purpose was quite clear. The use of Roman techniques to build

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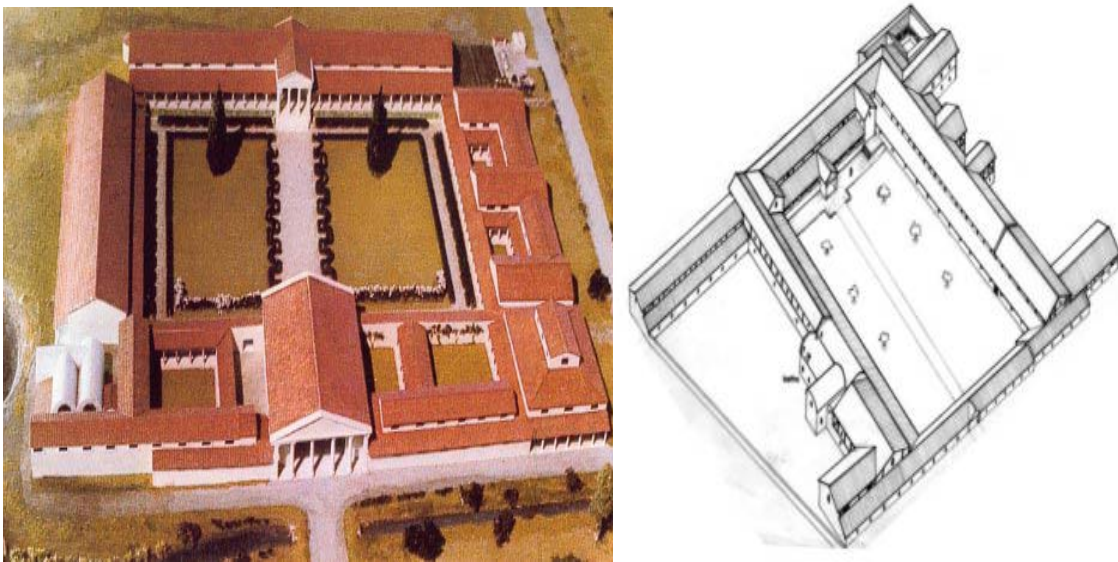
<sup>20</sup> Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, pp. 227- 229; Scullard, *Roman Britain*, pp. 138, 140; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 282-283.

<sup>21</sup> Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 596-611; Frere, *Britannia*, pp. 265-268; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 193-198; Fry, *Roman Britain*, pp. 129-130, 212-228; Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, pp. 209, 214-221.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Clayton, *A Companion to Roman Britain* (London: Dorset House Publishing, 1980), pp. 114-116.

a home was not based on any provincial floor plans, and used the Roman materials brought or made within the province.

Archaeological evidence shows that even after the Roman military had been withdrawn in AD 407 just a few years prior to the fall of the Western Empire, leaving the province to protect itself, Britons continued to live in the cities and villas, and continued to use the baths and other Roman buildings. They did not abandon their homes and return to the old way of life, although they did begin to lose the skills required to keep the Roman technology running, and began to repair their villas and other buildings with lower technology.



**Figure 40: Model of Fishbourne Villa<sup>23</sup>, and drawing of Bignor Villa.<sup>24</sup> Each villa was constructed differently according to the needs of the builder.**

Mosaic floors were fixed by placing a stone within the damaged floor. The Roman Britons continued to use the Roman cities and villas until the conquests of the Saxons.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.roman-britain.org/places/fishbourne.htm>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.romanbritain.freemove.co.uk/villa\\_files/image017.jpg](http://www.romanbritain.freemove.co.uk/villa_files/image017.jpg)

<sup>25</sup> Dark, *Landscape*, pp. 139-144; Cunliffe, *Roman Bath*, pp. 143-150; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 241-248.

After the completion of the wall, the Britons stopped rebelling to remove Roman rule from *Britannia* for the rest of its existence. They revolted on occasion, not to remove Roman rule, but to raise someone to the imperial throne. In the cases of Carausius, who was raised to emperor of *Britannia* in 287, and Allectus, who killed him and took his place in 293, the Britons rebelled against the Roman emperor, not the empire.<sup>26</sup> In 383, Magnus Maximus was raised to the position of emperor by the *Britannia* garrison and conquered Italy, Spain, and Gaul before being defeated.<sup>27</sup> The acceptance of the Roman world is exemplified in these rebellions when looking at the causes behind them. The Britons no longer wished to rid themselves of the Roman Empire, but rather wished for a different emperor placed on the throne. This is no different than any other Roman province, especially in times of turmoil within the empire.

The entire province of *Britannia* eventually gained Roman citizenship in 212 and looked to Rome in their times of need. When they were under attack during 408, the Britons appealed to Rome for assistance in repelling the barbarians. They were told to tend to their own defense as the western half of the empire was in turmoil.<sup>28</sup> The loss of the province took place in 410, around the same time that barbarians were ravaging the rest of the western empire. The removal of the last Roman troops took place in 407 under Constantine III, who had been elevated to emperor by the last garrisoned legion in *Britannia*. Once emperor, Constantine III took the remaining garrison of Roman soldiers from *Britannia* and crossed the channel, leaving the province completely unprotected.

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<sup>26</sup> Guy De la Bedoyere, *Defying Rome*, (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2003.)pp. 145-152; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 207-211; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 295-300.

<sup>27</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Defying Rome*, pp. 173-185; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 235-236; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 401-409.

<sup>28</sup> Todd, *Roman Britain*, p. 240; Salway, *Roman Britain*, p. 442; Potter, *Roman Britain*, p. 214.

With the troops withdrawn, those north of the wall poured over or through the wall, attacking the peaceful province unhindered.<sup>29</sup> *Britannia* was lost, but by that time the Britons seemed to have become Roman.

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<sup>29</sup> De la Bedoyere, *Defying Rome*, pp. 186-197; Todd, *Roman Britain*, pp. 237-239; Salway, *Roman Britain*, pp. 428-434.



## CONCLUSION

Hadrian was unlike any other emperor before him. He had been a general under Trajan during his eastern campaigns, had seen the instability of the provinces that had been conquered, and knew the empire could not continue unbridled expansion. After his ascension to the throne, the provinces recently conquered by Trajan began to rebel. It was at this time that *Britannia* rebelled as well, having been ignored during the reign of Trajan. Hadrian elected to take a different course than the Augustan ideals of his adoptive father. He relinquished the newly conquered provinces in the east, and began his strategy to change the military and Roman Empire from one of constant and offensive expansion to one of safety and security. With Hadrian's *limites*, the empire continued to prosper for another century. In *Britannia*, the wall was his set limit upon the empire. Hadrian's strategy was that there would be no expansions beyond the wall, or any other *limites* to the empire.

Throughout the empire, he built cities, theaters, bathhouses, aqueducts, and many other public works projects. The building projects he commissioned illustrated Hadrian's concern for the common people of the provinces. Building these projects brought stability to the provinces and increased their Romanization, converting the views of the provincials to the ideals of the Romans and creating a military both defensive and offensive. The building of the wall was an attempt to bring these strategies to *Britannia*. The wall is an example of Hadrian's desire for the whole of the empire. Hadrian wanted

a peaceful province where the provincials saw themselves as Romans. The wall was to serve several functions.

The wall in *Britannia* served as a barrier and a means of protecting the province from the barbarians beyond it. It set right certain problems that a static frontier created for the garrisoned troops. Since they were not fighting a war but guarding a line, they had become sedentary and undisciplined. Those garrisoned on the frontier of the province built the wall. The construction of the wall and the removal of luxuries caused the garrisons to become physically fit and more disciplined. The wall kept the province from rebelling as it had in the past by separating the problematic tribes in the north. Garrisoned with a large contingent of troops, the wall also acted as symbol of the permanence of the Roman occupation. It served as a customs border that controlled trade and the influx of people in and out of the province, and as a sign to the Roman world that the days of unbridled expansion were over.

Although Hadrian's stay in *Britannia* was short, his actions there shaped the province for hundreds of years. The plan of Hadrian's Wall may have changed during its construction, but its meaning did not. Hadrian understood the power of symbolism and used it to his advantage. The land beyond that wall was uncontrolled and barbarous. The wall symbolized the end of expansion and offensive wars. It symbolized to the Roman world and the Britons alike the limit of the empire. It was a permanent structure, built of stone and whitewashed so everyone could see this shining wall slicing the isle in two. To the Brigantes south of the wall, it was a symbol of Roman control and permanence. The idea that the Romans could be defeated and driven from the province was now unrealistic. The wall created an environment of Romanization that tried to make the

Britons accept that the Romans were not leaving, that they were committed to the province and to making it as Roman as possible. It brought soldiers into contact with the Britons in the north, allowing the Britons to Romanize through access to commerce and commercial goods such as Roman food, tradecrafts, and tools.

To the Roman provincials in the north, the wall symbolized security and safety. Within the wall, the Romans lived safe from attack by raiding parties from the north. Other Romanization that the wall brought was the increase in trade within the province and production of Roman goods. With the incursions from the north halted, Roman traders could move more freely through the province, and the Britons began to create Roman goods for trade within the province and trade with other provinces. The Britons had access to Roman amenities that surrounded the forts, such as the baths, brothels, drink shops, and food shops.

Britons learned Latin so they could trade with the *vicus* and forts of the province. Latin as a mutual language allowed personal interactions between Romans and Britons, creating relationships between them. In some cases, Britons married Roman soldiers and had families with these soldiers. Their children were brought up in a Roman home, enjoying Roman goods and services, and worshipping in Roman ways. The Romans synthesized the religion of the province with the religion of the Romans, creating a way to integrate the provincial worship into the manners of the Romans. It was not limited to the Jovian pantheon, but included cults like the cult of Mithras and others.

The wall was a show of power, permanence, and definition. The Britons below the wall were Roman provincials. They were not barbarians, and they became a

productive part of the Roman Empire, creating Roman goods, living in Roman homes, using the Roman language, and worshipping Roman gods.

Even after the Roman garrisons had left, the Britons did not give up their Roman traits and still considered themselves part of the Roman Empire even as the western portion collapsed and Rome was sacked. This shows the effectiveness of Hadrian's strategy in building the wall and Romanizing the province.

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### **Map**

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