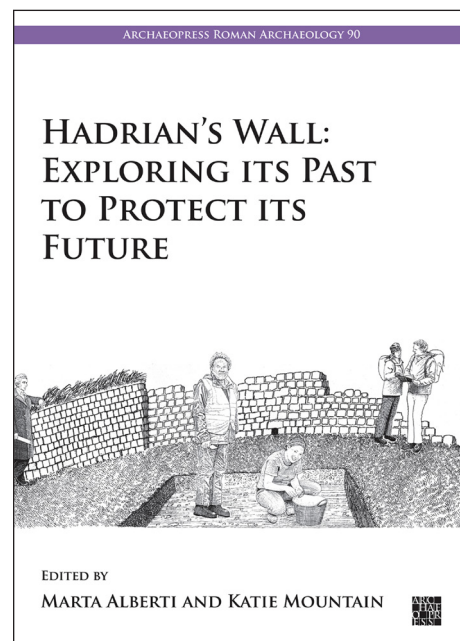


Book Review

Alberti, Marta and Katie Mountain (eds). 2022. *Hadrian's Wall: Exploring Its Past to Protect Its Future*. Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 90. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-80327-274-0 paperback £28; 978-1-80327-275-7 eBook Open Access.

Hadrian's Wall: Exploring Its Past to Protect Its Future is an edited volume to mark the 1900th anniversary of Hadrian's visit to the eponymous Wall. As it commemorates what could be seen as an inspection, it is perhaps appropriate that the focus of the volume is on management in the broadest sense of the word. There is a distinct emphasis on preservation, which is understood to be future facing and the 15 chapters represent a wide range of approaches to the issues involved. Beginning with scientific approaches to research and management and covering topics as diverse as tourism, economics and pedagogy, the volume represents a good cross section of stakeholders involved in the management of the Wall.

The volume will obviously be appealing for readers who want or need to understand how Hadrian's Wall is being managed — which should include both those who are interested in the many components of the wall and its place in the Frontiers of the Roman Empire UNESCO World Heritage Site, and those who are interested in Heritage Management, both in relation to the World Heritage Site programme, and more broadly for how the management of heritage fits into other land management, community management and regional planning issues.



The collection also shows the breadth and complexity of management issues associated with the multifaceted phenomenon of Hadrian's Wall. As Breeze's introductory chapter lays out, even defining what Hadrian's Wall is can be tricky. More than a 'site', more than a wall, more than a World Heritage Site — it includes museums, collections and communities spread across the north of England. The volume is therefore multi-scalar, multi-temporal and multi-vocal. It is particularly welcome to see the mix of academic, professional and community inputs.

As a pre-eminent feature of the Roman heritage of Britain, north-west Europe and indeed the world, the community of those invested in the management of Hadrian's Wall is active and passionate. It is likely that the prime audience for this volume will already be aware of most of the work reported on here, and many of the chapters such as McGlade, Pickles and Richards' chapter on sustainable tourism 'Exploring Hadrian's Wall' (Chapter 11) offer updates on initiatives which have been ongoing for decades. Even the chapters focussing on progress in scientific methods such as Wilmott's discussion of remote sensing (Chapter 3) is summarizing work from 'recent decades'.

Despite the subtitle's promise to explore the Wall's past to protect its future, the volume is very firmly focused on the present. Even Henderson's chapter titled 'The next 1900 years' (Chapter 13) primarily discusses how the current management plan differs from the plan from a decade ago. This vision of the future as a continuing present with some opportunities and threats is common in archaeological heritage management (Högberg et al. 2017), and is more obvious in this case because of the methodological and experiential nature of the subject matter. For instance, while Birley and O'Meara's chapter on managing and monitoring archaeological deposits refers to the role of climate change in the hydrological regime of the Wall (Chapter 2), there is no attempt to model what challenges could arise in even 100 years, never mind 1,900 years. Authors are reporting on what they have done and how they have contributed. The future is envisioned as more of the same.

This is not in itself a significant criticism since it is very common in this kind of work. Nonetheless, if 'future generations' are not the real beneficiaries of the work described, then more understanding is needed of what present day needs are being met. In their chapter on re-enactment and the business associated with it (Chapter 12), Brown and Robson refer to the Wall as a 'lifeline' that both brings in money through tourism, and encourages those tourists to feel a connection to the past through care. Whether it be through research, learning or practical management, caring for Hadrian's Wall is what produces the benefits that it can offer. The significance of the place, however, is largely presented as self-evident and there are many references to the reader already having an interest. The question of the significance of Hadrian's

Wall is a continuing challenge for the World Heritage Site, especially in its expanded form discussed in Jones' chapter on the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Chapter 14). Hadrian's Wall was inscribed as a World Heritage Site before the requirement of a statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and at this point the site is so large and complex it feels impossible to state the OUV succinctly. This poses further challenges for management as each of the many aspects of significance jostle for resources and planning.

Because Hadrian's Wall spans so many different boundaries, it remains an excellent example of both the challenges and innovation in heritage management practice. So, this volume deserves an audience beyond those interested specifically in the subject matter. The contributions are clearly written and illustrated and report on work that is well conceived and well executed. The book itself is well produced and clearly laid out. A small practical matter has made referencing the different chapters difficult in this review. While the chapters are numbered in the table of contents, they are not numbered in the chapter headings. Since the titles of the chapters are quite long it can be difficult to find specific chapters from their shortened headers. But this is a very small matter which should not detract from the overall publication of which the editors should be rightly proud.

Sarah May
ButCH Consulting
sarah.may@BureauButch.co.uk

Reference

Högberg, Anders, Cornelius Holtorf, Sarah May and Gustav Wollentz. 2017. No future in archaeological heritage management? *World Archaeology* 49(5): 639–647. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2017.1406398>

