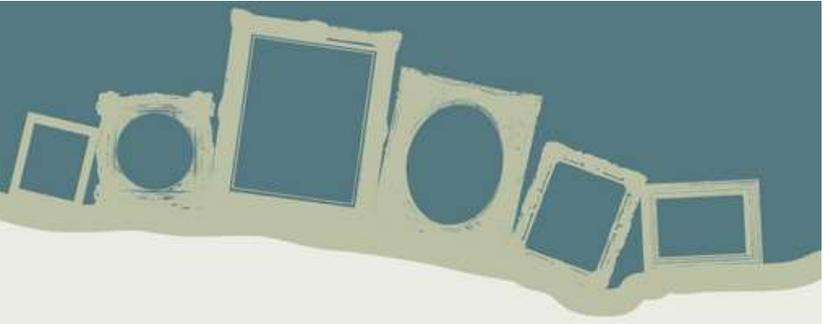


# Wall Face



**Antiquarian Image Card #4: William Camden by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger**

Oil on panel, 1609, NPG 528

Linked to Senhouse Roman Museum (Cumbria) and Vindolanda (Northumberland)

William Camden (2 May 1551 – 9 November 1623)

Camden was an English antiquarian, historian, topographer and officer of arms. He wrote *Britannia*, the first detailed historical and topographical survey of Great Britain and Ireland. Before Camden died he set up an endowment for a lectureship in history at Oxford University, and became the King of Arms. Camden's enduring legacy is that he established a benchmark for excellence in research that inspired successive antiquarians leading to a revival in the flourishing study of Hadrian's Wall today.

## Key achievements

- Wrote *Britannia*, the first detailed county-by-county survey of Great Britain and Ireland, describing the landscape, geography, antiquities, and history as Camden saw it.
- He used his fieldwork observations to show how the remains of the past could be identified in the landscape, producing the first rational picture of Roman Britain
- He travelled throughout Great Britain to facilitate his research.

## Links to Hadrian's Wall

- Camden was visited Carlisle and other areas of Hadrian's Wall in 1599.
- The great Roman sites from Carvoran (near Greenhead) in the west until reaching Corbridge in the east were not covered by him as this area was deemed unsafe for travellers due to the upset and mayhem caused by the Border Reivers.
- If Camden needed any reminder of the lawless nature of the area as he travelled the supposedly safer Tyne valley route he no doubt passed the blackened remains of burnt houses, the result of a raid by the Armstrongs of Liddesdale, at the small town of Haltwhistle.

## Character insights

- He said that the purpose of *Britannia* was "to restore antiquity to Britaine, and Britaine to its antiquity."
- His motto *Pondero, non numero* translates as "by weight, not by tale", meaning not to judge by face value.



William Camden by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger © National Portrait Gallery, London



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