

Echoes across the past: chorography and topography in antiquarian engagements with place

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Antiquarian practice in Europe, from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, was focused on the history and geography of regional landscapes, and on the structure and management of collections of archaeological artifacts. By the eighteenth century, northern European antiquaries began to take in the Mediterranean landscapes of Graeco-Roman antiquity, seeking the tangible historical roots of the emerging nation states of modernity. Antiquarianism is the main foundation of contemporary global engagements with land and senses of place and local identity, whether in tourism and heritage, contemporary arts, environmental and cultural resource management, or the academic fields of archaeology and historical geography. Antiquarian sensibilities were at the heart of the aesthetics of the sublime and picturesque; antiquarian fieldwork and practice were also paradigms of experimental scientific method.

We take up here three components of the antiquarian tradition: chorography, the documentation of region; itinerary, engagement with land through journey and movement; and topography, connecting history with landscape. Compared and contrasted will be short symptomatic extracts from antiquarians of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: John Wallis, Vicar of Simonburn in Northumberland; Walter Scott, literary antiquarian and historical novelist; William Gell, Roman topographer in Naples; William Martin Leake, military spy and classical scholar. Concepts of performance, of instrumentality, of mediation as corporeal engagement lever open these works and reveal crucial tensions of property, belonging and ownership, anxieties about scientific and literary authenticity as well as social responsibility, an optimism about the

rewards of certain kinds of intense engagement and intervention in the land, a quest for coherent narrative set in the face of an entropic world of change and ruin.

Our broader argument is that our current disposition towards inter or transdisciplinary spaces needs to be set in such a genealogical understanding; connecting current experimental hybrid practices in the academy and culture industries with the predisciplinary world of early modernity is a profound enrichment, because it opens us up to all kinds of creative possibility in this charged field of the representation of region and community.

Pompeii, February 10 1832. Walter Scott, poet, literary antiquarian, magistrate, collector, inventor of the historical novel, was visiting the excavations in the company of William Gell, antiquarian, topographer, and representative of the Society of Dilettanti of London. Gell was in pain with his gout and could hardly walk. Scott was dying and had to be pushed around the ruins in a wheelchair.

Gell's diary (reported by Lockhart, Scott's biographer (1850, page 741) contains the following entry:

"... I was sometimes enabled to call his attention to such objects as were the most worthy of remark. To these observations, however, he seemed generally nearly insensible, viewing the whole and not the parts, with the eye, not of an antiquary, but a poet, and exclaiming frequently—"The City of the Dead," without any other remark."

Pompeii was, of course, newly excavated: the spectacular, tangible and evocative remains of catastrophe, trauma, and aftermath. Scott talked more about Gell's dog which reminded him of his own back at Abbotsford on the Tweed in Scotland.

Why was it simply the city of the dead to Scott? Rather than pursue any interest in Roman antiquities, Scott, again according to Lockhart and also his own diary, feverishly collected local manuscripts and started writing a novel about bandits. How is this apparent clash of antiquarian perspectives to be understood?

We will argue that the difference between Gell and Scott, the cause of Scott's remark, is a fundamental conundrum at the heart of eighteenth century antiquarian practice concerning performative relationships to the past and to land and location that revolve round the figure of the antiquarian, around voice and text, traditional practices and historical sources, questions of how to authentically represent the life of the past. The conundrum is not solved (it remains with us today), but was sidestepped in the first half of the nineteenth century by standardizing and institutionalizing a particular way of engaging with landscape. The contrast may be summarized as one between the topological discourse of chorography, and topography in the modern disciplines of archaeology and geography. It is about the way you walk the land, hear the voices of the past, witness deeds done, and take home those experiences.

Let's start in the Scottish borders and aspects there of antiquarian study in the eighteenth century.

borders and ballads

In 1769 John Wallis published, by subscription, his two volume “Natural History and Antiquities of the County of Northumberland”. It was a somewhat archaic treatment of this county on the English side of the border with Scotland, very much in the style of the 17th century English chorographers such as Plot and Dugdale.

Volume One has chapters on the air, the earth, sand and stone, waters, birds, plants, animals, reptiles, fish, and the character of the people. The antiquities of the County were dealt with in the second volume via three itineraries, transecting the region. It is clear that these are not actual journeys that are being described; this is a convenient and very conventional trope, one that takes Wallis back through chorography to the Roman itineraries that are one of the earliest sources for his antiquarian scholarship. There are no maps, no illustrations. Considerable use is made of the list or catalogue. There is no strong narrative structure to this regional treatment, though stories and scenarios abound. The topic is the heterogeneity of inhabitation, the rich variety of life. Wallis’s purpose was again a traditional one of celebrating a region, a County, its wealth, features, and character. He very clearly addresses his audience. Of course, he knew precisely who they were. The list of subscribers that opens the first volume is a distinctive petty aristocratic “County” set of professionals, landowners, magistrates, ecclesiastics and academics; and due acknowledgment is given to his patron, the Duke of Northumberland. There was no anonymous reading public to be anticipated; the book trade in Britain had not yet taken off.

The voice of the author, this local Vicar of Simonburn parish, is present and gently authoritative, though not intrusive. We read of his encounters and particular observations and remarks, but these do not detract from the firmness of the substantive and empirical details that are the core of the work. Wallis emphasizes that he worked from documentary evidence and not hearsay. He also mentions great thunderstorms and floods that he witnessed himself, certain regional characters he met. Here he is on polysyllabic echoes (Volume One, page 7-8):

“We have two of these, very curious and uncommon. One is under the bank on the north side of the river Coquet, opposite to a farm yard by Mr Clutterbuck’s summer house, at Warkworth. It will return seven notes from a German flute in a still evening. ... The other is at the same village ... It repeats the words *Arma virumque cano* (Virg.) very articulately, and six notes from the same instrument. The locus polysonicus seems to be the castle, from which it comes in such soft and pleasing harmony, as if the castle was enchanted, and it was the voice of a Syren.”

There is one conspicuous exception to this gentle authorial presence, other than the flattering dedication at the beginning. The chapter on earth and land opens with a strong exhortation for agricultural improvement, a castigation of indolent neglect of the land. Here Wallis is clearly very much a man of the eighteenth century with an enlightened attitude towards reasoned, rational treatment of the present as well as the past.

Only four years earlier in 1765 had Bishop Thomas Percy, chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland, published his “Reliques of Ancient English Poetry”. Based upon an old manuscript found in the kitchen of a colleague where it was being used to light fires, this was a work of antiquarian rescue, a compilation of ballads and poems, transcribed from their oral originals, purportedly medieval and earlier and particularly featuring the world of the Scottish borders, the bard or minstrel’s performances in the halls of clan chiefs. The authenticity of the collection and of many that followed over the next half century was doubted and debated, not least

because Percy had clearly edited, emended and restored many poems. Notoriously the debate culminated in the long controversy surrounding James Macpherson's discovery and transcription of the work of the ancient Gaelic Bard Ossian (published 1762 onwards). The argument was not so much against restoration as concerning the authenticity of the national tradition and character represented by the body of work, and the artistry and taste of the restorations; the topic was the role of the scholar in editing text, and, more crucially, the role of the scholar in representing local oral tradition and performance, the deep-rooted indigenous practices of a regional or national community, as evidenced in different kinds of sources. The arguments were about voice. (Mention must be made here of the persistent theme in Ossian of the voice of the bard echoing through the highlands.)

It was with a work in literary antiquarianism, a scholarly edition of the border ballads, the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border", that Walter Scott opened his spectacular publishing career in 1802-3. He went on to write a series of his own epic ballads that promoted him to the heights of the relatively new commercial book trade. These were accompanied by an immense diversity of writing, and were followed by Scott's seminal series of historical novels.

Here is the preface to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805):

"The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other faculties, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorizes the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance. For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is Three Nights and Three Days."

Here is William of Deloraine (1.21):

"A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,

As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;

Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,

Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;

By wily turns, by desperate bounds,

Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;

In Eske or Liddell, fords were none,

But he would ride them, one by one;

Alike to him was time or tide,

December's snow, or July's pride;

Alike to him was tide or time,

Moonless midnight, or matin prime;

Steady of heart, and stout of hand,

As ever drove prey from Cumberland;

Five times outlawed had he been,

By England's King, and Scotland's Queen."

There follows a precisely routed journey past towers and ancient remains, with the recounting of anecdotes and associations offering insights into local history, regional life and the passage of time, the temporal relationships embedded in the very landscape. Typical here is the identification of characters with land, location and deed.

There is no strong narrative: structurally Scott's poems do not cohere. With their topic of landscape and manners, terrain, tradition, scenario and narrative fragment, names and lists, genealogies and toponymies take precedence. These qualities connect Scott with that antiquarian genre of chorography we have just discussed. There are numerous digressions and anecdotes and what often seem to be pointless incidents. This is backed by a not entirely spurious scholarly apparatus of footnotes that amplify the ebullience of detail with reference to historical and antiquarian sources; he references his edition of the *Border Minstrelsy* in order to generate echoes from then to the now of this recounting, in the voice of the last bard, at the end of an era. Scott, as author, is there in the notes, but his presence is otherwise usually diverted into the voice of a narrator; many of his works appeared anonymously and feature multiple voices and what we would now term avatars. As indicated in the Preface to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, just quoted, Scott wishes to disperse into the collective voice of a rude and oral medium, the ballad. Because he suggests it is appropriate to the subject matter.

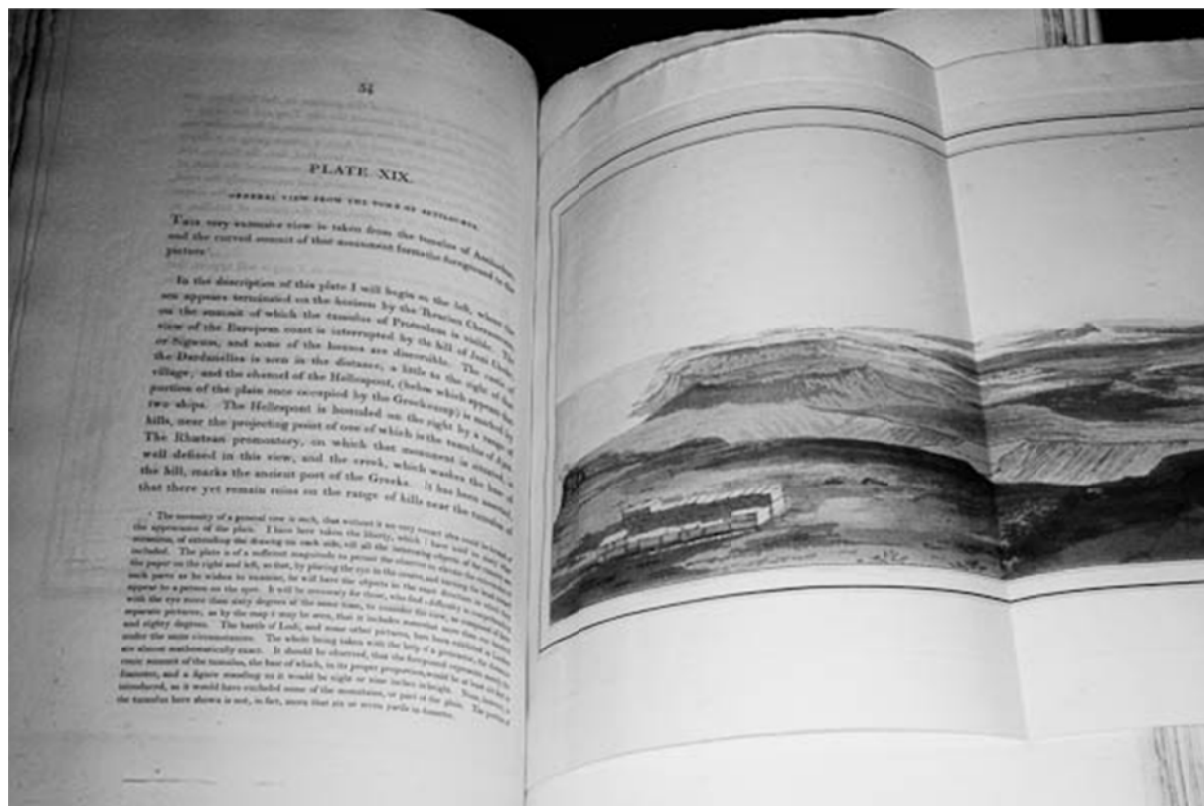
As with Wallis, this is not a landscape that can be easily mapped in a two-dimensional cartography. Wallis and Scott are not representing something that can be captured in a mimetic aesthetic, let alone a visual medium. In spite of all the specific and "authentic" details, neither Wallis nor Scott are illustrating anything in particular. Wallis spent twenty years traveling, interviewing, observing, collecting, noting, reasoning and arranging the wealth and character of a County for its well-to-do. Scott explicitly produces a performative remix that eschews

mimesis. Wallis and Scott's project is one of transcription, writing over the innumerable and ineffable particularities of place and event told and retold in conversations, recollections, poems performed.

Mediterranean itinerary and topography

Let us now return to the Mediterranean.

Gell's "Topography of Troy" (1804) is an early and key work in the search for the ancient site of Troy. It takes the form of annotated illustrations of the landscapes on the plain of Troy in north western Anatolia. The purpose of the work was to locate through scholarship the scene of that most famous siege of ancient epic and legend.

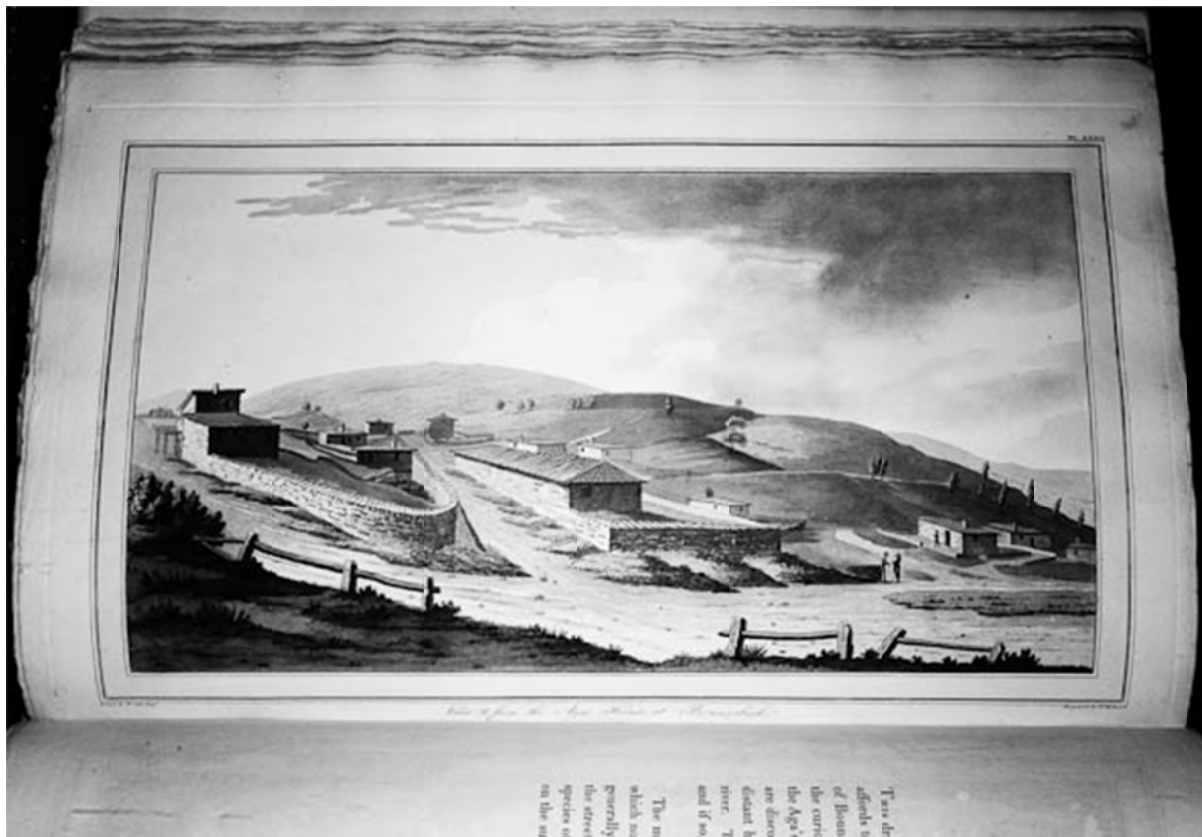


Gell: Topography of Troy: Plate 19

Plate 19 is a fold-out panoramic, 180° view from the "Tomb of Archilochus", an archaeological monument. Gell adds a note about the drawing.

"The necessity of a general view is such, that without it no very correct idea could be full of the appearance of the plain. I have here taken the liberty, which I have used on many other occasions, of extending the drawing on each side, till all the interesting objects of the country are included. The plate is of a sufficient magnitude to permit the observer to elevate the extremities of the paper on the right and left, so that, by placing the eye in the center, and turning the head towards such parts as he wishes to examine, he will have the objects in the exact direction in which they appear to a person on the spot. It will be necessary for those, who find a difficulty

in comprehending with the eye more than 60° at the same time, to consider this view, as composed of three separate pictures; as by the map it may be seen, that it includes somewhat more than 180° . The battle of Lodi, and some other pictures, have been exhibited in London under the same circumstances. The whole being taken with the help of a protractor, the distances are almost mathematically exact. It should be observed, that the foreground represents merely the conic summit of the tumulus, the base of which, in its proper proportion, would be at least 6 feet in diameter, and a figure standing on it would be eight or 9 inches in height. None, however, is introduced, as it would exclude some of the mountains, or part of the plain ...”



Gell: Topography of Troy: Plate 32

Plate 32 is an illustration of the Hill of Bounarbashi, a candidate for the ancient acropolis of Troy. Gell comments:

“This drawing has nothing to recommend it except the assistance it affords to the general plan for the illustration of every part of the hill of Bounarbashi, no portion of which can be totally uninteresting to the curious. The view was taken from a window in the back part of the Aga’s house looking nearly south. The two tumuli in the Acropolis are discoverable at the summit of the highest hill. Beyond the most distant house on the left, the ground falls very quickly toward the river. The city appears to have entirely cover the rising ground, and if so, must have produced a noble effect.

The longhouses in the foreground are exact portraits of those which now exist at Bounarbashi, and will give an idea of such as are generally found throughout the country. I have been informed that the streets, if indeed

they are worthy of that name, are paved with a species of lava, but I am not able to speak from my own knowledge on the subject.”

Gell's concern is to cover the ground, as it were, to cover all angles (literally in the panoramas), such that the text and visuals, in the case of Gell's topographies of Troy and of Ithaca, take the reader on location, or, more precisely, bring the Mediterranean to the reader in England. Even if what is illustrated is relatively uninteresting: Gell is somewhat sneering; the streets are not really streets. The glorious past is what he is interested in, the noble effect of the ancient city on its acropolis, now only to be imagined. He mentions lava stone, but doesn't consider it necessary to check.

Gell clearly aimed to achieve optical consistency and accuracy. The angles in the panorama are measured by protractor and mathematically correct; you can read distances off from them. In his *Pompeiana* (two volumes 1817-18), a description of the excavations and finds, Gell notes (Volume 1, page xvi) that the illustrations were all produced with a camera lucida, a new optical device, patented by Wollaston in 1807, that enabled the user to split a view of a subject, such as an artifact or a building, through a prism, so that a drawing may be traced while still looking at the subject, superimposed onto the paper. It stands that accuracy, with respect to Gell, rests upon capturing what is seen as it is seen.

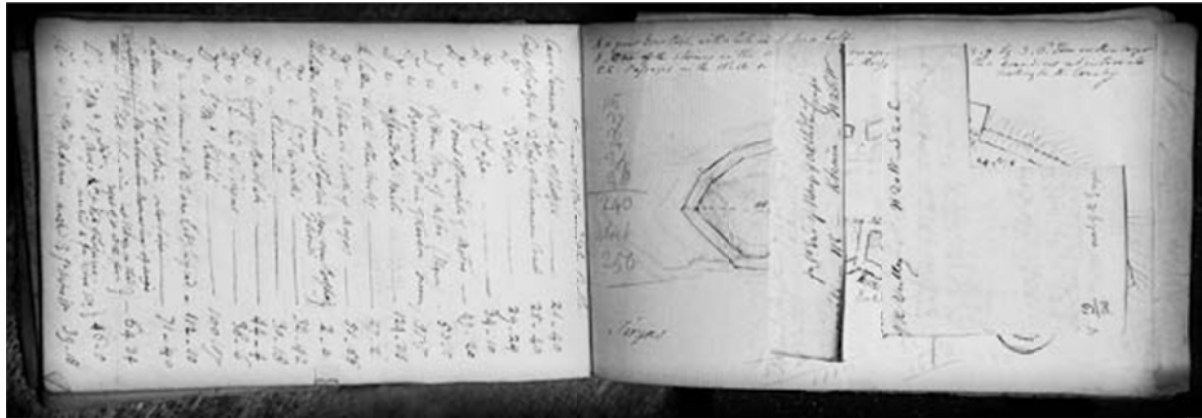
William Martin Leake was another pioneer in topographical documentation of ancient Greece (Wagstaff 2004). In 1806, under fears of French military designs upon the Grecian frontier of the Turkish Empire, Leake, a Captain in the Royal Artillery, was sent out to gain more accurate and credible geographical knowledge of Greece. While military concerns were the unequivocal reason for his travels, Leake used the opportunity to compile minutely detailed notes about ancient sites, particularly as they compared with ancient sources such as the guidebooks of Pausanias. His notebooks were subsequently compiled and further augmented with other details either at later points in his travels or back in London; pencil was carefully traced in pen and emendations were handwritten in the margins between lines of text. After retiring from the army in 1815, Leake devoted his time to antiquarian pursuits and turned the notebooks into travelogue, notably “*Travels in the Morea*” (1830), and “*Travels in Northern Greece*” (1835).

Leake maintained two sets of notebooks: larger for the daily narrative, and smaller as field logbooks. The larger notebooks (14.6 x 21 cm), many of which are covered in brown English leather, some of which are bound with hard card, contain the daily narratives of his journeys, sketch maps of sites and drawings of inscriptions seen along the way. They blend topography, politics, economics, archaeology, Classical literature, horticultural practices and so forth: a descriptive geography.

The smaller were “Hall & Co's much approved velvet paper memorandum books and metallic pencils.” Compact, 10.8 X 14.6 cm, Leake's logbooks easily fit in the palm of the hand. For the most part, notes begin at the top of each leaf and progress to the bottom of the next page.

Leake's logbooks No 12 and 13, for example, cover his journey from Argos to Anapli (Nauplion) in March 1806. Working from the front, Leake compiles lists of compass bearings and maps; from the rear, the logbooks contain drawings and sketches of inscriptions—this is as much an issue of how the logbook is held in the hand as it is one of organization; the weight of the pages are better distributed hanging to the bottom rather than over the top. The last entry, near the middle of notebook no 12 contains a map of Tiryns (reproduced as plate 3

in Travels in the Morea II, 1830). Two portions are carefully cut from center of the Tiryns map. These will later be found fixed with wax in logbook No 13.



Leake's notebook

Leake kept to-the-minute notes of his movement through the land. The time at which he left the house of Kyr Vlasópoulo on March 15th, 1806 is marked in his notebook as 1:51 pm. En route from Argos to Anapli, Leake notes passing the last houses in town at 2:03. Precisely 8 minutes later he crosses the river Bánitza (the ancient Inachus). After 20 minutes Leake reaches Delamanára. While passing through, he observes several remnants of antiquity — mostly squared blocks — in a ruined church. Adjacent to a well nearby lies a former column shaft turned cattle trough. Hereabouts, Leake sites a pyramidal monument to a battle between Proetus and Acrisius mentioned in Pausanias 1.2.25. Half an hour later, at 3:01, he reaches Paleo-Anapli, as the ruins of Tiryns are then known. Leake would spend exactly 1 hour and 46 minutes in the area of Tiryns before leaving for Anapli, where he enters the gate at 5:27.

Much like the navigational time logs of the period, travel times were often collated into lists. Gell had done this in a roadbook, his “Itinerary of the Morea” (1817). Leake took pocket watch, compass and theodolite on his journeys. The steady movement of cogs and gears translates into a measure – clockwork – and the repetitive act of temporally referencing one’s location regulates one’s activities on the ground. The measurement of time, if procedural, if ruthlessly consistent, becomes the measurement of physical distance – Leake’s metrology, it is worth noting, was established on the basis of how many paces a post horse took per minute and the length of the paces. And a system of measurement of any kind is a key element in standardization; Leake’s system went a long way towards the production of the first reliable map of the Peloponnesian interior of southern Greece. This map, “the result of more than fifteen hundred measurements with sextant and theodolite, made from every important geodæsic station, which circumstances would admit” (1830 I, vii), was published with Travels in the Morea in 1830. Such portable abstractions, further refined, would go a long way towards mediating subsequent performative engagements with the landscapes of the Greek Peloponnese. (Incidentally, from here, Classical topography would develop as much in a (dis)located and circulating field of visualized engagement between historical event in ancient text, daily narratives of calculated observation mediated by hashures on a flat projection, as with pocket watch, sextant, theodolite, boot and hoof on the ground.)

chorography and topography

All of the antiquarians we have discussed share a deep concern with the relationship between ancient sources and the present. All are concerned, in different ways, with the historical roots of modern Europe, whether that is an English county in an era of agricultural improvement and reasoned inquiry, an emergent nation state such as Scotland, or classical roots in Graeco-Roman antiquity (and Wallis has a great deal to say about Roman influences on regional character, as well as Roman remains). All deal in authenticity. Sometimes this lies in accurate and descriptive detail, a celebration of historical minutiae as well as an interest in contemporary idiosyncrasy. All are keenly aware of the role of philological source criticism, sharing a scholarly and critical concern with textual authenticity.

Gell and Leake are topographers in their interest in the intersection of the lay of the land and history. At the heart of their engagement with land is a consistent pace, measured by the gearing of a pocket watch, the gait of a mount, and optical consistency, measured by degrees of a protractor and the vanishing point of perspective. Both come together in the panorama and the map. The maps of Elizabethan England were central to the project of chorography (see the insightful study by Richard Helgerson (1992)), but Saxton's cartography, for example, was precisely connected to the gazeteers of chorography in its toponymy, its profusion of place names. Leake and Gell have the eye of calculation. Leake is the military spy, walking and riding the land with his copy of Pausanias in hand, the ancient Roman guide book, getting access to the fortress of Palamidhi at Nauplion, looking out over the Argolid, pacing out prehistoric Tiryns, birthplace of Herakles. Gell stands over his camera lucida with the eye of the connoisseur and traces the outlines of an antique work of art. Leake travels and notes for the military. Gell is still writing with a view to aristocratic patronage, a cultured elite facing the rise of an industrialized and commercialized Europe.

Wallis and Scott are not topographers in this sense. Their focus is topology, the folding of history and time through the pleats of land and place. There is no surface or spatial geometry in their engagement with riverbank, farmyard, tower, or other sundry ancient remains that can be navigated or mapped consistently. An itinerary for them is not a list of locations along a transect of a map or even a road, connected by the passing of hours and minutes. It is William of Deloraine riding out to Melrose; it is the character of Northumberland revealed in a mingling of the particulars of natural history, genealogy, ruins, antiquities, folklore, stone, water and earth.

A critical (and archaeological) topos or rhetorical structure in the work of all these antiquarians is "place/event" or "this happened here". Again there are decisive differences between the chorographers and topographers. For Wallis, Percy, and Scott, the intersection of place and event comes primarily through memory. It is what people have done, events witnessed, stories retold and descriptions made that lie at the heart of memory practices, at the heart of human inhabitation and community. It is precisely the connection between past and present that they foreground in their work; and voice, echoing from past lives, or the presence of the author/editor.

It may be that Bournarbashi, a village in Turkey, was where Achilles fell, and that we read of this in Homer, but Homer does not belong in that place now; his works have become a currency of transcendent cultural value. The connection between past and present for Gell and Leake is diagrammatic; its visualization is planimetric. Here at coordinate point x,y, triangulated upon topographical features a,b,c, died Achilles. And this knowledge, translated into flat panoramas of a vista as seen through camera lucida or projections whose optical fidelity is

to certain visual properties of the massive Cyclopean walls delimiting the citadel of Tiryns, can literally be transported to the learned societies (and military establishment) of London for practical future use. Reciting the ride of William of Deloraine won't help you navigate through the Scottish borders (cf Tim Ingold's (2000) elucidation of the differences between navigation and wayfinding).

politics and performance in writing on the land

Authenticity also raises questions about the author's relationship to their audience and community, as well as their object. A key difference between chorographers and topographers is representation. By representation we do not mean simply the matter of illustration, description or report, but political representation, witnessing, speaking for others. The matter of representation refers us to constituency and to the forum or assembly of representatives; our authors report to both. Though they may not acknowledge this, such relationships are at the core of their authorial agency. Without subscribers Wallis could never have produced his handsome volumes. Without a book-buying public Scott would not have been able to live as an author. Without his military appointment Leake would not have compiled his notebooks.

Scott represents the borders as an inhabitant, magistrate, popular writer, collector, landowner, member of the local yeomanry, literary antiquarian, witness. He is folded into the land as much as his characters. His presence is central to this representation, though he often works through an avatar or alias, through multiple voices. And no easy narrative encompasses his representing voice, because there is none in the heterogeneity of human inhabitation. But there are stories to be retold to new audiences in old constituencies. He locates himself as an heir, a guardian of an old oral and literary tradition - the ballad - and thus raises questions of memory and archive. Because of this explicit acknowledgement of the politics of representation, we suggest that a fulcrum in his writing is indeed historical agency - people's implication in historical change. We can see this in Wallis and Percy too. Wallis references the great characters of Northumberland marked on the land itself, and the opportunities presented to build with the riches of the land and its history. Percy is concerned with folk traditions, the mark of the people on national culture.

Scott in Pompeii? City of the dead? Where were the memories, the ghosts? Dry and dead relics? We suggest that Scott reacted to Gell's tour of Pompeii as he did and thought more of his dog back in his beloved home on the river Tweed because of the way antiquarian study and archaeological reconstruction can fail to realize they are all about connections between past and present, work performed upon remains, representation in a political sense of bearing witness to the life and times of located communities. These shifts towards the institutionalization and standardization of objects of discourse, the map, plan, description, regional account, and their reorientation upon a particular constituency were the core of the emerging field of professional archaeology, and, more importantly, the administrative apparatuses of the modern state in the nineteenth century.

Reviewing the genealogy of these engagements with land and community in the predisciplinary eighteenth century reveals, however, the subtlety of the political negotiation over the voice and authority of the author in relation to their chosen constituency, and the different ways of engaging history and the materiality of the past, many of which have been lost in modernist crystallization of disciplines and genres. Central to such a review is the concept of performance, with its wide valency. Engagements with place, land and the relics of the past: the work of writing and illustration, through walking, riding: the tools or props of measurement and documentation such as pencil, notebook, pocketwatch, compass, theodolite, camera lucida: the materialities of manuscript,

voice and song, boots, horse, wheelchair. Echoes across the past whether they be aural – notes of a flute, ballads reverberating among walls, roads, pastures – or visual – different practices of looking enacted with pocket watch, theodolite, camera lucida – speak to the subtle differences of these antiquarian practices. We hope to have shown in our short examples how new insights can be gained by locating text and author in such practices, as a complement to conventional commentary (see Sweet 2004 for a recent and orthodox treatment of antiquarianism as a contained intellectual field, and contrast Myrone and Peltz 1999). Science Studies (for example, Hackett, Amsterdamska, Lynch and Wajcman eds 2007), has moved on from abstract and formalist models of science and technology, focused, for example, upon the structure of scientific inference, or upon technology as applied science, to investigate the social and cultural aspects of scientific and technical practice. The notion of scientific practice as performative is one we embrace, particularly as it raises the question of the containment of science, the difference between scientific and other epistemic practices. As a corollary, we suggest that current moves towards transdisciplinary and collaborative cultural work have much to learn from those antiquarians who attempted to reconcile authentic witnessing with a vital and committed authorial voice of their own.

Bibliographic note

The notebooks of William Martin Leake are held by the Department of Classics, University of Cambridge, in their branch of Cambridge University Library.

The works of Scott, Wallis, Gell, Percy, Macpherson, and Leake, Lockhart too, are now readily available through Google books, often in several editions, as are those of their contemporaries. Rather than cite these in a conventional bibliography, we invite the reader to explore the works directly through the WWW. Easy access to these works, previously accessible in only a few special collections, opens up the possibility of new kinds of transdisciplinary research, simply through the facilitation of fast detailed search and comparison.

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