

A Tale of Two Empires

The use of the Roman imperial image in the development of the British identity
and the British imperial discourse from 1876 to 1914

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Content

Introduction	3
Chapter I: <i>British identity and Rome before the late nineteenth century</i>	13
Chapter II: <i>The British Imperial Discourse and the Roman empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century</i>	24
Conclusion	34
Bibliography	38

Introduction

The memory of the Roman Empire has been influential in West-European societies from the Middle Ages onward. The reception and perception of this memory has played a significant role in the process of forming cultural identities of West-European countries.¹

During the nineteenth century, the British society rapidly changed because of industrialisation. Consequently, the traditions, values and rules that had been established through the centuries no longer applied. So by retracing the roots of the British people, the Victorians tried to adapt their identity to this new situation.² To legitimise this new modified version, the British scholars needed a respectable historic analogy. Through the centuries an the idea of the Roman empire as the largest empire of the Ancient period, which had stood its ground for centuries and had never been outpaced. This prestige of the Roman empire had been created by antiquarians through the centuries, and became known as the Roman Image.³ As a result, the Roman image became that analogy.⁴

The British empire had been extending from the seventeenth century onward. It was, however, not until the nineteenth century that the British empire became emphasised as representative for the British national identity.⁵ Because of the extent of this empire had reached in the nineteenth century, the Victorians and Edwardian scholars found the Roman image to be an example to their empire. Not only did the Romans had a comparable empire in size, they also came across the same obstacles. So it was to the advantage of the British to make the Romans part of their imperial heritage thereby receiving some of that same prestige. But this process was not without problems. The Roman empire and its expansionism had become connected with Imperialism. This term had first been introduced in the 1840s to describe the French emperor Napoleon III's foreign policies, which had become connected with despotism, militarism and jingoism.⁶ Therefore Rome's imperial policies inherited the same negativity. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Britain incorporated Imperialism into their foreign politics. Now the question arose how to do so without invoking

¹ Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*, Routledge (London and New York, 2000) 1.

² Eric Hobsbaum and Terrance Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge university Press (Cambridge, 1983) 1.

³ Eric Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian views of Rome and the nature of 'Defensive Imperialism'', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vol. 15, no. 2 (June, 2008)187-216 hither, 194.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ Reginald Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain before 1850', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 37, no. 3 (1976) 387-410 hither 388.

⁶ Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen* (2000) 20.

the undesirable image of militarism and foreign aggression.⁷ How could the British then use Rome as their example and ancestor without receiving the same negative imperial mark?

In order to understand the use of the Roman image by Victorian and Edwardian scholars, there are some keywords that need further explaining. First of all there is the term Imperialism which was and still is a very difficult term to define, even today there is no definition agreed upon.⁸ Jeremy Bentham (1748-1831) one of the most influential British philosophers of early nineteenth century and James Mill (1773-1836) a Scottish historian formed a very dominant view on colonialism. This kind of foreign politics was usually connected with economic gain, seeing as colonies served as a outlet for surplus capital and population. In the case of the British colonialism, the surplus of capital and people was equally distributed over the colonies. As a result Britain no longer had any additional wealth nor manpower, therefore received no industrial advantage and no economic gain.⁹

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), another influential British philosopher and political economist of the nineteenth century. In his work *Considerations on Representative Government* (1858), he considered Imperialism to be colonies under direct rule of ‘the motherland’. These colonies provided economic advantages because they provided markets for British industrial production. Therefore economic gain and Imperialism were inseparable. Although he was a anti-Imperialist, he did predict that once Britain’s position in the world would be threatened by foreign economic competition, Imperialism would be the only solution.¹⁰ When in the 1870s economic and political threats on the continent began to grow the Britain accepted Imperialism as a new foreign policy. The late Victorian scholars adapted it to their own acceptable version which they called British Imperialism. The late Victorian and Edwardian scholars portrayed this kind of empire politics as being directed to an universal humanity, freedom, justice and caring for the well-being of the subjects. This will be explained later on in this thesis.¹¹

Based on James Mills idea of colonialism, John Atkinson Hobson formed his definition of the two. Hobson, a British economist, was the most influential critic of Imperialism in the beginning of the twentieth century. Vladimir Lenin, for instance, has used a great deal of Hobson’s work to on which he founded his own ideology concerning

⁷ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 22.

⁸ Steven Kettell and Alex Sutton, ‘New Imperialism: Toward a Holistic Approach’, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 15 (2013) 243- 258, hither 243.

⁹ Jeremy Bentham, ‘Principles of International Law’, in John Bowring (ed), *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. II, William Tait (Edinburgh, 1838) 411; James Mill, *Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, Liberty of Press and Law of Nations*, J. Innes (London, 1828) 113.

¹⁰ John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, Liberal Arts Press (New York, 1865) 12.

¹¹ Eric Adler, ‘Late Victorian and Edwardian views’ (2008) 192.

capitalism.¹² In Hobson's book *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), he defined colonialism as: a group of people who migrated and settled on land with little to no population, that remained under the control of the 'motherland'. Imperialism, on the other hand, was a combination of nationalism and capitalism which had grown into a 'perversion'.¹³ According to this author it was an aggressive form of the state-government fixated on territorial and industrial enlargement. Furthermore, it pushed nations to participate in a cut-throat economic competition. Hobson saw Imperialism as the most powerful movement in Western politics of his time.¹⁴ He also stated that the idea of empire has its roots in ancient and medieval times. An empire consisted of a federation of states under a hegemony which covered for the most part the world which was then known. Similar to the state of the Roman empire during the *Pax Romana*.¹⁵

German historian Richard Koebner (1885-1958), was a great influence in the field of changing use and connotations of words involving important concepts to historians. His research concentrated on the changing meaning of the word 'empire' and 'Imperialism'.¹⁶ According to Koebner, there were several connotations connected to Imperialism which were influenced by Hobson ideology on the matter.. In his article *The concept of Economic Imperialism* (1949) he stated that Imperialism came in various forms, economic political, and cultural. Economic Imperialism, to him, was the most dominant of the three. Koebner explains it as follows: The men who represented the capital in the west-European nations had gained the control over the foreign and colonial policy of their governments. Capitalism had pursued them to bring weaker people under their rule and exploiting them.¹⁷ His concept of Imperialism is therefore a capitalist fuelled enterprise.

More recent views on Imperialism are not very different. Edward Said (1935-2003), was a literary theorist and founder of the critical theory field of post-colonialism.¹⁸ In his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1996), he does not incorporate the economic aspect in his definition of Imperialism. Said saw this policy as a system of dominance and subordination organised with an imperial centre an periphery.¹⁹

¹² Kettell and Sutton, 'New Imperialism', *International Studies Review* (2013) 244.

¹³ J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism; A Study*, James Nisbeth & Co (London, 1902) 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, V.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

¹⁶ Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word (1840-1960)*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1964)

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁸ The Critical Theory stresses the reflection and critique on society and culture by using knowledge of social sciences and humanities.

¹⁹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Publishers (1996) 9.

In their book *British Imperialism 1688-2000* (2002) J.A. Cain and A.G Hopkins gave an overview of the British imperial history from the seventeenth century onward. Moreover, they provided a very detailed explanation of Imperialism in the context of the British empire through the centuries. Cain and Hopkins stated that imperial expansion made a vital contribution to the process of economic development and nation building.²⁰ Although the economic aspect of British foreign policy was a very dominant one, the empire also exported settlers, political ideology and cultural values which were needed to create the imperial system. This provided coherence and imposed compliance within the empire.²¹ Cain and Hopkins also emphasized the importance of industrialisation which led to an economic fundament of the British imperialistic policies.²² Steven Kettle and Alex Sutton stated in their article *New Imperialism* (2013) that even in 2013 there is no clear definition of Imperialism. It was very important in shaping the world's economic and political systems. Also in their opinion Imperialism was fuelled by the search for economic enrichment.²³

In this thesis, the term Imperialism is focussed on the way in which the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British scholars perceived it. In their eyes it was an aggressive form of empire policy with a militaristic, jingoistic and despotic nature. When in 1870's it becomes part of the British Imperial policies, they tried to adapt Imperialism in such a way that it would not harm the image of the British identity.

The second keyword is identity. During the nineteenth century nations began to highlight the importance of a national identity, Britain was no exception. One of the most influential historians of the twentieth century in the field of forming national identities is Eric Hobsbawm. In the book *Invention of Tradition* (1983), which he co-edited with Terrance Ranger, Hobsbawm described the process of inventing traditions. Traditions are a very important aspect of constructing a national identity. According to Hobsbawm, invented traditions are a set of practices which are usually subjected to rules and/or rituals of symbolic nature.²⁴ Seeking to include certain values of behaviour by means of repetition. By repeating these values, a continuity with the past was created. In context of establishing the identity of a nation, a continuity with a suitable historical past was a vital part. ²⁵ Hobsbawm stated that

²⁰ P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism 1688-2000*, Pearson Educated Limited (Edinburgh 1993 [Repr. 2002])

²¹ Ibid, 4 and 5.

²² Ibid, 8.

²³ Kettell and Sutton, 'New Imperialism', *International Studies Review* (2013) 243.

²⁴ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Traditions* (1983) 1.

²⁵ Ibid, 1-2.

identity, however, is seen as something natural and primal. Therefore it could be something which has always been there and was not 'invented' in the nineteenth century.²⁶

Another very influential historian who also studied the development of national identity is Benedict Anderson (1936-). Yet he focussed on the idea of imagined community. His work contributes to the definition of both the development process of Britain's national identity during the nineteenth century, and were exactly the Roman image comes into play. In his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) he states that nation, nationality and nationalism are difficult concepts to determine.²⁷ Anderson states that a nation is a imagined political community, because members cannot know all fellow members of their nation. But in their minds they do feel connected to one another because they are all part of the same community.²⁸ Although nationalism bears a negative connotation, Anderson emphasises that although nationalism is for the most part based on imagining and creating. Ernest Gellner (1925-1995), was social anthropologist and famous for his attack on *Ordinary Language Philosophy*²⁹. In his work *Nations and Nationalism* (1985), Gellner explained that nationalism was first and foremost a political principle in which the national and political elements should be in accordance.³⁰ He also stated that nationalism assimilated invention with the means to fabricate and to falsify. Anderson does not agree with Gellner's depiction of nationalism and accuses him of being anxious to show that nationalism is masquerading under false pretences.³¹ Projecting this process of creating identity on Britain it seems that the British portrayed themselves in the manner in which they wanted to be depicted. This, nonetheless, did not mean this portrayal was based upon complete fiction, since there had to be a grain of truth to base their identity upon.

Khrisan Kumar (1942-), American sociologist and historian, specifically focusses political and social developments of societies. In his book *The making of English National Identity* (2003), Kumar showed the process of development of the British identity during the nineteenth century and the way in which Victorian and Edwardian scholars saw national identity.³² In his book Kumar shows how Imperialism was a very dominant part of the English identity in the nineteenth century. The British found it impolitic to carry out nationalistic

²⁶ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Traditions*, 3

²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso (London, 1983) 3.

²⁸ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 6.

²⁹ This school of Philosophy states that traditional philosophical problems stem from philosopher's who have forgotten the meaning of / or misuse words.

³⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press (1983) 1.

³¹ *Ibid*, 6.

³² Krishin Kumar, *The making of English national identity*, Cambridge university press (Cambridge, 2003) X.

behaviour and therewith aggressively stress the greatness of Britain. So for the most part of the nineteenth century there was virtually no expression of 'nationalism'.³³ Instead of emphasising the characteristics of Britain, the British did take pride in what they had achieved, their masterpiece the British empire. The empire slowly became representative of what it meant to be part of the British society. The Roman empire had somewhat operated the same. Being a Roman citizen, an integral part of the empire had been the highest achievable goal because of the rights and prestige that came with it. Because of this similarity between the Roman and British empire, Kumar states that this was the basis of a continuity between the two.

National identity seems to be a very difficult concept to grasp, just as Imperialism is. But it is clear that national identity, which came to its full potential in the nineteenth century, consists of truth and fiction. It is constructed based upon an image that the people in question want to carry out to the outside world. This image contains characteristics and strongpoints of the people's own choosing, but partly based upon information of their past. This, is crucial to understanding the Victorians and Edwardians in their use of Roman history. To support and legitimise their own identity, the British empire and therefore British Imperialism.³⁴ In this thesis, the British and the British identity refers to the English and the way in which they characterised themselves, their culture. Seeing as they were the dominant people on the British isles, all others Scots, Irish and Welsh had to adapt to their version of identity. Furthermore, the nineteenth century scholars all refer to themselves as British whilst most of them are English. Therefore, they make no real distinction between English and British. Also, the British identity strongly connected with the empire.

This thesis focuses on the way in which Britain used the Roman image in their Imperial discourse during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The main focus will be on the British scholarly world, because the interest of the British middle and lower classes in general was more centred around the Orient than Classical Rome. They were more interested in an alien culture than a dead past.³⁵ An important historian who had a profound influence on Roman studies from the 1850s onward was Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903). His work *History of Rome* (1874) influenced and shaped the image of Rome in the Victorian scholarly world. Mommsen portrayed the Romans as noble and peaceful of mind. Their

³³ Kumar, *The making of English national identity*, IX.

³⁴ Ibid, X.

³⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 23.

Imperialism was, according to him, a defensive reaction to the peoples neighbouring the borders of the Roman territory. Conquering and expanding was a preventive measure so hostiles would not be a threat to the Roman empire. With this theory Mommsen created a new concept, which was called ‘Defensive Imperialism’.³⁶

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Mommsen’s work was being questioned, especially his methodology and conclusions. Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-1892), Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford accused Mommsen of using references, citations and discussions of controversial points, and having the tendency of making statements.³⁷ Nonetheless, this did not lessen the extent to which Mommsen’s work had influence on the study of the Roman Empire in England. Both him and his work were an inspiration to Henry Pelham as well as Francis Haverfield. These two authors who were very important in understanding the Roman heritage in the context of the Victoriana and Edwardian society.³⁸

Henry Pelham (1846-1907), Camden professor of Ancient History at Oxford university from 1889 till his death in 1907. In his study *The Outline of Roman History* (1894), he was the first to incorporate the history of Britain as a Roman province with the help of archaeological evidence.³⁹ His successor, Francis Haverfield (1860-1919) who became Camden professor of Ancient History from 1907 till his death in 1919, continued with Pelham’s work on the Roman province of Britain. In his work, *The Romanization of Britain* (1909), he describes the history of the ancient Britons⁴⁰ under Roman rule from the first century till the fifth century C.E., using archaeological evidence as a basis. Haverfield was not only the first to look at the local history under Roman rule. But he was the first to truly stress the importance of archaeology when studying ancient history. Moreover, Haverfield shows the opinion of a large part of the Victorian and Edwardian scholars towards Roman Imperialism in his study. Therefore, his work is an important contribution to this thesis.⁴¹

Seeing as to why the Victorians looked at Imperial Rome in search of an example, Catherine Edwards gives several clear explanations in her book *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture 1789-1945* (1999). First of all, it was the high esteem in which Rome was held by the west-European countries for centuries, mirroring Rome in its golden

³⁶ Paul Freeman, ‘Mommsen through Haverfield: the origin of Romanisation studies in late 19th-c. Britain’, in D.J. Mattingly (ed.), *Dialogues in Roman Imperialism*, International Roman Archaeology Conference (Rhode Island, 1997) 33.

³⁷ Ibid, 33.

³⁸ Ibid, 27.

³⁹ Freeman, ‘Mommsen through Haverfield ’ (1997), 37.

⁴⁰ Inhabitants of Britannia during first to fifth century B.C.E, most of them are part of the Celtic tribe.

⁴¹ Freeman, *Mommsen to Haverfield*, 38.

days was a sign of the sophistication of a society. Furthermore, the flexibility of Rome's image, caused by the many historical layers, made it appealing to work with since it could be shaped and used to one's advantage. Edwards also shows that making Rome Britain's example had much to do with what was convenient to the Victorian cause. In the first half of the nineteenth century, imperial Rome was almost seen as an abomination in comparison to the previous centuries as a Republic. But as soon as Queen Victoria was crowned 'Empress of India' in 1876, the imperial element became very appealing and useful.⁴²

Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology (2000) a study by Richard Hingley. This British historian explored in his work the relationship between the Victorian and Edwardian view on ancient Rome and British Imperialism. He looked at the way in which the Roman image is fitted into the British imperial discourse. He also stressed the importance of archaeology and the way in which it gave the Edwardians a better understanding of Roman Britain and Roman history in general. The contribution of archaeology is very important in the process of understanding Roman history, but will not be further explored in this study. Seeing as this thesis will focus more on the development of British identity and the use of Roman history.

Another work of Hingley, *Images of Rome: Perceptions of Ancient Rome in Europe and the United States in the Modern Age* (2001), gives an account of the process as to why societies in the nineteenth century used a popular part of history and made it their own. In his study, he focusses on the Victorians and Edwardians in relation to their use of Roman history.⁴³ Hingley also stressed the flexibility of the Roman image and they appeal that came with it. He explained that archaeology provided stories about origin monuments and artefacts which helped develop the national identity. The stories also provided a connexion with the imagined ethnic past and a sense of place. The latter was of vital importance to self-definition, seeing as this tied the ethnic identity to archaeological evidence. Hingley stated that during the nineteenth century, the idea of Eurocentric perspective on the ancient cultures became a vital part of Imperialism. It can be argued that Western civilisation had been partly developed through appropriation of these ancient cultures. These statements pave the way to an important part of this study, which is the development of a self-consciousness using an ancient past.⁴⁴

⁴² Catherine Edwards (ed.), *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture 1789-1945*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1999) 2-12.

⁴³ Richard Hingley (ed.), *Images of Rome: Perceptions of Ancient Rome in Europe and the United States in the Modern Age*, Cushing-Malloy (Michigan, 2001) 7.

⁴⁴ Hingley, *Images of Rome* (2001) 7-19. Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen* 2-5.

Edmund Richardson, a British historian active at the university of Durham, presented a more recent view on the Victorians and their perception on Rome. In his book *Classical Victorians: Scholars, Scoundrels and Generals in pursuit of Antiquity* (2013), he describes the way in which the Victorians dealt with the Roman heritage mainly from a cultural point of view. According to him, the Victorians had a fascination with the dead, and the use they had for the living. The idea of hope and memory seemed to invoke the Classical world, probably being the work of the Romantic spirit of the era in which the past was glorified in an ever changing industrial society.⁴⁵ He hereby focussed more on the cultural aspect of Roman history rather than the political, but therefore not less important and an interesting path to follow. Antiquity had had a dominant and steadfast image, and it's legitimacy was acknowledge throughout Europe and throughout the ages. Therefore, a dominant historical example such as the Roman empire was essential to review the British self-image.⁴⁶

This thesis focusses on the way in which Victorians and Edwardians perceived and interpreted history themselves. Reception, therefore, is also an important aspect of this study. In their book, *A Companion to Classical Reception* (2008), Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray give a very clear and detailed explanation of Reception of the Classics. They stated that there are different interpretations of the same event through the centuries. Each reception is in its own way part of a wider process, and interacts with a succession of context.⁴⁷ This succession meant that, cultures build upon an earlier created contexts of the same subject, and add their own interpretation on which the next generation could build their ideas. This goes not only for Classical heritage, but also for non-classical.⁴⁸

Classical reception research is a fairly new concept in the Anglophone scholarship, Hardwick and Stray state. The eventual mainstreaming of Classical reception has raised some crucial questions, and caused intense debates about the theoretical frameworks and working methods of reception studies.⁴⁹ Studying Antiquity or the perception of Antiquity through the ages is a difficult process. Not only are there multiple ways in which the Classical heritage can be studied, all of these methods have a problematic side. They can endanger the conclusions that are made.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Edmund Richardson, *Classical Victorians: Scholars, Scoundrels and Generals*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 2013) 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 2-3.

⁴⁷ Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (eds.), *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, Blackwell Publishing (Oxford, 2008) 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 3-4.

So far, several authors have been mentioned that are of importance to the subject of this thesis. Moreover, this introduction has shown the difficulties of studying Classical reception, the significant authors in the nineteenth-century study of Roman history, and the modern authors who explained aspects which are important to this thesis. The main focus will be on the way in which the late Victorians and Edwardians used the Roman image. Their perception of this image provided an analogy between the British and the Roman empire. The prestige that Rome had developed throughout the ages had made it very appealing. When in the late nineteenth century the Victorians were inclined to accept Imperialism as a new empire policy, the use of the Roman image changed. How did this effect the use of the Roman empire as an analogy?

Therefore, this research will centre around the following question:

In what way did the Victorian and Edwardian reception of the Roman image, contribute to the process of legitimising British Imperialism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century?

This thesis will be divided into two chapters. The first will explore the way in which the Roman image was used in combination with the changing British identity. What problems were encountered, and how they were solved. The second chapter will look at the use of the Roman image after Imperialism had become part of the politics of the British empire. The objective of this study is to see how the Victorians and Edwardians themselves looked at the history of the Roman empire. To discover in what way they interpreted and used the Roman past and to what extent they saw it in the context of its own time.

Chapter I

British identity and Rome before the late nineteenth century

During the nineteenth century it became important for Britain to re-establish their national identity by re-tracing its roots. A practice which had become popular among West-European nations.⁵¹ The rapid changes in everyday life resulting from the fast industrialising societies created a sense of identity loss. Suddenly the world as it had been known for centuries changed unrecognisably. In search of a new sense of stability, the Victorians tried to adapt their idea of what it meant to be British. To give this new vision authority, their society used images from the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations as an analogy. These cultures had been revived during the Renaissance and its influences were used on an intellectual level.⁵²

The memory of Greece and Rome had become a popular example to support the structuring of nations. By incorporating these ancient images as part of the British cultural framework⁵³, the Victorians tried to pass on the sophistication and prestige of these images on to their own society. By doing so they attempted to distinguish themselves from their continental neighbours, and give meaning to their adjustment of the British identity in the industrialised society.⁵⁴ Throughout the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, Hellenistic images were the most popular. These images were fused into aspects of British society such as political concepts, social activities, building styles and principles of education.⁵⁵ Together with the already existing English culture, this served as the foundation of an adjusted British cultural identity.⁵⁶ The Roman Image was also made use of, although not as much as the Hellenistic images. These images of ancient Rome were often important to politicians, administrators and the population in general.⁵⁷ This chapter, however, will focus mainly on the Roman image, because of the connection the British drew between the Roman and British empires. In this chapter the two problems presenting itself concerning the use of the Roman image will be explored. Furthermore, it will look at the way in which the Victorians dealt with these complications in order to keep using Rome as an example.

⁵¹ Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.

⁵² Francis Haverfield, *The Romanisation of Roman Britain*, Clarendon Press (Oxford, 1912) 5.

⁵³ Cultural framework is the structure within which the British culture is formed. This included rituals, values, ideology etc.

⁵⁴ Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, 2.

⁵⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 19.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

In the course of nineteenth century, Britain became more and more in need to adjust its identity to the rapid industrialising world. In the 1800s the Industrial revolution had swiftly changed the British society. This process had altered every-day life in such a profound manner, that the feeling of losing what it meant to be British seemed imminent.⁵⁸ Traditions, values and rules which had been established throughout the centuries no longer applied to this new industrial world, and therefore had to be changed. In comparison to other European countries, the British did not thought of themselves as being nationalists. Their identity consisted out of the ideology that the Victorians were constructors of Great-Britain, creators of the British empire and pioneers of the world's first industrial civilisation.⁵⁹ The Victorians saw themselves as developers of civilising projects which they considered to be of world historic importance. The task at hand was to carry out civilisation in area's which were, in Victorian eyes, underdeveloped.⁶⁰

To re-establish and adapt the British identity, the Victorian scholars needed an analogy from the past with a certain prestige, such as the Roman empire. One could argue that the Romantic movement had a significant influence on the way the Victorians looked at Roman history. Glorifying the past was quite common and could have caused the Roman image to have been romanticised and, which made it seem more appealing.⁶¹ An analogy focussed on the Roman image seemed appealing. It provided a stable cultural fundament because it had been a unchanged concept throughout the centuries. On this consistency the British could partly build the new version of their identity and legitimise it.⁶² Emphasising the rediscovered characteristics of its nation, the British scholars became conscious of its representative nature, which led to the creation of national identities. Giving affirmation by invention of tradition was an important aspect in the process of creating a national identity. According to historian Eric Hobsbawm, an invented tradition could appropriate a set of practices which included certain rules, values, and repetition of behaviour. This created continuity with a suitable historical past.⁶³

Roman historic images were suitable analogies to the new British identity. The positions of Britain and Rome in the world and in the context of their own time, had been very similar. The Roman empire had been the largest of the ancient world, maintained for hundreds of years and had been never outpaced. The British empire was largest one in history and the

⁵⁸ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 24.

⁵⁹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*, (2003) IX.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, X.

⁶¹ Edmund Richardson, *Classical Victorians* (2013) 1.

⁶² Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 26.

⁶³ Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* , 1.

first who exceeded the Romans. In the course of the nineteenth century, the British empire occupied a large part of the world, India being its biggest colony falling under direct British rule from 1858 onward. Never being outmatched themselves, Britain claimed their place as heirs to the legacy of Rome.⁶⁴ So in light of this parallelism, the British scientific community provided a connection between the Roman image and the identity of Victorians.⁶⁵

Throughout the centuries Antiquarians had created the awe and prestige surrounding the Ancient Roman image.⁶⁶ So when the Victorian scholars used Rome as an analogy, they automatically passed this prestige on to their own empire. The history of the Roman empire consisted out of two periods, the Republic and Imperial Rome. The Victorian scholars considered the Republic to be the most representative of the British government. Looking at the government systems one could argue that the image of imperial Rome was actually more suited, seeing as the head of state was Queen Victoria, not the House of Lords. The history of Imperial Rome was linked to the nineteenth century connotation of Imperialism. To preserve the good name of the empire, Republican Rome became the analogy.⁶⁷ The term Imperialism was first used in the 1840s, associated with the politics of Napoleon III of France. This was perceived as glorified, despotic, with a strong militarism and an aggressive overseas policy. This form of government was therefore seen as something the Victorians did not want to be associated with.⁶⁸

Besides looking at respected historic images in support of re-establishing the British identity, the Victorian scholars also studied the history of their own nation in search of the British origin. After all, they were rediscovering their culture which meant going back to the beginning. The Roman authors were the only ones providing the earliest description of the ancient peoples of Western Europe. This caused a number of controversies. First of all, the Roman accounts were all from a Roman point of view. Seeing as these authors were part of the hegemonic culture at that time, they perceived all non-Romans as inferior which included the peoples of Ancient Britain.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the ancient Britons⁷⁰ had been conquered by Rome in the first century B.C.E. and had thus lived under their rule for over four centuries. Therefore, when Victorians claimed kinship to the tribes of Ancient Britain and at the same

⁶⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World*, Penguin Books (London, 2002) 15.

⁶⁵ James Bryce, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India*, Oxford University Press (London & New York, 1914) 1-4.

⁶⁶ Eric Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian views', 194.

⁶⁷ The term Imperialism in association with Imperial Rome indicates the Victorian perception of that period, not that the actions of the Romans in relation to foreign policy could be marked as Imperialism.

⁶⁸ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 19.

⁷⁰ The Celtic tribes living in Ancient Britain from the Iron age through the Roman period.

time stated to be the successors of the Roman empire they created a paradox.⁷¹ On the other hand, the fact that Britain had been a Roman province provided the Victorians with a continuity between the Roman and British empires.⁷²

The Victorians looked at their own ancestral roots, more specifically the tribes of the Teutons and Anglo- Saxons. When the Romans left Britain, the invading Anglo-Saxons killed the Britons or drove them westwards.⁷³ These invaders never left and were, consequently, also incorporated in the British ancestral history. Although the British scholars wanted to explore and use their ancestral roots, they did not claim any kinship with the Ancient Britons although they were the oldest inhabitants the known sources described. The only use these Ancient Britons had was to criticise Rome for stripping the former of their freedom.⁷⁴

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), professor of modern history at Cambridge, had an influential point of view on the history of the Roman empire. He described the relations between Rome and the Teutons in several lectures which were considered to be of great value for understanding the Roman image.⁷⁵ British scholars, including Kingsley, saw the Teutons as a race consisting of all known ancient Germanic tribes, such as Goths and Anglo-Saxons. The Teutonic peoples were known for their love of freedom, incredible valour and a society structure which had elements of early democracy.⁷⁶ In light of tracing the origin of Britain, these scholars believed that these Teutons were the ancestors of the British population, which had inherited the characteristics for which this Germanic race was admired.

In *The Roman and the Teuton* (1864), Kingsley painted a pretty grim picture of the Imperial Roman society. Downgraded and rotten to the core because of their immoral behaviour and acting in interest of personal gain, the Romans had strayed far since the golden days of the Republic. The eventual fall of the Roman empire was caused by invading Teutons, ending the ‘immorality’ of the Roman empire.⁷⁷ The Teutons were, in Kingsley’s eyes, innocent and unspoiled by decadence in comparison to the Romans and their society was in a state of civilisation, which could be seen as similar to that of a child. Therefore, their barbarian behaviour was no more than a symptom of not yet having evolved into a state of

⁷¹ Charles Prestwood Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, Clarendon Press (Oxford, 1912) 1, 10, 11.

⁷² *Ibid*, 86.

⁷³ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 63.

⁷⁴ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol 1, Fred Du Fau & Company (1781 [repr. New York, 1906]) 1.

⁷⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 21.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

⁷⁷ Charles Kingsley, *The Roman and The Teuton*, MacMillan and Co. (London, 1864 [repr. 1889]) 14.

civilisation.⁷⁸ However, the Teutons did have definite laws, founded on abstract principles, which later on would form the foundation of the English constitution.

By linking the origin of the British people to that of the Teutons, Victorian scholars tried provide proof of the superiority of Britain. After all, these ancient peoples had shown to be more advanced than the Romans because they possessed elements of democracy and moral virtues. Kingsley has shown that the relations between Britain, Rome and the Teutons presented some difficulties. The barbarian characteristics of the Teutonic race made them somewhat inferior to the Romans. By using the analogy of the Roman empire and claiming kinship to Teutons at the same time, a paradox was created which damaged the glorification of Britain's past. Therefore, Kingsley tried to excuse the uncivilised Teutonic society by stating that they simply could not help it. Furthermore, he emphasised that in contrast to Roman society, the Teutons already had an early form of democracy and understood the importance of freedom, which made them superior to Rome.⁷⁹ There appeared to be a constant battle to build bridges between suitable parts of history in order to make them consistent and legitimise their connection with the British national identity.

By the 1840s the emphasis shifted from Teutons to Anglo-Saxons, who were considered to be a Teutonic tribe. English scholar and historian John Mitchell Kemble (1807-1857) gave a scientific base to the relations between the Anglo-Saxons and Teutons. This made his work important for the development of the Victorian view on their ancestral history.⁸⁰ He claimed the Anglo-Saxons and the Teutons shared common blood, despite the division of land and the destiny of the Germanic tribes.⁸¹ The mission of the Germanic peoples was to renovate and re-organise the western world. The Teutons recognized law and fulfilled the duties that went with it, and consequently were in a way civilised. Because they were incorporated into the Roman empire and therewith lost their freedom, the Teutonic development had come to a halt. Any progression the Teutons had made was forgotten long-time rule of Rome over Europe. Once the western Roman empire had ceased to exist, the Teutons could continue their development, which was strongly connected with the sense of independence and freedom.⁸²

The Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was the first to emphasise the success of the Saxon triumphs as a product of racial superiority. Therefore the ancestral link

⁷⁸ Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton* (1864), , 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 16.

⁸⁰ Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism', (1976) 403.

⁸¹ John M. Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the Commonwealth Till the Period of the Norman Conquest*, Vol I, Longmans, Brown, Green and Longmans (London, 1849) 5.

⁸² *Edinburgh Review* (jan. 1849) 152.

between the Victorians and Saxons supported the idea of superiority of the British identity.⁸³ He stressed the power of the Teutonic race, in which he saw a vigour which would bring about the transformation of the world. Carlyle placed the German, Norman and Saxon races all in the category of the Teutons, like Kingsley had done. This Teutonism recreated the image of Europe under the rule of Rome.⁸⁴ Kingsley's stated that the Anglo-Saxons were commonly known for their cruelty. The part of this Germanic tribe which had settled in Britain during the 'Great migration' between the second and fifth century C.E., seemed to have been the least cruel from the start.⁸⁵

It was from the 1850s onward that the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority took hold in the Victorian society. The idea of the British people being decedents of the Anglo-Saxons was, nonetheless, not something that had originated in the nineteenth century. This was actually established during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It coinciding with the beginning of the British empire, and was less racial based then the ideology taking hold mid-nineteenth century.⁸⁶ The Anglo-Saxon period of England was seen as a Golden age, during which there existed free institutions and the freedom to defend popular liberties. The view on the Anglo-Saxon history of Britain changed in the course of the nineteenth century. It became a legitimisation of the British hegemony in its imperial territory.⁸⁷

Historian Reginald Horsman (1931-), is one of the few scholars who studied the Victorian ideology of racial superiority of the Anglo-Saxons. Horsman explained why the British chose an Anglo-Saxon ancestry. This was caused by the impact of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. In the minds of the English Reformers, the Roman empire had been destroyed by the Germanic tribes. Seeing as the Anglo-Saxons were of Germanic origin, the Reformation started in Germany which attempting to destroy the Roman ecclesiastical empire, history repeated itself. Henry VIII used the same ideology when he founded the church of England in 1534, when he deliberately separated from Rome. Because of this act it was believed that England returned to a purer form of religious practice, one that had been used before the Norman conquest of 1066.⁸⁸

The interest for the Anglo-Saxons during the sixteenth and seventeenth century was at first merely for propaganda of the British empire and, for the most part, had a non-racial

⁸³ Robert Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, The Macmillan Company (London, 1841 [repr.] 1897) 19.

⁸⁴ Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism', 399; Charles Kingsley, *The Roman and The Teuton*, (1864) 13.

⁸⁵ Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton*, 16.

⁸⁶ Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism', 388.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 387.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 390

nature.⁸⁹ By in the nineteenth century, however, the link between Britain and the Anglo-Saxons became a matter of proving British racial superiority, thereby emphasising the national characteristics.⁹⁰ As mentioned above, the Victorians believed the Anglo-Saxons to be a freedom loving people, who had representative institutions and who enjoyed a primitive kind of democracy. These elements were considered by the Victorians as pillars of civilised society.⁹¹ By attributing these characteristics to the ancestors of the British, it proved that the Victorian society was more sophisticated in comparison to the other ancient peoples of Europe, including the Romans. This early freedom was supposedly crushed by the Norman conquest in the eleventh century. Because of the Magna Carta of 1215, some of this freedom was regained.⁹²

During the eighteenth century, the success of the British empire provided empirical proof of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Simultaneously, an interest in the primitive people of Europe arose, which became an important part of the Romantic movement and gave the racial spin to the concept of Anglo-Saxonism.⁹³ With this emphasis on race, the Anglo-Saxons had become the British ancestors who had a more advanced form of society than the ancient peoples of other Western-European countries. An early form of democracy, a consciousness of freedom etc., all elements which proved that the Victorians had a superior ancestry in contrast to the rest of Europe and therefore were superior themselves.⁹⁴

The second analogy the Victorian scholars created to re-establish the British identity was that of the Roman Empire. In this case, Republican Rome was emphasised instead of Imperial Rome, which might have seemed as a more suitable equivalent. The work *The History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1782) by historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) was mostly used by the Victorian scholars to support their arguments against Imperial Rome.⁹⁵ According to Gibbon, the real decline of the Roman Empire started after the reign of the two Antonines, Antoninus Pius (r. 138-161) and Marcus Aurelius (r. 161-180).⁹⁶ Gibbon considered the Republic the glory days of the Roman empire. It was during this period that the Romans expanded their territory expanded the most.⁹⁷ When Octavian came to power in 31

⁸⁹ Horsman, 'Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism', 388-389.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 390.

⁹¹ Ibid, 388.

⁹² Ibid, 391.

⁹³ Ibid, 392.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 395.

⁹⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 28.

⁹⁶ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1906) 10.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 2-3.

B.C.E he renounced any ambition for expansion. The militaristic aspirations disappeared because military victory from that moment onward was reserved for the emperor.⁹⁸ According to Gibbon, from the moment that Rome became governed by emperors, the decline of the empire began. The morals and virtues of the inhabitants of the Roman empire slowly disappeared and made way for corruption, decadency and eventually despotism. Yet Gibbon points to Christianity as the biggest cause of the decline and fall of the Roman empire. This religion had spread believe in a better life after death, therefore the Romans no longer cared as much for their lives in the present.⁹⁹

In the nineteenth century a lot of Victorian scholars, such as Kingsley, continued with the line of thought on the immoral behaviour of Roman society. He described how the Romans had lost their morality in private as well as in public.¹⁰⁰ The powers which were celebrated were force and cunning instead of freedom and justice. The only aim of the Roman people had become personal gain and the only god they served was the *Divus Caesar*, the imperial demi-god. This deity symbolised the unlimited powers, brute force and self-enjoyment.¹⁰¹ According to Kingsley, the Romans made this demi-god a paragon of ideal humanity which included characteristics such as envy, flattering, hatred and obedience.¹⁰² Furthermore, Kingsley described how the palace had become a place of corruption and of people only looking for public plunder. The government was administered by an official bureaucratic hierarchy of extortion. The middle-class had disappeared, lingering in the cities to proud for labour. The masses were to degraded to defend their rights. Rome's political state was not much better.¹⁰³

According to both Gibbon and Kingsley, the empire was in a state of continuous revolt, civil war and invasion.¹⁰⁴ There was constant disorder and the only binding element was the bureaucracy of tax gatherers. It was Rome's own weakness that kept the empire from falling, the masses being to crushed to rise up. Kingsley, nonetheless, did defend Roman Imperialism as 'a type of all good government'. It were the bad morals and vices of the Romans which had caused this type of government to fail, seeing as the morality of the people decided the morality of the empire.¹⁰⁵ The Victorian scholars and Gibbon both seem to make

⁹⁸ Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 348.

¹⁰⁰ Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton*, 17.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 18.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 22; Kingsley, *The Roman and the Teuton*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

a very ‘black and white’ distinction between the Teuton as ‘good’ and the Romans as ‘bad’.¹⁰⁶ Perhaps these scholars wanted to portray the Victorian ancestors as positive as possible by positioning themselves as opposites of the Romans, thereby strengthening the British identity. It clearly shows that what the Victorians valued in a society was attributed to the seemingly progressive Teutons and Anglo-Saxons. This Victorian image of these Germanic tribes served as a suitable counterpart to Imperial Rome.

The negative view on Imperial Rome became problematic when in 1876 Queen Victoria was crowned ‘Empress of India’. Suddenly the tables turned and the glorifying view on Republican Rome made way for that of Imperial Rome. The negative connotation associated with Imperialism seemed to disappear.¹⁰⁷ During the 1870s, new ideas and images of Imperialism developed in Britain, forming a new imperial discourse. The reason for this new focus on Imperialism were the unifications of Germany and Italy in 1871. These two new nations now formed a new threat towards the dominance of Britain and their empire. Furthermore, Germany and Russia had taken on a new expansionistic attitude which forced the Victorians to change their own attitude towards foreign policies.¹⁰⁸ During the 1880s, the term Imperialism became associated with British politics. Imperialism now stood for tightening the bond between various united parts of the empire. It was also associated with the acquisition of colonies for political and economic gain.

Last but not least, Imperialism was seen as a way to bring ‘civilisation’ to those who did not have it yet. Imperial Rome had become a legitimisation for the new Imperial discourse of Britain.¹⁰⁹ The Roman imperial image not only came to function as a legitimisation but also as a historical reference and a provider of lessons in empire building. According to Victorian ideology, Britain had two special tasks in world history. The first one was the task of conquering half or more of the planet for the use of men. Secondly, Britain had the constitutional task of sharing the fruits of the conquest and showing others how it was done.¹¹⁰

Looking at the new connotation of Imperialism, Imperium and the Ancient period often became associated with a symbol of antique glory.¹¹¹ This historical consciousness probably derived from the classical education of the Victorian elite. Many of the Victorian

¹⁰⁶ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 23.

¹⁰⁷ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 22.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹⁰ Robert Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1897) 19.

¹¹¹ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 23.

authors drew upon the Roman image as a reflection for the British empire in all its glory, due to political and social stress. Not only was the British power in the world contested, the impact of the industrial revolution had caused a fear of decline and fall. Because of the rapid change of industrialisation, fear of decline became eminent. Therefore it became essential to find ways to prevent the British empire from ever declining and, eventually, falling. The Victorians saw the fate of the Roman empire as a clear warning.¹¹²

Many Victorian authors had used to the work of Edward Gibbon as prove of the negative image of Roman Imperialism. At the turn of the century, Gibbon's work also had become a guide to the decline and fall of the British empire.¹¹³ Edwardian authors writing about decline and fall, pointed to the morals and lessons which could be drawn from the Roman example. These lesson could maybe prevent the seemingly inevitable decline and fall of the British empire.¹¹⁴

In conclusion, the Roman empire was, in multiple ways, linked to the British identity. Because of the rapid changing British society, due to industrialisation, the Victorians lost grip on their sense of stability. Therefore they were in need of an analogy which could provide a new basis of certainty about the past, present and future of the British empire. The history of Roman empire provided such analogy. The Victorians linked themselves to the Romans in several ways. First of all, numerous characteristics were incorporated into the British cultural framework. Secondly, because Britain had been a part of the Roman empire for four centuries, their histories were integrally linked. Consequently the Victorians could easily claim a connection with Rome, because they had taken part in Roman history and use it as an analogy. Thirdly, by the nineteenth century, the British empire had become the largest empire in history. The only people who had achieved the same in the past were the Romans. Consequently, Britain connected the two empires and claimed to be heirs of Rome. This provided the British empire with the same prestige that the Roman image had received through the centuries, which functioned as a legitimisation of their rule in such a large part of the world.

The Victorians made a very clear separation between the history of Republican Rome and Imperial Rome. By doing so they could circumvent the negative connection between Imperialism and the history of Rome. One could also argue that they specifically linked the

¹¹² Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 24.

¹¹³ Ibid, 29.

¹¹⁴ Roy Porter, *Gibbon making History*, Winefeld & Nicolson (1988) 28; Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentleman*, 29.

British empire to the Republic to avoid the paradox of the British ancestors as subjects of the Roman empire. It was after all during the Imperial period that Britain was conquered.

The Victorians were not only interested in the Roman past but in that of Britain itself. Because of the re-evaluation of the British identity, it became important to re-trace the roots of the British people. One would have expected that the Victorians would have chosen the Ancient Britons as their ancestors, seeing as these Celtic tribes had been living on the British Isles before and under Roman rule. Instead, the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons became the ancestors of the British people. Being heir to Rome and simultaneously claim ancestry to peoples who had been subjects of the Roman empire created a paradox. To legitimise both claims, the Victorians portrayed the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons as prudent, moral, freedom loving and ahead of their time. The Romans were depicted as despotic and militaristic. By doing so, the Victorians proved that they were heirs of the Roman empire by means of the size of the British empire, the power that came with it and the distribution of the Victorian culture. At the same time the Victorians had surpassed the Romans because of the high standard of their morals and values which they had inherited from their German ancestors.

The Roman image thus functioned in multiple ways. On the one hand it served as an ancestor and a steppingstone, on the other hand it was both a positive and a negative example. It seemed that the parts of Roman history which were seen as positive in Victorian eyes, were confirmation of British grandeur. By using parts of the Republican history and finding continuation in nineteenth century Britain, Rome truly became ancestor to the British empire. The negative sides of Roman history provided proof of British superiority over the Roman empire. Seeing as the Roman empire had never been surpassed by any other west-European nation, Britain also outdid the continental nations. In order to establish a new form of the British identity the Victorians actually created a new past by selectively choosing suitable parts of history. When these parts formed a problematic connexion, the Victorians formed new connexions of emphasised negative and positive contrasts in order to fit the pieces back together.

Chapter II

The British Imperial Discourse and the Roman empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

The unification of Germany and Italy in 1871 and the aggressive imperialistic foreign policies of Germany and Russia had become a threat to the British dominance on the world stage. Therefore, Britain had to adopt another strategy of foreign politics to keep up and defend its position. So the once dreaded Imperialism now became that new strategy. The already existing connexion between the British empire and Ancient Rome proved an easy transition.¹¹⁵ The analogy of Imperial Rome became incorporated into the British imperial discourse which consisted of the Late Victorian empire ideology, were certain rules and thoughts were established within a imperial framework.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, by the late nineteenth century Britain had lost its advantage as industrial leader of the world because nations such as Germany had caught up with industrialisation. The new formed nations on the European mainland and the loss of Britain's economic advantage, were not the only threat. There was still the influence of the Industrial revolution on the British society. Moreover, the transition from Republican to Imperial ideology had to be legitimised. The late Victorians could not simply accept Imperialism whilst it was still seen in connection with militarism and jingoism.¹¹⁷

This chapter will discuss the ways in which the image of Imperial Rome was used in the further development of the British imperial discourse from the 1870s onward. Moreover, this chapter will look at the comparison made between Imperial Britain and Imperial Rome in the context of empire building.

¹¹⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 11, 23.

¹¹⁶ Andrew S. Thompson, 'The language of Imperialism and the Meanings of Empire: Imperial Discourse in British Politics 1895-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 36 (1997) 147-177, hither 150.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

In 1876, Queen Victoria was crowned empress of India through Benjamin Disraeli's *Royal Title Act*, as highpoint of the new imperialistic policies.¹¹⁸ The crowning of Victoria heralded the age of British Imperialism.¹¹⁹ This was just one of the ways with which the British tried to legitimise their newly found approval of Imperialism. Within the Late Victorian and Edwardian scholarly society there were two schools of thought concerning the imperial politics of Ancient Rome and British empire, the Imperialists and the Anti-imperialists. Both tried to fit the Roman image into their version of the British imperial discourse.¹²⁰ Historian Theodore Mommsen stated in 1878, that Roman expansionism was born out of defending the empire's borders.¹²¹ Therefore, this expansionism was not a result of a hunger for territory but simply a way to eliminate all threats to the empire, creating a side effect of growing territory. The Late Victorian scholars could have agreed with this idea and simultaneously legitimise their own expansionism. But they did not. However, these scholars did evaluate to which extent Roman Imperialism had an 'defensive' character. How did they, then, see their own Imperialism in context with that of Rome?

John M. Robertson (1856-1933) was a British journalist before he became a Member of Parliament (M.P.). He was one of the most outspoken anti-imperialist and, more important, an M.P., who publically opposed the politics in India and Egypt.¹²² In his book *Patriotism and Empire* (1899), he depicts Rome as oppressive and immoral. To him, the empire had had a despotic nature from the early Republican days onward and, therefore, had never been much else. The Roman empire was no exception, given that empires in general, displayed jingoistic and military elements. Eventually all empires would decline and fall, without exception, not even the British empire. He criticised the way in which the British imperialists had scanned Roman history in search of bits and pieces which would suit their objective, glorifying Britain.¹²³ Robertson regarded the Roman analogy as an indication of Britain's future as an empire. Imperialists tried to alter the process and thereby saving the British empire from its fate. By scanning history for bits and pieces which suited their cause, these scholars could not change the inevitable, according to Robertson.¹²⁴

The manner in which the Imperialists viewed Rome was not positive either, although it might have been expected. John Cramb (1861-1913) a Scottish historian who taught modern

¹¹⁸ Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian views', 192.

¹¹⁹ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 6. Adler, 'Late Victorians and Edwardian views', 195.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 205.

¹²³ John M. Robertson, *Patriotism and Empire*, Grant Richards (London, 1899) 151.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 152.

history, and supported the British empire.¹²⁵ In his book *Reflections on the origins and destiny of Imperial Britain* (1900), he stated Roman expansionism was not defensive but deliberate, and had originated in the early stage of the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.E.).¹²⁶ He also highlighted that the British empire was the first to break with the tradition of structuring empires after the Roman example.¹²⁷ Therefore the British empire became the mould for modern European nation building in its most original and perfect form.¹²⁸ The nineteenth century Victorian government identified itself with justice and civic freedom.¹²⁹ The British imperial ideology was structured upon a broader concept of two elements. The first was freedom, which allowed or secured the ability for every person to become the best version of themselves. The second one was justice, which stemmed from the soul of Britain's population and not its ruler. These two features were something that the Roman statesmen did not hold in high esteem.¹³⁰ Therefore, Cramb stated, Rome was inferior to Britain. The only positive contribution of the Roman empire to its subjects was a large territory and an example of good government.¹³¹

Many Late Victorian patriots saw Rome as the greatest civilising force in ancient European history. Cramb emphasised that Britain might have inherited the Roman imperial spirit, but had improved on it significantly. The British empire had spread the most enlightened form of inherited western civilisation.¹³² This meant that because the British culture transformed itself into an improved version of the Roman culture, Cramb claims it was superior to all other European nations.¹³³ The kind of Imperialism that the British in the late nineteenth century used as their new political strategy was not the same as the one which became identified with militarism and despotism. The late Victorians had altered it into patriotism with the aspiration to accomplish an universal mankind. The British empire then would become an empire without violence and set for general equality of the world population. This goal had become 'the destiny' of Imperial Britain.

Furthermore, Cramb considered the late Victorians to be a people with a 'genius for empire', and had to fulfil its task of creating a universal humanity. Britain's Imperialism became associated with acquiring colonies for economic and political gain and became the

¹²⁵ Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Views', 202- 203.

¹²⁶ John Adams Cramb, *Reflections on the Origin and Destiny of Imperial Britain*, Macmillan & Co (London, 1900) 16; Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Views', 203.

¹²⁷ Cramb, *Reflection on the Origin* (1900) 23.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 23.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 31.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 30.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 30.

¹³² *Ibid*, 88.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 8-12.

embodiment of spreading civilisation in underdeveloped parts of the world.¹³⁴ It also was Britain's task to subdue the world, establish peace and govern it with justice.¹³⁵

The ancient Roman form of Imperialism was limited to concrete and external justice, nothing more than a means to an end. This meant that justice was based upon ruling the people from above, by a monarch or tyrant. This difference made the distinction between the sophistication of modern British Imperialism and the underdeveloped ancient Roman Imperialism.¹³⁶

The author, portrayed the British empire as a better version of the Roman empire by comparing the two. It also shows that the Imperial discourse was heavily based on equal justice and freedom. Moreover, the emphasis on freedom can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon ancestors which were praised for this quality (see Chapter I). The author therewith tried to give authority to the position of British empire in the world. It was a provider of civilisation to the underdeveloped societies, as a mother raising her children. He also accepted the Roman image as basis for the British empire, yet he clearly stated that Victorians had surpassed the Romans at every level. The British empire was selfless without personal gain, which made it the greatest culture of its own time.¹³⁷ Cramb placed Rome directly opposite of Britain in a positive-negative comparison. He pointed out all the negative characteristics of the Roman empire and compared them with all the positive features Britain possessed. By creating a good-bad contrast, he reinforced the positive features of the British empire. By outpacing the most advanced form of empire, that of the Romans, the late Victorians had accomplished a form of sophistication which the other European nation

Evelyn Baring, the Earl of Cromer (1841-1917) was a British diplomat, colonial governor and had been controller-general¹³⁸ of Egypt between 1883 and 1907. Although he was not educated in the Classics, he had been president of the Classical Association¹³⁹(1909-1910). He was self-educated in the Greek and Latin language. In his book *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910), Cromer made his own comparison between the Roman and the British empires.¹⁴⁰ Roman expansion and Imperialism were the result of a search for natural and defensible borders. This was something which the British wanted to acquire too,

¹³⁴ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentleman*, 22.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 16-18.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 19.

¹³⁷ Cramb, *Reflection on the Origin*, 25, 28.

¹³⁸ The ambassador of the United Kingdom to Egypt.

¹³⁹ *Classical Association*: is a learned British society in the field of the Classics.

¹⁴⁰ Adler, *Late Victorian and Edwardian views*, 200.

therewith defending Britain's expansionism.¹⁴¹ By doing so, it seemed Cromer created a kinship between the Romans and the British in order to defend both their foreign policies.¹⁴²

Yet further along this monograph, Cromer retracted his defence and stated that the true intentions of Roman expansionism were self-enrichment instead of defensive Imperialism.¹⁴³ According to the Earl, the Roman world policy was introduced during the First Punic War (264-241 B.C.E) and did not meet the acquirements of 'defensive Imperialism'.¹⁴⁴ Cromer stated that Roman colonialism was immoral by modern standards. The cause of this immorality was the absence of moral guidance provided by Christianity. Therefore, the human development of the Roman empire never evolved. Also, Cromer emphasised, the Romans never knew a culture of their own. Their empire had been a medium through which the Greek civilisation had spread and simultaneously they used it as their own culture.¹⁴⁵ The British empire, nevertheless, had its own culture with a high moral standard. Its goal was to 'save' its subject from war, pestilence and famine. Furthermore, Cromer concluded that British Imperialism was therefore intentional, whereas that of the Romans seemed more or less accidental.¹⁴⁶

Cromer, at some point, had to acknowledge that Rome had been superior to Britain in achieving assimilation. To even the effect of this superiority, he belittled the accomplishment by stating that it was nothing compared to the British endeavours.¹⁴⁷ Rome's task had been far more easy than that of a modern Imperial nation. Furthermore, the Romans seemed to have lacked any consciousness of colour prejudice, due to the fact that they had far more malleable subjects since there were no monotheistic believers.¹⁴⁸ Cromer tried to excuse the negative characteristics of the British empire by expediting them as insuperable.

Charles Prestwood Lucas (1853-1931) was a civil servant, historical geographer and appointed to the Colonial office.¹⁴⁹ In his book *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (1912) he sketched a comparison between the Roman and the British empire. Although he did have a classical education, he was not positive towards the Roman empire. This, however, did not mean that he did not recognize the incredible achievement that was the Roman empire. Lucas

¹⁴¹ Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian views', 200; Earl of Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, Longmans, Green & Co (New York, 1910) 31.

¹⁴² Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian views', 201.

¹⁴³ Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910) 24.

¹⁴⁴ Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Views', 201; Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910) 20.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 62.

¹⁴⁶ Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Views', 202.

¹⁴⁷ Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 113; Adler, 'Late Victorian and Edwardian Views', 202.

¹⁴⁸ Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 114.

¹⁴⁹ *Colonial office*: an Government department of the British empire which presided over the British colonies.

referred to this empire as ‘the greatest political system of the ancient world’.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the comparison between the empires served as proof that Britain was superior to Rome. Colonisation in Roman eyes was nothing more than an extension of the ‘paterfamilias’ model, and were unconcerned with the wellbeing of their subjects.¹⁵¹ Britain, on the other hand, was, according to Lucas, selfless in its politics. He emphasised that the Edwardians had a regard for freedom in colonial politics in contrast to the lack of liberty in the Roman empire.¹⁵²

He did not categorise Rome’s Imperialism as defensive, and believed it was a consequence of preconceived aggression.¹⁵³ Eventually this empire was nothing more than a military enterprise which was aimed at enriching its own citizens at the expense of its subjects. According to Lucas the Roman Empire was a militaristic society who’s first instinct was to conquer. Apparently, this was something Britain was not guilty of.¹⁵⁴

There were, however, a couple of achievements which this author also could not deny. Roman society knew humanitarian and technical accomplishments. To Lucas these achievements were nothing compared to the industrial progress of Britain.¹⁵⁵ Another matter the author could not ignore was Britain’s racism towards their subjects and the seemingly absent racial bias of the Romans. Therefore Rome had prevailed over Britain on a moral scale. In an attempt to present the British morals still superior over that of the Romans, Lucas tried to rationalize the racial prejudice. He separated colour discrimination into two distinct categories. The first was negative colour prejudice and the second understandable colour prejudice. The British had not been maligned in their judgement of the non-British subjects. They could not help themselves and therefore their racism fell under the second category..¹⁵⁶

Both the late Victorians and the Edwardians had the tendency to make comparisons between the two Empires. Lucas, however, claimed to feel uncomfortable doing so. In an attempt to show the advanced nature of the British empire, he claimed to distance the two empires instead of comparing them. Yet, it seemed that an assessment was necessary to point out the good and the bad.¹⁵⁷

A somewhat more positive view on the Roman empire is that of British historian John Robert Seeley (1835-1895). His work, *The Expansion of England* (1883) helped to redefine the value of Roman studies to the British Imperial discourse. In this work he stated that the

¹⁵⁰ Adler, ‘Late Victorian and Edwardian views’, 196

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 197.

¹⁵² Ibid, 198.

¹⁵³ Charles Prestwood Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, 75.

¹⁵⁴ Adler, ‘Late Victorian and Edwardian views’, 198. Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* 75.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 198.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 199.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 199.

Roman empire was at the centre of human history and could be seen as the foundation of the present civilisation of mankind.¹⁵⁸ This coincided with the view that, despite Rome's 'despotic nature', they did provide Europe, including the Ancient Britons, with more 'advanced' form of civilisation. Therefore, the basis of the British culture had become more sophisticated. Although there was no ancestral claims to the Ancient Britons, to Seeley this was proof of British pre-eminence.¹⁵⁹

Camden professor Ancient history at Oxford University, Francis Haverfield (1860-1919)¹⁶⁰ played an important role in the further development of both the Imperial Discourse and the study of Roman archaeology.¹⁶¹ In his work *The Romanisation of Roman Britain* (1912) he emphasised that the native Britons had been given the benefits of civilisation during the four centuries of Roman rule.¹⁶² Haverfield highlighted the fact that historians rarely praised the Roman empire. Although he did agree with the view that the Roman period was despotic, and where political freedom was absent. A period in which the 'creative genius' and 'intellect' were excluded, with which Haverfield agreed.¹⁶³ The Roman empire was seen as a product of the old world, whereas Britain had the wisdom which had developed over the centuries.

Haverfield especially emphasised the influence of the Renaissance on Europe and the progress of civilisation it caused. This did not mean that the Roman empire never progressed, but the developments that were made were of a practical nature. The highpoint of the imperial age was the creation of provincial administration.¹⁶⁴ Haverfield feels it was proof of the fact that the Romans tried to better the world and bring happiness.

The author categorised provincial administration into two particular forms. The first was the creation of frontiers, which kept out the barbarians and as a result the provinces within these borders could develop. This had made the development of civilisation possible and created the necessary circumstances for the Roman culture to take root. Frontier studies were important to the Edwardians and Victorian scholars. They were fascinated by the separation between civilised and barbaric. A contrast which they were constantly making,

¹⁵⁸ John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, Little, Brown & Company (Boston, 1912) 24.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁶⁰ There is some controversy as to what extent Haverfield was involved in British politics, and if his work was influenced by this. Paul Freeman states that this is not the case and that Haverfield is working in a European context. Richard Hingley thinks that Roman archaeology was in fact not politically neutral. Hingley concludes this looking at Haverfield's education and upbringing which had close ties to the Late Victorian and Edwardian discourse. But this did not mean that Haverfield was a nationalist.

¹⁶¹ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 56.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 53.

¹⁶³ Francis Haverfield, *The Romanisation of Roman Britain*, 1.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 3,9.

even in the comparison of Rome and Britain. Still many gentlemen placed themselves in the position of the civilised Roman. All those who were outside the British empire were perceived as barbarians. The subjects of the empire were not all civilised but had assimilated.¹⁶⁵ These military studies were also particularly useful when it came to problems with assimilation and incorporation. As a result, scholars such as Haverfield found it important to study civilian settlement in Roman provinces, seeing it from a contemporary imperial perspective.¹⁶⁶ Until the British empire was at its height, the Roman empire had not found its equal. However, in comparison to Rome, Britain's task had become to develop the good qualities of its civilisation rather than to defend it.¹⁶⁷ The success of the Romans was based upon the courage with which they saved the civilised life of Europe until it could defend itself. The second form of provincial administration was the long and peaceful government, which gave order to the empire. Although Rome eventually declined, the rest of the world became Roman.¹⁶⁸

The last quarter of the nineteenth century, Britain became inclined to openly adopt an Imperial foreign policies. The unification of Germany and Italy, the new aggressive foreign policies of Germany and Russia, and the loss of Britain's leading economic position, caused yet another policy change. To keep up with the new continental competition, the Victorians accepted Imperialism as their new political strategy. Yet this transition had to be legitimised, seeing as the negative connotations of Imperialism damaged the 'virtuous character' of the British empire. The late Victorian and Edwardian scholars, therefore, tried to adapt Imperialism. By creating a British form of Imperialism, they tried to rid it of its negativity and transform it into a somewhat more honourable form. By doing so the British not only legitimised their use of imperialistic policies but could also continue to claim the sophistication of their empire. However, to be able to do so the late Victorian and Edwardian scholars needed to make clear why their execution of Imperialism was so different. Theodore Mommsen had provided these scholars with an apologetic vision on the expansionism of Ancient Rome. Something which they could have applied to their own situation, but did not. The Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists tried, each in their own way, to fit the Imperial Roman empire into the British imperial discourse. Theodore Mommsen had provided these scholars with an apologetic vision on the expansionism of Ancient Rome. Something which they could have applied to their own situation, but did not do.

¹⁶⁵ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, 58.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 59.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 11.

Robertson, who was clearly an anti-imperialist, describes the Roman empire as something which had been immoral and oppressive since the early days of the Republic. Therefore he stated that the Republic had not been much better than imperial Rome, therewith tackling the analogy between the Republic and the British empire. Furthermore, he opposed the policies of Britain in India and Egypt which were forms of Imperialism as well as colonialism. But only speaks of these policies in a negative manner where it concerned Rome. He also emphasises that all empires are militaristic and jingoistic and will eventually fall. Robertson did not explicitly refer to Britain as being one of these empires, neither denied it. He criticises the late Victorian scholars on the favouritism of certain parts of the past. By scanning them and using which is suitable an artificial past is created. But at the same time he more or less did the same, seeing as he did not mention any positive parts of Roman history.

The Imperialist point of view on Rome is not much different when looking at Cramb. He portrayed Rome as being consciously expansionistic and had been since the Second Punic war. This proved that the scholars such as Cramb were trying to create continuity between the behaviour of the Romans during the Republic and during the Imperial period. By doing so they justified on the one hand the transition of analogy and on the other hand showed that Rome always had been expansionistic. Cramb stated that Rome had been the greatest civilising force in Europe, but that Britain's imperial policy centred around freedom, justice and creating an universal mankind. Consequently, since the foundation of the British empire was based upon the Roman legacy, the British not only had inherited this prestige but also improved on it with their moral sophistication.

The Earl of Cromer did defend the expanding British territories as a result of the search for natural borders. Their political policy was selfless, based on freedom, and were committed to their subjects. The Romans seemed to have had the same urge for natural borders but Cromer determined their motive was self-enrichment. The strange thing is that this scholar initially defended Roman expansionism but eventually retracts this statement. He did not give an explanation nor did include any consequence for British expansionism.

The foreign policies of the Roman empire consisted out of militarism and 'immoral' colonialism. This author also creates a contrast between Rome and Britain, a good – bad situation, only to prove Britain's superiority.

Lucas paints a very similar picture as Cromer did, although he acknowledged the achievement that was the Roman empire. He stated that Britain had built upon this amazing accomplishment and had surpassed it by the moral and virtuous sophistication of the British culture. Consequently, the policy of the empire was selfless in its politics, cared for the

subjects and held freedom in high esteem. The same picture Cromer portrayed although Lucas gave the Roman empire more credit. This author is the only one who really addressed the issue of British racial prejudice. It seemed Rome did not really know the idea of racism, the author stated, therefore they were morally superior to the British. To exonerate the Victorians and Edwardians from their racial bias, Lucas stated that this racial prejudice was something the British simply could not help it.

There were authors who saw the Roman empire as the foundation of the civilisation of mankind, such as Seeley. But his acknowledgement was in service of proving Britain's superiority, not to the advantage of Roman history. The only author who seemed the most unbiased was Haverfield. His work described Rome and Britain on equal footing, but not placing the one above the other. He acknowledged the contribution of the Roman empire to the British civilisation with as its crown piece, the provincial administration which was widely used in the British empire. This was something which significantly improved the workings of the empire.

The Roman image was, as it had been before the late nineteenth century the foundation of the British imperial discourse. Maybe one could better say that its prestige was the fundament of the British imperial policies. The authors, with exception of Haverfield, all used the Roman image to create a contrast between Britain and Rome, in order to justify the imperial policies of the British empire. By doing so, the empire was depicted as an moral, righteous, freedom loving nation.

Conclusion

At the start of this study, the question was in which way the late Victorians and Edwardians used their reception of the Roman image to legitimise their new imperial politics. In order to answer this question, chapter one discussed the Victorian association of the British empire with the Roman image before the late nineteenth century. Because their society was changing due to industrialisation, the Victorians needed to re-evaluate the idea of their national identity. To do so, these scholars looked-for a historic authoritative image which provided legitimisation to the new national identity. Roman images were very popular in the nineteenth century, mostly because of the antiquarian tradition which gave the Roman empire its prestige. Numerous characteristics were incorporated into the British cultural framework. As a result, Rome became the analogy to which the Victorians mirrored their own empire. One could argue that the Romantic movement had a significant influence on the way the Victorians looked at Roman history. Glorifying the past was quite common and could have caused the Roman image to have been romanticised and, which made it seem more appealing.

When the Victorians tried to incorporate these images into their own national discourse it created several paradoxes. Britain had been a Roman province for over four centuries. Consequently their histories were integrally linked. On the other hand, being part of the Roman empire meant that the British ancestors were subjected to Rome. So how could the Victorians, then, claim ancestry to both the Romans and their ancient British ancestors? Furthermore, the Victorians separated the history of Republican Rome and of Imperial Rome. They felt the Republican history to be more representative of their government. This was also inconsistency seeing as the head of state was sole ruler Queen Victoria, not the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The probable reason behind this choice was that Imperial Rome and the nineteenth century connotation of Imperialism were connected, therefore unusable. Otherwise it would damage the reputation of the British empire. Another reason could be to avoid the paradox of the British ancestors as subjects of the Roman empire. It was after all during the Imperial period that Britain was conquered. Unfortunately, this theory is worth more than a simple mention, and might thus function as the subject of another study.

The Victorians also traced their own origin and, as a result, made the Teutons and Anglo-Saxons the ancestors of the British people. This created a contradiction, seeing as the Victorians now had claimed to be heirs of the Roman empire and simultaneously claimed kinship to peoples who had been Rome's subjects. To legitimise both claims, Victorian scholars, such as Charles Kingsley and Robert Carlyle, portrayed the Teutons and Anglo-

Saxons as prudent, moral, freedom loving and ahead of their time. The Romans were depicted as despotic and militaristic. By doing so, the Victorians proved that they were heirs to the Roman empire by means of the size of the British empire, the power that came with it and the distribution of the Victorian culture. At the same time, the Victorians had surpassed the Romans because of the high standard of their morals and values which they had inherited from their German ancestors. The history of the Roman empire also functioned as a warning. Gibbon stated that, although, Rome had known its golden days in the second century C.E. it eventually declined and fell. The Victorians perceived this as a possible scenario for their empire. This might have been sophisticated, and had the advantages of industrialisation all the possibility of decline and fall would always be present. Another reason for this focus on decline and fall could have been the result of the effect Industrialisation had on the British society. It caused uncertainty about the past, present and future of the Victorians and could have induced the fear of a declining British empire.

Chapter two described how the Roman image was seen in the context of the British imperial discourse, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Both the unification of Italy and Germany, the new aggressive foreign politics of Russia and Germany, and the new and fast industrialising nations had become a threat. The position of the British empire, which had been uncontested since 1815, now had to face new competition. In order to keep up, the Victorians accepted Imperialism as their new strategy of foreign policy. However, Imperialism still had the negative connotation of militarism, despotism and jingoism. These connotations damaged the self-proclaimed 'virtuous character' of the British empire. To be able to use Imperialism without losing the empire's good reputation, the emphasis of the analogy between the Roman and British empire was now directed at Imperial Rome instead of the Republic.

The two schools of thought, namely the Imperialists and the Anti-Imperialists, all depicted Rome as inferior, whilst emphasising the fame of the Roman empire. By doing so they sharpened the contrast between the British empire and the Roman empire. Moreover, they could highlight the superiority of the former. The dominant school of thought on Imperialism, were the Imperialists. Prominent scholars who were positive towards the imperial politics such as, the Earl of Cromer, Cramb and made a good-bad comparison between Rome and Britain in order to glorify the British empire and therewith their national identity. These scholars did acknowledge that Rome had not been as barbaric as the subjects of the Roman empire. The Romans had made significant contributions to the European

civilisations. Although these contributions were in the eyes of the late Victorians and Edwardians nothing compared to what they had accomplished with their empire.

The most outspoken anti-Imperialist was Robertson who did not condone any form of imperialism or empire for that matter. He considered the Roman empire to have been immoral and oppressive since the early days of the Republic. Furthermore he stated that all empires were militaristic and jingoistic and will eventually fall. Robertson did not explicitly involve the British empire in his ideas about empires, which had probably to do with his position as M.P. and the fact that he could not be too critical of his fellow countrymen.

Scholars like Lucas, Seeley, and Haverfield were not distinctly Imperialists nor anti-imperialists. Apart from Haverfield, the two other scholars only emphasised the good-bad contrast between Britain and Rome. Again, in order to amplify the prestige of the British empire. Haverfield was a somewhat different story because he seems more unbiased towards Rome, and more willing to paint a picture of Roman history. He did still see the Romans as despotic and militaristic but also the accomplishments. More important, he placed the achievements and faults of the Roman empire in the context of its own time. Whilst the other scholars compare nineteenth century Britain with Ancient Rome. Therefore, the most of the late Victorian and Edwardian scholars seemed to use the Roman image to create a contrast between Rome and Britain, thereby pointing out all the negative characteristics of the former to amplify the respect for the latter. As a result, the British empire was depicted as being superior to the Romans who already had the prestige of superiority in contrast to the rest of the European nations.

So, in what way did the late Victorians and Edwardians perceive the ancient Roman image? The Victorians and Edwardians had chosen the Roman image for its prestige. By claiming Roman heritage, the British empire as Rome's heir gained the same prestige, the largest empire in history and a prevailing culture. On the one hand the Roman empire functioned as a basis for the British empire and therefore also for the British national identity. On the other hand it was used to magnify the grandeur of Britain. Furthermore, the Victorian and Edwardian scholars were very specific as to what part of the Roman and also their own history they chose to use. As a result they created their own versions of the past, which suited their own objectives. However there seemed to have been a consciousness in the nineteenth century about selecting the past. Robertson for one, criticised his fellow scholars for doing so. This can point to an awareness among the Victorian and Edwardian of a more

scientific-based form of historiography. Instead, they were very selective about the Roman past and their own, in order to create a past which suited their idea of the British racial history. There was a very strong influence of nationalism, although the British claimed not to have been nationalistic. Yet the very fact that the Victorians and Edwardians emphasised only the positive characteristics of their own nation and the negative ones of all non-British proves otherwise. The Roman image, both viewed positive and negative, functioned as an amplifier of the prestige of the British empire. Eventually, the Victorians and Edwardians only looked at the prestige of historic images but not to history itself. This is the danger with using other pasts in national cultures. The past is no longer seen in its own context, but becomes a representative of a certain image.

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