A Pilgrimage Through History

Mark Twain's experience of sites of the past as described in The Innocents Abroad

Image from: Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, a New Pilgrims' Progress*, 1st ed. (American Publishing Company, 1869).

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10-07-2025

Abstract

Recent years have seen significant academic interest in the embodied experiences of tourists. However, such tourist experiences have hardly been the subject of study in a historical context. This study aims to contribute to the limited body of literature on this topic. This thesis examines how Mark Twain experienced sites of the past as recorded in his travel book *The Innocents Abroad*. Drawing from both tourism studies and embodiment theory, this study explores how Twain's views on Romanticism, history, and his own Protestant American identity shaped his encounters with sites of the past. Through a close analysis of *The Innocents Abroad*, this paper characterises Twain as someone who is critically aware of the literary tropes of his time, yet also appreciates the mythical stories embedded in the places he visits. Furthermore, this study investigates how Twain's embodied experiences range from awe to fatigue and how these interacted with his expectations and preconceptions as a tourist. Ultimately, by analysing Twain's embodied, cognitive, and cultural encounters with sites of the past, this thesis demonstrates how his experiences were shaped by the interplay between personal identity, historical imagination, and the realities of nineteenth-century tourism.

Contents

Introduction

In our modern tourist age, a traveller has a wealth of choices in historical experiences to book. Tourists can admire old churches, prance around excavated Roman settlements, gaze upon the tombs of the greatest historical figures, and marvel at cities and castles that have stood for generations. History occupies an important role in the tourism industry. Such Roman settlements often see many schools of children visit each year, the historical figures are often well known through popular myths and stories, and the old cities can often be explored through a series of plaques and tours. One can safely say that these tourist destinations often aim to have their visitors learn and, to a degree, even experience the past.[1] Through modern technology, such as augmented reality, visitors can be brought closer to the past than ever before.

The entire tourism industry counts millions of travellers each year visiting such sites. However, the concept of 'history' and 'historical sites' is not something that was solely created by the modern tourism industry. Travellers across history would see ruins, buildings, graveyards and houses of worship of those that came before them. In the Roman Empire, Romans that could afford to do so already travelled through their realm viewing statues, artifacts, relics, and bones of their diseased historical figures.[2] Throughout the Middle Ages, Christian pilgrims travelled to the Middle-East to visit the tombs of martyrs and encountered ruins from the Roman past.[3]

The birth of modern tourism is often traced to the Grand Tour that was popular from the 17th century to the early 20th century.[4] People partaking in this cross-European tour were often wealthy, aristocratic men, largely of British origin. The reasons for undertaking this journey were varied but usually included the development and education of the young gentleman, alongside a large dose of partying, drinking and other such recreational activities. In particular, historical sites were a staple destination for these tourists. Since the route of the Grand Tour usually concluded in Italy, people would be confronted with all sorts of Roman and Renaissance sites along the way. Many had their portraits painted with Roman ruins and marvelled at the painted works of the great masters.[5] Eventually, with the rise of Romanticism, the Grand Tour

[1] Sabine Marschall, "Tourism and Remembrance: The Journey Into the Self and Its Past," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 12, no. 4 (March 5, 2014), 335-336.
[2] Loykie Lomine, "Chapter 4. Tourism in Augustan Society (44 BC-AD 69)", in *Histories of Tourism*, ed. John K. Walton (Channel View Publications, 2005), 76.
[3] Diana Webb, "Medieval Pilgrimage: An Outline", in *Medieval European Pilgrimage c.700-c.1500*, 1st ed. (Red Globe Press London, 2002), 1-6.
[4] Eric G. E. Zuelow, *A History of Modern Tourism*, 1st ed. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 14-21.
[5] Ibidem, 24.

slowly faded out of popularity. However, the fascination with sites of the past remained. Medieval ruins and gothic architecture are staples of Romantic art, and many tourists travelled to experience them first hand.[6]

In 1867 the U.S.S. *Quaker City* leaves the port of New York to carry over sixty American tourists on a novel pleasure trip through the Old World. One of its passengers was the rising author Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known by his penname: Mark Twain. Alongside seventy other adult passengers, he set out to experience Europe and the Holy Land like few American parties had done before. The tales of this voyage were documented by Twain through correspondence he wrote for the *Daily Alta California*, *New York Tribune* and the *New York Herald*. He later compiled this correspondence into his first piece of travel literature: *The Innocents Abroad or, The New Pilgrims' Progress*.[7]

While it is not possible to simply ask historical figures how they experienced sites of the past, historical travel literature can provide us, modern readers, some insights into the experiences of historical travellers. In his preface to *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain tells us that he indeed aims to share with us his experience and to provide a truthful account of his journey, unlike other contemporary travel books. He writes:

> "This book is a record of a pleasure trip. … [I]t has a purpose, which is to suggest to the reader how he would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who traveled in those countries before him. I make small pretense of showing anyone how he ought to look at objects of interest beyond the sea—other books do that, and therefore, even if I were competent to do it, there is no need.
>
> I offer no apologies for any departures from the usual style of travel-writing that may be charged against me—for I think I have seen with impartial eyes, and I am sure I have written at least honestly, whether wisely or not." [8]

In this thesis, I shall explore Twain's 'honest' suggestions to the reader and analyse the experiences of historical sites that Twain describes in *The Innocents Abroad*. I aim to provide insights into how Twain's experiences are shaped by the historical sites themselves and the context of his time and character. With these insights, we can not only better understand how

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[6] Mark Bennett, "Gothic Travels," in *Romantic Gothic*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Edinburgh University Press eBooks, 2015), 228, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748696758-012.
[7] Jane Jacobs, "Introduction," print, in *The Innocents Abroad or, the New Pilgrims' Progress*, by Mark Twain (1869; repr.,Modern Library, 2003), xviii.
[8] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: or, The New Pilgrims' Progress*, print (1869; repr., Modern Library, 2003), xxxiii.

people in the past interpreted history in their own time but perhaps also reflect on how we deal with historical sites in ours. In order to achieve these aims, I have formulated the following research question:

"How does Mark Twain describe his experience of sites of the past in *The Innocents Abroad*?"

This document is divided into separate chapters. First, I will conclude this introduction with a state of the art, detailed relevant literature on the history of tourism, experiential research, Mark Twain and the interpretation of historical sites. Following this, the first chapter aims to answer the question: what were the circumstances of Twain's journey in *The Innocents Abroad*? This will provide context to Twain's character and life, which is necessary for an analysis and interpretation of his experiences. In the second chapter, I seek to answer the question: How does Twain characterize 'the past' in the sites he visits? Here, I will explore the broader narratives present in *The Innocents Abroad*, which further deepens the understanding of how Twain experiences sites of the past. In the last chapter, I will analyse the question: How does the physical context of the sites of the past in Twain's journey influence experience? This will be an analysis of how the physical and environmental characteristics of the sites Twain visits interact with his preconceived expectations. In the conclusion, I draw upon the results of each chapter to present Mark Twain's description of his experiences of sites of the past.

State of the Art

This subject of this thesis lies at the intersection of multiple fields of study. It encompasses elements from tourism studies, sensory studies, critical heritage studies and literary studies. The field of tourism studies is a relatively modern field, mainly taking shape in the 1980s and 1990s.[9] Since then, studying tourism in a historical context has become a well-established tradition. In "Revolutionary Ruins: The Reimagination of French Touristic Sites During the Peace of Amiens," Elodie Duché demonstrates that British tourists during the French Revolution have been instrumental in shaping the production and imagination of touristic spaces, such as historical sites.[10] Duché argues that the clash between the revolutionary context of the French revolution and the conservative identity of the British travellers led to expressive and emotional language use in the narration of tourist experiences.[11] The research demonstrates

[9] Greg Richards and Wil Munsters, *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*, *CABI eBooks*, 2010, 2.
[10] Elodie Duché, "Revolutionary Ruins: The Reimagination of French Touristic Sites During the Peace of Amiens," in *Beyond the Grand Tour*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2017), 215.
[11] Ibidem, 215.

the importance of considering the context of the travel destination in relation to the identity of the person interpreting that site.

Tourist experiences are not only present at the tourist sites themselves, but are also expressed in their art. Authors, such as Mark Bennett with his chapter "Gothic Travels" in the book *Romantic Gothic*, have explored how these tourist experiences and historical contexts are expressed in literature. Bennett explains that Gothic fiction authors such as Ann Radcliffe strategically use gothic elements such as death and haunting, to distinguish themselves from previous Romantic travel writings.[12] This sentiment of a desire to distinguish themselves from regular travel writing mirrors the feeling that Twain expresses in the preface to *The Innocents Abroad*.

With the sensory turn of the 2010s, experiential research became much more prevalent. In the literature collection *Tourism and Embodiment,* Catherine Palmer and Hazel Andrews demonstrate the use of sensory research in the form of embodiment theory for the field of tourism studies. The authors describe the importance of embodiment as follows: "Embodiment as the coming together of body, mind and the senses is about culture in its broadest sense because culture is a constitutive element of lived experience."[13] Similarly, the book highlights various ways in which embodiment is crucial in understanding tourist behaviour. In this sense, Palmer and Andrews' work is novel, as it aims to make embodiment a core theory within tourism studies going forward.[14] Nevertheless, works such as those of Bennet and Duché do share similar themes of centring the tourist experience, although the precise terminology related to embodiment is absent.

Given his literary prominence, Mark Twain's work has also received a lot of academic attention. Twain's personality and writings have been studied primarily within the field of literary studies. Seminal works such as the *Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain*, edited by Forrest G. Robinson, explore Twain as both a private person and a writer.[15] These comprehensive works detail many aspects of Twain's personality such as his relation to racism, slavery, gender, American identity and more. Through these aspects, the authors try to understand Twain and his literature on a deeper level. More recent books such as *Mark Twain*

[12] Bennett, "Gothic Travels." 240-241.
[13] Catherine Palmer and Hazel Andrews, "Animating the Field," in *Tourism and Embodiment*, ed. Catherine Palmer and Hazel Andrews, 1st ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 2.
[14] Ibidem, 1.
[15] Forrest G. Robinson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain* (1996; repr., Cambridge University Press, 2006), I.

in Context, published in 2019 by Cambridge University Press, offer an updated profile on Mark Twain and collect the latest research into one bundle.

Similarly, *The Innocents Abroad* itself has been the subject of various literary studies. In the 1977 article "Mark Twain the Tourist: The Form of the Innocents Abroad", Bruce Michelson analyses the writing style and tropes employed in *Innocents*. He notes that Twain's style of travel writing offers a mix of playfulness, while also leaving room for reflection in his earlier chapters. By contrast, when Twain's journey enters the Middle East, Michelson notes that Twain's playfulness deteriorates alongside the quality of the writing.[16] These changes in writing style allow us to glimpse the reality of the journey that Twain was taking and how it affected his writing process.

In a 2002 publication titled *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism: The Tide of a Great Popular Movement*, Jeffrey Alan Melton identifies that Twain's multiple personalities as both writer and tourist are in conflict, yet have seen little academic scrutiny.[17] He notes that Twain stands at the beginning of an era of American tourism and that its development can be traced through Twain's writings.[18] Studying Twain's journey's and experiences can thus provide insights not only into the man himself but also the subsequent modern tourist culture that he stood at the precipice of.

Twain's travel experiences have also been studied in more recent publications. In "Mark Twain and The Innocents Abroad: illuminating the tourist gaze on death," Tony Johnston uses *The Innocents Abroad* as a historical source to further experiential research in thanatourism.[19] Like Melton, Johnston recognises Twain's writings as a fruitful source for studying experiences and tourist behaviour. He notes that studying experiences is critical to understand how tourists deal with certain subjects. In the case of his paper, this subject is the relation between a tourist and sites of death.[20] In his analysis of *The Innocents Abroad*, Johnston concludes that, regardless of Twain's predisposition to dramatization, his contemplation of death defined many of his experiences, as Twain expresses his engagement with death through wit and humour while still maintaining a level of respect.[21]

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[16] Bruce Michelson, "Mark Twain the Tourist: The Form of the Innocents Abroad," *American Literature* 49, no. 3 (November 1, 1977), 397-398, https://doi.org/10.2307/2924989.
[17] Jeffrey Alan Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism: The Tide of a Great Popular Movement* (The university of Alabama Press, 2002) xiv.
[18] Ibidem, xv.
[19] Tony Johnston, "Mark Twain and The Innocents Abroad: Illuminating the Tourist Gaze on Death," *International Journal of Culture Tourism and Hospitality Research* 7, no. 3 (July 25, 2013), 199, https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcthr-05-2012-0036.
[20] Ibidem, 200.
[21] Ibidem, 210-211.

Furthermore, Johnston identifies an important research gap in thanatourism. He states that tourism is inherently tied to spatial places as well as emotional preconceptions. However, many publications have neglected the spatial elements of thanatourism sites.[22] With his paper, Johnston illustrates that experiential research is a useful tool in expanding our understanding of tourist behaviours and perceptions and urges other authors to consider the relevance of this methodological approach.

Theoretical Framework

In order to properly answer the research question, a theoretical framework first needs to be established. This framework will cover all that is necessary for the interpretation of the experiences of the tourists as well as the sites they visit.

Firstly, the way in which tourists interpret the world around them has often been referred to as 'the tourist gaze'. This concept was first coined by John Urry, who used it to describe how a tourist's perception of a tourist site is shaped and conditioned by memories, prior experiences and social norms.[23] The tourist gaze makes us aware of the complex dynamics between a tourist and their destination. This gaze presents itself through what its contrasted with. Contrast itself is what gives tourism form. In particular, the contrast between the ordinary and the extraordinary induces a pleasurable sense in a tourist. This separates a tourist from their own everyday experiences because what makes things worth gazing upon in the first place is that they are, in a sense, out of the ordinary.[24]

For example, when Twain enters Tangiers, he explicitly comments on people's daily habits because they appears foreign to him.[25] According to Urry, the tourist gaze truly started its development with the rise of modern tourism, with the Grand Tour.[26] Around the time of Twain's travels in *The Innocents Abroad*, tourism became increasingly practiced by non-aristocrats, and with it, the tourist gaze truly developed into an almost unavoidable element of modern tourism practices.

In the past, the tourist gaze has often been categorised by scholars as a purely visual process. However, Urry challenges this notion and states that in recent years, the concept has

[22] Ibidem, 210.
[23] John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, 2011, 2. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446251904.
[24] Ibidem, 4.
[25] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 49-51.
[26] Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, 5-6.

evolved to encompass sensory practices.[27] This recognises the material and emotional circumstances of the tourist and the subject gazed upon.

Embodied experiences form a cornerstone of this thesis. Shahid Rasool et al. explain embodiment theory as a tool that helps us comprehend our own emotional experiences and feelings of others.[28] Defining what 'embodiment' is exactly is hard, as it is a very complex, diverse and subjective concept. In the context of tourism research, Palmer and Andrews explain embodiment as "a way of understanding culture and the self in relation to practices of movement, thinking and sensing".[29] This is also the conceptualisation of embodiment that this thesis assumes.

Furthermore, Palmer and Andrews explain that tourism is a field that is especially suited to embodied research, as tourist spaces are often governed by culturally determined codes of conduct that shape tourist behaviour. Parks, beaches, hotels, airports, etc. all have their own social rules that shape how we engage with the space. A comprehensive understanding of these spaces requires the perceiver to engage with the various embodied responses evoked by the qualities of the surrounding environment.[30]

Researchers Liao Jiang and Larry Yu, in their paper on embodied literary tourism, suggest that the embodied experience of literary tourists in the Chinese Shandong province could be divided into the elements of perception, imagination, understanding and emotion. Perception concerns the literal sensory experience, such as what smells are present or what sights there are to see. Imagination adds a layer on top of this, where the creativity of the human mind alters these experiences based on pre-conceived expectations. For example, a tourist's expectations can determine whether rain feels pleasant or ruins the experience. The understanding stage occurs when tourists reconcile between their real-life senses and their preconceptions. Finally, this culminates in an emotional expression, which, according to Jiang and Yu, varies drastically between people, ranging from being inspired to being disappointed.[31] Jiang and Yu conducted their research by using a tripartite framework that analyses embodied experiences.[32] This framework consists of studying embodied experiences through the body,

[27] Ibidem, 14-15.
[28] Shahid Rasool et al., "Dark Tourism, Thana Tourism, and Ghost Tourism: A Bibliometric Visualization Review for the Last 23 Years (2000–2023)," *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights* 8, no. 3 (September 23, 2024), 945. https://doi.org/10.1108/jhti-04-2024-0300.
[29] Andrews and Palmer, "animating the field," 3.
[30] Liao Jiang and Larry Yu, "Consumption of a Literary Tourism Place: A Perspective of Embodiment," *Tourism Geographies* 22, no. 1 (April 1, 2019), 131, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2019.1586985.
[31] Ibidem, 139-144.
[32] Ibidem, 139.

cognition and situation. Such factors show how embodied experiences are made up of various elements that each interact with each other, something this thesis will also pay attention to.

Through their research, Jiang and Yu establish that pre-conceived notions gained through literature and cultural consumption play a large role in people's embodied experiences of literary tourist sites.[33] However, their findings have larger implications than for exclusively literary tourism experiences. The research shows that sensory and emotional elements, while complex and subjective, can be used to gain a deeper understanding of tourist experiences.

Another significant aspect of understanding experiences of history is determining what historical sites are in the first place. Pierre Nora's concept of a *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory) helps to contextualise what is perceived as historical. Nora separates the concept of history from the concept of memory, positing that history is an imagination or representation of the past, one that overrides what happened in reality.[34] Memory, on the other hand, is what ties the past to the present. It is a less formalised version of the past, constantly evolving and changing.[35] A *lieu de mémoire* is a site that speaks to this sense of memory. It confronts the perceiver with the intersection of history and memory, prompting reflections on life, death, heritage and the passage of time.[36] A site of memory can come to be naturally, instinctively or be created artificially. Regardless of their different origins, sites of memory can all be recognised through the immediate sensory experience the perceiver has at the site. [37] These sites are often material, symbolic and sometimes even functional. A purely material or functional site can become *a lieu de mémoire* when it is imbued with symbolic meaning, which is what transforms ruined Roman arches from a simple constellation of stones into a true *lieu de mémoire.*

Nora's theory on *Lieux de mémoires*, embodiment theory and the tourist gaze all overlap, dealing with the way in which we experience things. The tourist gaze explains how we experience places as tourists, embodiment theory explains how our experiences are shaped by our bodily senses, and the *lieu de mémoire* explains how 'the past' is present at sites. Taken together, this theoretical framework will form the basis for my analysis and interpretation of Twain's experiences of sites of the past, as expressed in *The Innocents Abroad*.

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[33] Ibidem, 146.
[34] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989), 9. https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520https://www.jstor.org/stable/2928520.
[35] Ibidem, 8.
[36] Ibidem, 19.
[37] Ibidem, 18.

Methodology

This thesis presents a methodological challenge. Most modern studies on embodied experiences require extensive interviews or for the researcher to participate in the experiences themselves. The nature of 'experience' is so subjective that any analysis risks the misinterpretation of it. The literary medium through which Twain communicated his experiences complicates the analysis further. When studying embodied experiences through language, the assumption is that such experiences can largely be conveyed through language. Studies, like those done by Johnston, take the literary medium as a vehicle for the expression of individual subjectivity.[38] This expression can, of course, be mediated by the author.

An important part of this analysis is the recognition of this mediation stage. Twain had time to revise his writings and change things to better suit the story. However, by incorporating the analysis of Twain's characteristics, motivations, background and general personality, mediation becomes part of the expression itself. Twain, for example, is known to purposely veil difficult emotions through humour.[39] In this way, both the way that Twain communicates a subject and how he likely experienced it are intertwined.

In my reading of *The Innocents Abroad,* I highlighted words and passages where Twain is communicating feelings and emotions. For my analysis, I mainly focus on how these emotions relate to the passage of time in a historical sense. This means that Twain's feelings on a particular breakfast were not considered, but Twain's description of the Hagia Sophia was. I then base my analysis on the same framework as Jiang and Yu, keeping in mind body, cognition and situation.

With regard to the terminology used in this thesis, the use of 'sites of the past' requires a brief explanation. This is a term I use to refer to ruins, graveyards, sepulchres, castles, archaeological sites, churches, and other similar sites. Sites of the past all engage with the passage of time in some way, such as decay, memory or history. This term goes beyond the concept of 'historical site,' as that is often a site with a specific historical status and can potentially leave out certain sites such as churches and graveyards.

Furthermore, the reason I use a different term than *lieu de mémoire* is because of the latter term's connection to modernity. When discussing Twain's experience of sites of the past, it is important to contextualise his experience of history within the framework of his time. According to Nora, modern society has a clear separation between memory and history, and the

[38] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the Innocents Abroad", 203-204.
[39] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xxv.

term is meant to explore this separation.[40] At the tail end of the Romantic period, the time in which Twain wrote *Innocents*, this distinction was much less codified.[41]

Ultimately, the purpose of this methodology is to reflect upon Twain's word choice and its possible meanings, and in doing so, get closer to understand the embodied experience of history by the tourists of the past.

[40] Nora, "Between Memory and History", 13.
[41] Patrick H. Hutton, "Pierre Nora's Les Lieux De Mémoire Thirty Years After.," in *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, ed. Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 32.

Chapter 1: An American Picnic on a Gigantic Scale.

The Career of Samuel Langhorne Clemens as Mark Twain has a long and storied history. Through literature such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *The Prince and the Pauper*, Twain cemented himself as a great American literary icon of the 1800s, making his name famous even to modern audiences. The distinction between Clemens and Twain can often be blurry. Scholars such as Michelson demonstrate how in Clemens' autobiographical works, such as *Innocents*, 'Mark Twain' is a character.[42] Twain is humoristic and is characterized by mocking everything he found to be ridiculous. However, while one can view Mark Twain as a mere literary creation by Clemens, authors such as Michelson have shown that the character Twain and the person Clemens are inextricably linked.[43]

This chapter will be concerned with establishing the above link. It will explore Clemens' – and by extension Twain's – world views and beliefs. Furthermore, this chapter will contextualise Twain in his historical period and highlight the practical details of the voyage of the U.S.S. *Quaker City*, which would ultimately launch Clemens' writing career to new heights.[44] Throughout this chapter, I will refer to Mark Twain with the understanding that this also refers to Samuel L. Clemens.

1.1 Brief biography

Mark Twain was born on 30 November, 1835 in Florida as Samuel Langhorne Clemens. His writing career began when he was sixteen years old, writing sketches for the local newspaper. Eventually, he would become a pilot for Mississippi Steamboats. At the onset of the American Civil War, Twain volunteered to fight for the Confederacy, deserting only two weeks later.[45] He fled towards Nevada, where he would work in the silver mines in search of wealth. During this period, Clemens first adopted the name *Mark Twain*. While he would not find much wealth in silver, he did publish his first story titled *Jim Smiley and his Jumping Frog* in 1865.

After this success, Twain would pursue a career as a newspaper correspondent, first in the Hawaiian Islands and afterwards in New York. He would end up working for several

[42] Michelson, "Mark Twain the Tourist", 391-397.
[43] Ibidem, 395.
[44] Jeffrey Alan Melton, "Travel Writing", in *Mark Twain in Context*, ed. John Bird (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 91.
[45] Gary Scharnhorst, "Biography", in *Mark Twain in Context*, ed. John Bird (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3.

newspapers such as the *Alta California* and the *New York Tribune*. In 1867, when an advertisement for a landmark voyage across Europe and the Holy land appeared, Twain convinced the Alta California to pay the $1,250 fee in exchange for regular dispatches about the journey.[46]

Twain not only corresponded with the *Alta*, but also wrote twenty instalments to the *New York Tribune*, and in secret negotiated a few more instalments for the *New York Herald* as well.[47] Upon returning from his trip, Twain compiled his dispatches into *The Innocents Abroad or, the new Pilgrims' Progress*. After the success of *Innocents*, Twain continued to publish both travel literature and novels, some of which would see equal or even greater success.

1.2 The politics of Mark Twain

The world view of Mark Twain remains a complicated subject, one that has been tackled by many different authors. Authors such as Stuart Hutchinson note Twain's recurring admiration for authoritarian figures.[48] However, this value was not absolute, as shown by a scene in Innocents where Twain notes the arrival of the Turkish sultan in Paris. He describes Emperor Napoleon III as a strong and enlightened figure, while the Sultan is described as a tyrant.[49]

> "Napoleon III, the representative of the highest modern civilization, progress, and refinement; Abdul-Aziz, the representative of a people by nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, superstitious—and a government whose Three Graces are Tyranny, Rapacity, Blood. Here in brilliant Paris, under this majestic Arch of Triumph, the First Century greets the Nineteenth!"[50]

In the 1871 edition of *Innocents*, Twain revised his passages praising Napoleon III in light of the recent defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian war.[51] France's defeat was such a national embarrassment to the country, that it could not possibly live up to the title of "representative of the highest modern civilization". Michelson explains that if Twain's praise for Napoleon III's regime had been satire, the "embarrassingly" swift defeat would have added

[46] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xvii.
[47] Stuart Hutchinson (Introduction), *The Innocents Abroad: or, The New Pilgrims' Progress*, print (1869; repr., Wordsworth Editions, 2003), vi.
[48] Ibidem, p. xiii.
[49] Ibidem, xiii-xiv.
[50] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad: Or, a New Pilgrims' Progress*, 1st ed. (American Publishing Company, 1869), 126.
[51] Michelson, "Mark Twain the Tourist", 395.

to the comedic effect of the joke.[52] However, since Clemens' genuine praise of France was seemingly invalidated by the Franco-Prussian war, he dropped the passage in later editions. Situations such as these hint at the writer behind Mark Twain, whose humour was informed by his own beliefs.

Twain's relationship with authoritarianism is complicated. On the one hand, he praises authoritarian figures, on the other, he critiques oppression. As a young boy, Twain's father owned enslaved people before the American Civil War.[53] For most of his early life, he had remained in favour of the status quo, maintaining no party affiliation. However, around the time of Twain's voyage to Europe, and after the American Civil War, he affiliated himself with the pro-emancipation and humanist Republican party.[54] This party was also known for its focus on business and catering to well-off Americans, which is important to note in light of Twain's recent status as an affluent individual.[55] Around this time, Twain became outspoken on women's rights, publishing articles with both pro- and anti-feminist angles.[56] Throughout his writings, he does maintain a sensitivity to the plight of the oppressed.[57] In Syria, Twain characterises the 'good nature' of the Syrians and recognises their plight for freedom against Ottoman tyranny.[58] This shows the complexity and perhaps even occasional hypocrisy of Twain's social beliefs at the time of his journey aboard the U.S.S. *Quaker City*.

Another subject close to Twain's heart was that of religion. As with most Americans of the 19th century, religion influenced how Twain contextualised his experiences.[59] His views on religion were complicated and changed throughout his lifetime. Before his journey to Europe, Twain had been inspired by *The Age of Reason*, a deistic manifesto written by the revolutionary Thomas Paine.[60] Deism is the belief that a higher power can be discovered through reason and observation of the natural world. Deists reject the notion that higher powers operate through divine revelation and are thus highly critical of institutionalised religion. This was also the case for Twain, whose religious scepticism characterises many of his descriptions in *Innocents*. This is not to say that Twain had never practiced or experienced organised religion. In his childhood, Presbyterian fundamentalism was the norm and Twain even attended Sunday school for three

[52] Ibidem, 395.
[53] James S. Leonard, "Politics," in *Mark Twain in Context*, ed. John Bird (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 151.
[54] Ibidem, 152.
[55] Ibidem, 152.
[56] Ibidem, 153.
[57] Robinson, "The Innocent at Large", 46.
[58] Hutchinson (Introduction), *The Innocents Abroad*, xiv.
[59] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism,* 49.
[60] Harold K. Bush, "Religion", in *Mark Twain in Context*, ed. John Bird (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 171.

years.[61] His knowledge of Christianity was sufficient, and this base knowledge is what allowed Twain to pen such informed critiques of his peers in *Innocents*. He subtly mocks the spiritual practices of his fellow travellers and often reflects on the faith of the Old World and the Holy Land.[62]

However, Jeffrey Melton raises the point that in *The Innocents Abroad*, the character Mark Twain displays different religious beliefs than Clemens. He notes that while Clemens was not particularly religious, Twain did align himself with (progressive) Protestantism.[63] This is especially clear within the context of Europe, where Twain contrasts his own Protestant religion to the Catholicism of the countries he visits. Melton speculates that this is done in an effort not to alienate the predominantly Protestant American audience that Twain was writing for.[64] This is exemplified by the many critiques Twain has on the Catholic Church throughout the narrative of *Innocents*, including critiques on the egregious Catholic displays of wealth, or the many relics of dubious provenance. These critiques comfort the Protestant reader and re-affirm the "righteousness" of the protestant faith.[65]

Another aspect that marked Twain's identity was his American nationality. For Twain, this was displayed in his focus on American values, such as liberty and republicanism.[66] In *Innocents*, Twain mainly constructs his American identity in relation to the places he visits. In this way, Twain's identity as an American is highlighted by what he thinks is 'foreign' and is thus constructed through the tourist gaze. Examples can clearly be found in *Innocents*, such as when Twain visits Tangiers. Among many examples, Twain compares how the Moors view Spain, and cannot help but comment that America's fleets are also mighty, the locals just do not know it yet.[67] He explains that "The Moors, like other savages, learn by what they see, not what they hear or read", placing Moorish identity in contrast with the more "advanced" powers of the West, such as Spain and the United States.[68]

Modernity and advancement in general are important to Twain. In *Innocents*, he often describes the material condition of the locations he visits. In his descriptions, he shows a particular disdain for decay.[69] In the Azores, Twain comments on the poor condition of the roads, and in Venice, he expresses his disinterest in the St. Mark's Cathedral on account of its

[61] Ibidem, 173.
[62] Ibidem, 171.
[63] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism,* 51-52.
[64] Ibidem, 51.
[65] Ibidem, 51.
[66] Leonard, "Politics", 152-159.
[67] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 57.
[68] Ibidem, 57.
[69] Jacobs (introduction), *The Innocents Abroad*, xx.

weathered exterior.[70] In contrast, in France, he remarks on the highly developed railroads, praising their efficiency and organisation (even though the carriages were less comfortable than he would have liked them to be).[71]

1.3 The Innocents Abroad and Travel Writing

The Innocents Abroad fits into a long tradition of travel writing. By the 18th century, the format of touristic travel writing had been well established. Its primary goal was to engage the reader through vivid and detailed descriptions of travel, mainly taking place in the British Isles or along the tracks of the Grand Tour.[72] This format became so widespread, that by the end of the 18th century, the market became oversaturated. After all, there are only so many ways writers can describe the same places.

In response, a new trend emerged. This new wave of travel literature would focus on the personality of the writer instead of the locations themselves. Carl Thompson describes this shift in *Travel Literature*, explaining that this period gave rise to "sentimental" tourists in search of emotional adventures.[73] According to Thompson, these developments positioned tourists as a symbol of modernity. Around them, a whole industry of travel literature developed, spearheaded by the guidebook publishers Karl Baedeker and John Murray.[74] It was also during this time that the American travel writing genre emerged. People who identified themselves as "American" explored not only the North American frontiers and the Pacific, they also visited Europe in a more limited capacity.[75] This genre was often defined by a patronising and supremacist attitude, dismissing achievements of local (native) cultures and the establishment of a framework for a rising American empire.[76] The core of this attitude came from a powerful need to define the American identity and create a place for the United States in the cultural landscape, even if that was by defining "American" in an oppositional relationship to the rest of the world.

The shift from more materially based descriptions to more emotionally driven travel literature also mirrors the transition of the Enlightened era into the Romantic era. Railroads

[70] Ibidem, xx.
[71] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad,* 72-74.
[72] Carl Edward Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2011), 49.
[73] Ibidem, 49.
[74] Ibidem, 49.
[75] Ibidem, 51.
[76] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism,* 55.

became a staple of travel and the traditional routes of the Grand Tour declined in popularity.[77] This declining popularity was not solely caused by changing travel methods, it was also induced by a growing Romantic interest in the Medieval European past.[78] This led to the declining relevance of the classical framework that defined the Grand Tour and much of the travel writing canon up to that point. [79] In particular, Gothic-Romantic travel writers started to garner an audience, as the increasingly popular Gothic fiction novels were often published by the same companies that published travel guidebooks.[80]

Gothic-Romantic writers were interested in sites of the past, such as castles and graveyards. Their descriptions of these sites often placed an emphasis on "the passage of time" as the main actor in shaping the site's often decayed state. These motifs mirrored ones found in late 16th century art, where time was often depicted to cause the destruction of human achievement.[81] Bennett explains in "Gothic Travels" how the emphasis on time as the primary actor at a site frames sites of the past as natural features, rather than man-made structures. [82] This framing holds particularly true for decayed structures such as ruins, as the passage of time has depoliticised them by washing away all connotations with the building's original function, leaving just an aesthetic appreciation. Bennett describes that the passage of time manifests itself in different ways. The 18th- and 19th-century writer John Gilpin, Bennett explains, puts a particular focus on how sites of the past are changed in his contemporary time.[83] To Gilpin, experiencing the "reanimation" of sites of the past, was a tragedy. He likened it to "uniting living bodies to dead", showing his fear of ruins being anything else than undisturbed features of nature.[84]

By the time that Twain published *The Innocents Abroad* in 1869, the era where Romanticism was the defining motif in literature was considered to be over by academics.[85] The new Victorian period in travel writing saw authors attempt to distinguish themselves from 'regular tourists'. A growing anti-touristic sentiment had taken hold in travel literature, shifting

[77] Amanda Gilroy, "Introduction", in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844*, ed. Amanda Gilroy (Manchester University Press, 2000), 2.
[78] Bennett, "Gothic Travels", 228.
[79] Ibidem, 225.
[80] Ibidem, 224.
[81] Simona Cohen, "Tempus Edax Rerum: Time and Demise of Human Achievement in Renaissance Allegory.," IKON 4 (January 2011), 109.
[82] Bennet, "Gothic Travels", 228.
[83] Ibidem, 230.
[84] William Gilpin, *Observations on the Coasts of Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in 1774*, vol. 4 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804), 51.
[85] Gilroy, "Introduction", 2.

the focus to authors who ventured off the beaten track.[86] While a travel writer's personality was already a big part of Romantic travel writing, it truly became a staple of Victorian-era travel literature. Thompson explains that the sensibility, emotional cultivation and superiority over other tourists were the main markers of a Victorian travel writer.[87] At the head of this evolution, Thompson positions writers such as Stendhal and Dickens. The descriptions found in their work all share similar characteristics. For example, they were less concerned by capturing factual details, but more with conveying the spirit of the place they visited.[88]

Twain was aware of the conventions of travel writing. He had always been inspired by both reading Romantic histories and Enlightened texts, such as those by Josiah Royce and Thomas Paine.[89] However, in the preface to *Innocents*, he makes his position on the matter clear. He warns the reader that he "offer[s] no apologies for any departures from the usual style of travel-writing".[90] His reference to the usual style of travel writing was mainly aimed at a Romantic writing style, meaning that he would try to avoid the overly flowery and sentimental writing style of the previous decades. [91] In a sense, he did accomplish this by relying on more humour, irony and scepticism. His dislike for traditional literalism also rears its head throughout *Innocents*. This mainly took the form of ridicule towards his fellow travellers, mocking them for their Christian literalism, while positioning himself as a more progressive Protestant.[92]

Despite this, he still followed traditions of his time. The claim to honesty and telling an objective story was a trope of the time.[93] Ironically, even the very claim of breaking from tradition, was a more common Romantic rhetorical strategy. This shows that, regardless of Twain's own claims, he both challenges and conforms to tradition. Through both humour and humility, he presents his work as more palatable to his audience. Balancing innovation and tradition was important, especially if Twain wished to achieve commercial success. The reason that the traditions existed in the first place was that they were comfortable to readers. Hence, forgoing all conventions would have ultimately alienated his audience.[94]

While the success of *Innocents* is in no doubt largely due to the skill of Twain as a writer and his mediation of tradition versus innovation, it was not the only factor. The United States underwent a tourism boom halfway through the nineteenth century. This not only meant that

[86] Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 54.
[87] Ibidem, 55.
[88] Ibidem, 55.
[89] Greg Camfield, "History", in *Mark Twain in Context*, ed. John Bird (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 253.
[90] Twain, The Innocents Abroad, xxxiii.
[91] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 28.
[92] Camfield, "History", 255.
[93] Ibidem, 28.
[94] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism,* 4.

people had a desire to travel, but also that they desired to read about it. Almost every notable newspaper featured a travel section, which became the bread and butter of many writers' careers.[95] This is understandable, as an unprecedented number of Americans wanted to travel, yet did not have the means to go far. Melton even describes travel literature as "virtual reality for the nineteenth century".[96] Twain also acknowledges the American touristic fever with a passage in *Innocents*, where a fellow traveller is astounded that the shopkeeper where they are buying their supplies for the travel, is not travelling himself:

> "Never mind, I'll hand it to you in Paris."
> "But I am not going to Paris."
> "How is—what did I understand you to say?"
> "I said I am not going to Paris."
> "Not going to Paris! Not g—— well, then, where in the nation are you going to?"
> "Nowhere at all."
> "Not anywhere whatsoever?—not any place on earth but this?"
> "Not any place at all but just this—stay here all summer."
> My comrade took his purchase and walked out of the store without a word—walked out with an injured look upon his countenance. Up the street apiece he broke silence and said impressively: "It was a lie—that is my opinion of it!" [97]

Of particular interest to American readers, was the alluring romance of distant Europe. Its relics, its historical places, its opulence and grandeur, all provided the perfect backdrop for a holiday. Twain was well aware of this perception, yet he was also an eternal critic. He critiques the fakery of it all, the pretence that Europe is somehow magical, and generally adopts a cynical attitude.[98] In Paris, he play into the tropes mentioned in classic guidebooks. His disappointment at the English-sounding name of his guide and his descriptions of his wishful barbershop fantasies all point to these tropes. He does not just ridicule guidebooks but also pokes fun at himself for believing in the stories to begin with.[99]

While he generally shows a witty awareness of the preconceptions of his fellow travellers and himself, this is not the case in every situation. His expectations of Venice echo the descriptions of other travel literature, focussing on its towers and domes and the general

[95] Ibidem, 17-18.
[96] Ibidem, 17.
[97] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 12.
[98] Robinson, "The Innocent at Large: Mark Twain's Travel Writing", 30.
[99] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xxiii.

wealth of the city. Just as he ridicules his fellow travellers for their mismatched expectations based on literature and myth, so does he experience disappointment. Venice turned out to be in a state of decay, the sunlight was no longer something that glows with a golden mist, it became a treacherous thing, one that shattered his illusions.[100] However, when night falls in Venice, the city matched Twain's expectations. He described Venice as "the princeliest among the nations of Earth", as the dark hides away all the decay.[101]

This demonstrates how Twain's own experiences are also shaped by his preconceived notions and expectations. These notions and expectations were shaped by the same things that he mocked his fellow travellers for. Twain was not only a 'rebel' who broke with the traditions and expectations of the genre, he was also a product of it.

1.4 Picnic with the Pilgrims

In February 1867, an advertisement appeared across the United States for a luxury trip. The advertisement announced that the steamship Quaker City would depart from New York in June of that same year. It would travel to the Holy Land, Egypt, Greece and other noteworthy destinations on the way. The voyage supposedly catered to affluent travellers, costing around $1,250 per adult passenger. Aboard the ship, there was a library, plenty of musical instruments and an experienced physician. [102] There were also plenty of opportunities to head further inland, travelling by rail. Furthermore, the advertisement suggested that passengers should count on about $5 (in gold) of travel expenses on shore per day. Anyone signing up to undertake the voyage also had to be approved by an applications committee, after which they were allowed to buy their ticket.[103]

This excursion was a predecessor of the cruise voyages that would become popular in the 20th and 21st centuries. Twain himself recognises the novelty of this trip and compares it to "a picnic on a gigantic scale."[104] His excursion was, of course, no ordinary picnic, as it would span many countries and last five months and eleven days.

Alongside Twain, there were many other passengers. While Twain had not yet reached the hights of his fame, his sketches titled *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* had gained considerable renown.[105] Of the more well-known and advertised celebrities, none

[100] Ibidem, 30.
[101] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 155.
[102] Ibidem, 4-8.
[103] Ibidem, 7-8.
[104] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 1.
[105] Jacobs, The Innocents Abroad, xviii.

actually showed up. This left Twain as the only celebrity undertaking this journey. Throughout the *Innocents*, few of his fellow travellers are named. They are generally referred to as "the pilgrims" by Twain. That this group of travellers would be a new type of tourist did not go unnoticed. It is woven into the title of his work: "The Innocents Abroad or, The New Pilgrims' Progress". He noted the historical importance of this voyage, dubbing themselves the 'new' pilgrims.[106] Twain himself was not one of these new pilgrims, however. The pilgrims' business was serious, concerned with following the path of the pilgrims of old. Twain was there for pleasure and more light-hearted fun.[107] He, instead, is a playful tourist, simply there to enjoy his picnic. Since Twain does refer to his travel party as the Pilgrims I will do so as well throughout this thesis.

Although not everyone on the Quaker City might have been a pilgrim, they all were one thing: innocent. The first half of *The Innocents Abroad* title refers not to their purpose, as the word pilgrim does, but to their way of seeing and experiencing. The Americans aboard this ship were the "new barbarians", as ignorant of the ways of the Old World as their hosts were of theirs.[108] When abroad, the travellers were wide-eyed and innocent, caught up in their adventure.[109] Being an innocent is about reconciling your preconceptions with the reality of your journey.[110] This negotiation can, according to Twain, shape you, rid you of bigotry and prejudice and help you become more open-minded.[111]

There is, however, another side to this somewhat generous interpretation of the innocent experience. When expectations do not meet experience, tourists can manipulate their own experiences to shape it into their expectations.[112] In *Innocents*, one such scene plays out in Paris. Here, Twain and a small group of fellow travellers were looking for a guide through the city who was fluent in English. Eventually, they found an internationally oriented guide named A. Billfinger willing to guide them. To the travellers, the name of this guide did not sound Parisian or romantic enough. To remedy their mismatched expectations, they decided to address the guide as "Ferguson" instead. [113] From this point in the story forward, any guide, regardless of nationality, is referred to as Ferguson by Twain.

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[106] Michelson, "Mark Twain the Tourist", 391.
[107] Ibidem, 387.
[108] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xxiv.
[109] Michelson, "Mark Twain the Tourist", 396-397.
[110] Melton, "Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism", 79.
[111] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xxvi.
[112] Melton, "Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism", 79.
[113] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 82-83.

Renaming their guides to Ferguson is not an act of open-mindedness, regardless of its comedic value. As such, being innocent (naive) defines the way in which the pilgrims and Twain go about their journey. Situations such as these highlight their lack of cultural knowledge and foreignness. Simultaneously, it makes us aware of the framework through which Twain (and his companions) are experiencing their adventures. This framework is one that tries to shape itself to fit the mould of the tourist's (innocents') gaze.

Twain's own relation to the Pilgrims was also complex. On the one hand, they served as the subject of ridicule and as a source of entertainment for the reader, who is experiencing everything through Twain's eyes. On the other, Twain had genuine relationships with his travel companions. After all, there were only 65 travellers and they shared a journey for over five months. Occasionally, he shows his frustration with his companions, describing his disappointment in their behaviour, instead of simply making a joke out of the situation.[114] In particular, sites of death formed a point of contention between Twain and his fellow Pilgrims. When visiting these places, such as a morgue in Paris or a Capuchin mausoleum, Twain expected a certain level of respect towards the site from his companions. For Twain, this respect should be rooted in sensitivity and empathy, something that his fellow travellers occasionally lacked.[115] In the Capuchin mausoleum, Twain is upset by the way their guide speaks of the human remains stored there. To him, the language used was too technical, more becoming of a surgeon performing a medical operation than of a caretaker of human remains.[116] This aversion to the business-like way of storytelling by their guide shows Twain's desire for a more Romantic experience, one that better fits Twain's own opinions about death, and his own notion of respect.

Twain also expresses genuine frustration with the Pilgrims over disagreements regarding the procurement of souvenirs from sites of the past. During the Pilgrims' stay in Egypt, they travelled to Memphis to visit the site of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. Here, one of Twain's fellow travellers attempts to chip off a piece from the face of the Sphinx as a souvenir. This action is met with scorn from Twain, who likens the man to a reptile and attempts to report him to the authorities. [117]

Similarly, in Sebastopol, the Pilgrims loot the battlefield of the Crimean War for leftover munitions and bones, an act seen as disrespectful by Twain.[118] While the collected bones were eventually identified as belonging to animals (instead of humans), this did little to lessen

[114] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the *Innocents Abroad*", 210.
[115] Ibidem, 210.
[116] Ibidem, 205-206.
[117] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 473-474.
[118] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the *Innocents Abroad*", 209.

Twain's disapproval. These situations remind us that Twain is not merely a literary character and that his companions are not fictional creations who serve as a vehicle for Twain's jokes. These moments of genuine indignation reveal a deeper moral and perhaps even Romantic sensibility. They break the illusion of Twain as a detached and ironic narrator, exposing him as someone who could get deeply invested in the ethics of his travel and behaviour of his group. Through the Pilgrims, Twain's own experiences are reflected, whether they are experiences of discomfort or of comedy.

1.5 A voyage across the Mediterranean

The journey the Pilgrims made across the Mediterranean included many different places. The official itinerary before departure announced the following stops: the Azores, Gibraltar, Marseilles, Paris, Lyons, Switzerland (Optional), Genoa, Milan, Verona, Padua, Venice, Parma (optional), Bologna (optional), Livorno, Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Naples, Rome (optional), Palermo, Athens, Corinth, Constantinople, Sebastopol, Balaklava, Smyrna, Ephesus (optional), Beirut, Damascus (optional), Joppa, Jerusalem (optional) the river Jordan (optional), Nazareth (optional), Bethany (optional), Bethlehem (optional), Alexandria, Cairo (optional), Malta, Cagliari, Palma, Valencia, Madeira, and finally, Bermuda.[119]

This list of destinations is impressive, even by modern standards. It offered many classic cities along the beaten paths of the Grand Tour and the Holy Land. Aside from a large selection of places the steamer would dock, there were ample opportunities for the passengers to visit optional sites by rail. This itinerary was not set in stone, as the steamer would change its destination on its circumstances, such as the weather, war or disease. With a unanimous vote, the passengers could even elect to extend the voyage beyond its planned schedule.[120]

This advertisement sets the expectations for the trip. It mentions that the trip will be comfortable and full of interesting destinations. It places a particular emphasis on the interesting sites of the past throughout its text. Examples of this are its emphasis on the palaces of Genoa, Correggio's frescoes in Parma, the cathedral and tower of Pisa and the Roman baths and amphitheatre in Lucca. Of the Italian portion of the trip, there is an optional route that would take the traveller by rail from Rome to Naples through Herculaneum, Pompei, Vesuvius, Vergil's Tomb and Paestum. Similarly, the journey through the eastern Mediterranean has mention of ancient Crete, ancient Pamphylia and ancient Troy. Finally, Egypt also receives a

[119] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 4-7.
[120] Ibidem, 8.

special historical mention. The ruins of Caesar's palace, Pompey's cellar, Cleopatra's needle, the catacombs and the ruins of ancient Alexandria are mentioned in particular, alongside ancient Memphis and the Pyramids.[121]

All these explicitly advertised sites of the past all share one feature: they are all part of the Western historical canon. While the journey crosses many different countries, including non-Western ones, there is a lack of culturally specific offers. In this list of destinations, the cultural authority of the Grand Tour and its legacy shows itself. This conveys to the passengers that they would embark on a journey that combined the traditional Grand Tour with older Western pilgrimage routes.[122]

While Twain did visit the majority of these destinations, the list is not completely accurate. The Quaker City also visited Tangier in Morocco after its visit to Gibraltar. Here, the Pilgrims faced, for the first time in their journey, a truly foreign place. Twain's reference to the city as "the ancient city of Tangier" further cemented his trip's connection to history.[123]

[121] Ibidem, 5-7.
[122] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the *Innocents Abroad*", 199.
[123] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, vii.

Chapter 2: Pictures of the Past

2.1 Twain's historiographical development

"The past" as a concept is very broad. Is this morning's breakfast considered part of the past? While this question might seem benign, it points out the context-specific understanding of broad concepts such as "the past". Even though there might be some general intuitive understanding of the concept, this does not per definition mean there is a universal experience of time, history and the past. This chapter shall analyse how Twain represents the past in *The Innocents Abroad*. What interpretations does he make at historical sites, what narratives does he repeat or establish and how does he deal with the subject of history?

Scholars have examined Mark Twain's musings on the concept of history and the past before. The author Gregg Camfield sketches the historiographical situation of the 19th century in relation to Twain. He explains that in the early 19th century the Romantic progressivist narratives of history were slowly being replaced with Romantic conservative views.[124] This meant that the predominantly Protestant and Enlightened progressive accounts of history fell out of favour with writers of the time. The Romantic conservative ideals that took their place positioned the origin of Western Anglo-Saxon culture in the medieval aristocratic and piety-based society.[125] These ideas were spread mainly through the increasingly popular genre of historical novels, mainly set in a medieval past.

This Romantic conservative ideology first gained popularity in the United Kingdom, where it was used to strengthen the power of the Monarchy in its fight against the legacy of the French revolution. The romanticisation of the monarchy helped foster a mythology of the past, one that justified the racial and political hegemony of Anglo-Saxonism.[126] This Medievalist sentiment also reached the United States, where it served to establish an aristocratic notion of culture, which in turn also justified the enslavement of others. According to Camfield, American writers such as Harriet Beecher and George Fitzhugh pointed to the French revolution as a cautionary tale of a democracy that had gone too far.[127] They copied the European trend of staging their stories in the Middle Ages and mirrored the aristocratic sentiments that came with that.

[124] Camfield, "History", 255.
[125] Ibidem, 256.
[126] Ibidem, 256.
[127] Ibidem, 256.

Camfield marks Twain's marriage in 1870 as the real start of Twain's engagement with the political debates surrounding history and more specifically, surrounding historical fiction writing. [128] He characterises Twain's legacy as one that ultimately shunned the notion of Medievalism, favouring a more progressive standpoint. Twain's works of historical fiction such as the *Prince and the Pauper*, point out the flaws of aristocratic ideals and use the asymmetry of Medieval society as the source of mockery and ridicule. Twain also linked these Medievalist sentiments to the American South's embrace of the Jim Crow laws, leading to the quasi re-enslavement of Afro American people.[129] He remarked that the loss of the American Civil War had induced a delusion in the South, as its people treat their own history as medievalist fiction.[130]

The position that history occupies in Twain's travel writings also changes throughout his career. Before *Innocents*, Twain was primarily a journalist and a humourist. After *Innocents*, he had a deep personal connection to the tourist literature genre as a travel writer.[131] His later works *Roughing It* (1872) and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) offer a much more personal take on history than *Innocents*. During these two novels, Twain is not a foreigner, he is in his own country. While *Innocents* had a clear distinction between the 'self' (American tourist) and the 'place'(Europe), the later two novels lacked this. [132] Twain tried to capture the style and charm which had made *Innocents* so popular yet struggled to separate his personal past from his tourist persona. Now, his own identity as an American defines his experience, and this is reflected in how he represents the peoples, cultures and histories he encounters. He wrote with a foundational understanding and respect for the subject matter throughout his American travels, rather than masking his opinions through a veneer of mockery and ridicule.[133]

This development was not something that went unnoticed by Twain himself. After his travels, he reflects on history and his position in it. His travel *book Following the Equator* (1897) highlights this fact. Throughout these Pacific travels, he reflects on the way that history is not a representation of moral progress, a notion that was gaining popularity in the United States at the time. Instead, he sees history as a way to interpret the facts of the past.[134] He was critical of the way history had been used to create a nationalist narrative used to justify Western

[128] Ibidem, 256-257.
[129] Ibidem, 259.
[130] Robinson, "The Innocent at Large: Mark Twain's Travel Writing", 38-39.
[131] Ibidem, 95.
[132] Ibidem, 96-97.
[133] Ibidem, 97.
[134] Camfield, "History", 261.

atrocities. He wrote: "There are many humorous things in the world; among them the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages". [135]

While Camfield pinpoints Twain's marriage as the time where his relativistic views on history solidify, traces can already be found in *The Innocents Abroad*. In several passages, Twain displays his ability to view a historical story from different angles, putting himself in the shoes of 'side characters' rather than the protagonists of these tales. One such example occurs when Twain and the Pilgrims decide to visit the Ambrosian library during their stay in Milan. Here they saw a manuscript written by the Roman poet Virgil. Twain, however, showed more interest in the manuscript's annotations, written by the Renaissance writer Petrarch. He introduces Petrarch to the reader as "the gentleman who loved another man's Laura", referring to Petrarch's love poems about a woman named Laura.[136] The subject of Twain's attention is not Petrarch or Laura, however. Instead, he expresses his sympathies for "mr. Laura", the supposed husband of Laura. He laments that mr. Laura's life was overshadowed by another man's love for his wife and that he has been forgotten. According to Twain, the conventional retelling of the story of Petrarch and Laura is "too one-sided—too ungenerous."[137] For Twain, a one sided history is, regardless of its poetic value, unjust.[138]

The story of Virgil and Laura is not the only time where Twain displayed a relativist approach to history. During Twain's stay in Paris, he and the Pilgrims made an excursion to France's national cemetery Père Lachaise.[139] Here, the tomb of Abelard and Heloise gained special attention. Twain recounted the story of the lovers, claiming that very few people know the full truth of the matter.[140] His retelling would be stripped of "nauseous sentimentality".[141] He explained that Heloise, the niece of a catholic clergyman named Fulbert, lived with him to study language and literature. A rhetorician by the name of Abelard fell in love with Heloise and offered to tutor her. Fulbert agreed, not knowing that the two would spend their time talking about love instead of their studies. From this point in the story, Twain offers a departure from the traditional romantic framing of the story and instead focuses on Fulbert's emotions. Twain described Abelard's "seduction" of Heloise as depraved, unmanly and criminal.[142] Eventually, the pair found a way to humiliate Fulbert and be together. In response to the humiliation, Fulbert

[135] Mark Twain, *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World* (Courier Corporation, 1989), 213.
[136] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 127.
[137] Ibidem, 128.
[138] Ibidem, 128.
[139] Referred to by Twain as "Père la Chaise".
[140] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 99.
[141] Ibidem, 103.
[142] Ibidem, 100.

hired a band of Ruffians who mutilated Abelard. While this moment was a low-point in the conventional story, Twain wrote that this mutilation was a just act, one that was warranted by Abelard's actions.[143] Twain lamented the fact that there are no records of what became of Fulbert; "rest and repose be his!".[144] In his framing of the story, Twain portrayed Fulbert as someone whose trust was abused and Heloise as a misused and faithful victim of a vicious seducer.

Twain's telling of both Petrarch and Laura's romance and Abelart and Heloise's story share similarities. In both cases, he discusses love stories, and in both cases, he focusses on a third party involved. He displays a sense of awareness around the communication of history, recognising these stories are told from the perspective of the lovers. His ability to recognise different perspectives and reframe these stories so differently, shows his relativistic position in regard to history. Although Camfield's assertion that Twain's attitude towards history formalised in the late 1870s holds promise, the seeds for his relativism can already be found in *The Innocents Abroad*.

2.2 The past as Tempus Edax Rerum

One theme that is present in most of Twain's descriptions of sites of the past is that of decay. As discussed previously, time-induced decay is a common theme among artists throughout time. From the Tempus Edax Rerum (Time, devourer of all things) motifs to the Gothic-Romantics, the passage of time has often been linked to the wear and tear of human achievement.[145] That many of the sites of the past Twain encountered were ruined, did not go unnoticed by him. Especially throughout his journey in the Middle East, he trekked through kilometres of desert and stumbled upon ruin after ruin, often of Roman origin. Viewing all these ruins, most devoid of human life, had put into perspective the inevitable decay of human achievement and time's ultimate dominion over humanity. This is exemplified in the following passage, where Twain writes about the grey lizards as an embodiment of time's decay as this lizard species seems to pop up at every ruin they have visited recently:

> "Gray lizards, those heirs of ruin, of sepulchres and desolation, glided in and out among the rocks or lay still and sunned themselves. Where prosperity has reigned, and fallen; where glory has flamed,

[143] Ibidem, 101.
[144] Ibidem, 103.
[145] Cohen, "Tempus Edax Rerum", 109.

> and gone out; where beauty has dwelt, and passed away; where gladness was, and sorrow is; where the pomp of life has been, and silence and death brood in its high places, there this reptile makes his home, and mocks at human vanity. His coat is the color of ashes: and ashes are the symbol of hopes that have perished, of aspirations that came to nought, of loves that are buried. If he could speak, he would say, Build temples: I will lord it in their ruins; build palaces: I will inhabit them; erect empires: I will inherit them; bury your beautiful: I will watch the worms at their work; and you, who stand here and moralize over me: I will crawl over your corpse at the last." [146]

In the last sentences of this quote, Twain reveals that he connects the passage of time not just to the decay of structures, but also the decay of people. This link between death and decay seems almost natural - as structures decay, so do people. However, this connection highlights the Christian influence on the way that Twain engages with these sites. The connection between the Christianity and death has always been strong. Death forms a core part of Christian theology, occupying a central and ritualised role.[147] This has given way to many different death-related sentiments, such as the famous *memento mori ("remember you must die"*). These sentiments focus on the certainty of death as well as the subsequent reward of an afterlife in heaven. Throughout the centuries, this concept has become entrenched in Western culture, making people receptive to it.

Christianity has not only given way to a connection between death, time and decay, it also linked tourism to these phenomena. The centrality of death meant that many travellers sought out places of death, dubbed by Johnston as "deathscapes". He explains that these are places that are characterised by the way in which they intensify the interaction between society and death by giving equal emotional weight to both the living and the dead.[148] Examples of such places include graveyards, morgues, mausoleums. In *Innocents*, many different tombs and cemeteries are visited as tourist sites, such as the Père Lachaise, mentioned earlier.

There are many different places where Twain contextualised history through a lens of decay. One of his first remarks upon reaching Athens was that the city is defined by the extreme contrast between the stories of Ancient Greece and the desolate reality of Modern Greece.[149] This stark historical contrast between Ancient and Modern Greece is a trope as old as the Roman times. Twain's thoughts of the history of Greece are stirred by the countless ruins that the

[146] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 361.
[147] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the Innocents Abroad", 204.
[148] Ibidem, 204.
[149] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 256.

Pilgrims encountered on the plains of Attica and the majestic ruined statues that dotted the ruins of the Acropolis.

The strong mental connection between ruins and history is reinforced by many similar descriptions of ruined sites of the past. One prominent example is the ruin of Baalbek, "whose history is a sealed book".[150] While in modern times archaeologists have determined Baalbek to have major Greek and Roman roots, little of this was known in Twain's time as true excavations would not start until a few decades after his visit.[151] The mystery of who built the city did not deter Twain, however. On the contrary, he speculates its founders to be giants or even gods. His admiration of the ruined pillars and walls he found in Baalbek highlight an important factor in Twain's perceptions of decay. His praise goes out to the workmanship and delicacy of the leftover structures, but he cannot help but exclaim that these ruins must have been much more beautiful before they fell into decay.[152] This connection between aestheticism and decay is also addressed during Twain's visit to Genoa, where upon seeing the many villas of the city he wrote:

> "I can not conceive of such a thing as Genoa in ruins. … [T]hese towering broad-winged edifices, we have seldom seen before; and surely the great blocks of stone of which these edifices are built can never decay".[153]

In this passage, Twain describes Genoa as so grand, he cannot imagine it to be decayed to a point where it is no longer beautiful. This reinforces the idea that decay is a negative force, something that ruins the aesthetic value of the things it touches. On the other hand, Baalbek is still beautiful, despite the ravages of time. Regardless of how long Baalbek has existed and decayed, Twain can still aesthetically appreciate it for the things that must have been there once.

Both these examples frame 'history' in a negative light, as something that tarnishes and decays beautiful things. During Twain's visit to Damascus, this sentiment is epitomized. Upon arrival, Twain's account of Damascus, the reader is greeted with a poetic page describing just how ancient Damascus is. Twain even recognises it as "The oldest city of the World".[154] He writes that: "[Damascus] measures time, not by days and months and years, but by the empires

[150] Ibidem, 328.
Mark Twain refers to Baalbek as Baalbec.
[151] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Adam Zeidan "Baalbek | Lebanon, Temple, Ruins, Population, & Map," Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/place/Baalbeck, accessed: 17-05-2025.
[152] Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 328-329.
[153] Ibidem, 118.
[154] Ibidem, 336.

she has seen rise, and prosper and crumble to ruin".[155] Similar to Twain's respect for the grey lizards, Twain's respect for Damascus comes from the fact that, where other places had fallen into decay, this city still existed and thrived. Twain expressed his bewilderment of encountering the city in a short, one sentence poem:

> "Though old as history itself, thou art fresh as the breath of spring, blooming as thine own rose-bud, and fragrant as thine own orange flower, O Damascus, pearl of the East!"[156]

Once again, Twain makes an implicit link between history and decay in this poem. He says that *though* Damascus is old, it is still fresh. This reinforces the logic that antiquity *should* equal decay. After his poem Twain goes on with his musings on Damascus. At the end of his praises, he grants Damascus the title of "The Eternal City", a title usually reserved for Rome.[157] The eternal freshness of Damascus has an almost paradoxical status within Twain's conceptualisation of the past and the passage of time. As seen in Baalbek and Greece, history ruins empires and leaves them desolate. Human achievement shall, over the course of time, crumble and deteriorate and nature, as exemplified by the grey lizards, shall take over. Damascus is older than any other place Twain has visited, and yet still thrives. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Twain uses the language of nature, such as 'fresh', 'breath of spring', 'blooming' and 'rose-bud' to describe the city. Significantly, Twain explains to his readers that Damascus was likely the site where the Garden of Eden was located.[158] Through this statement, Damascus is elevated above human-achievement. It is imbued with a biblical importance, where its existence is a divine exception to the rule.

However, in contrast to his own poem, Twain still described Damascus as polluted, dirty and a sink of uncomeliness. He even claims that if the Garden of Eden was ever there, it is not there now.[159] Twain's critique on the state of Damascus do not result from a natural time induced-decay. Instead, the city's ruin stems from its inhabitants actions, which made it dirty, crooked and diseased.[160] That the city was still standing was not due to its citizens, but due to nature. The area's large amounts of fresh water ensured that, regardless of human action, there would always be a fertile land that cared for its people. This sentiment further positions

[155] Ibidem, 336.
[156] Ibidem, 336.
[157] Ibidem, 336.
[158] Ibidem, 335.
[159] Ibidem, 335.
[160] Ibidem, 335-341.

Damascus as a feature of nature or the divine. It thrived in spite of its people, not because of them.

Twain's engagement with these ancient sites reveals a fundamentally Christian worldview of temporal existence, one where *tempus edax rerum* and *memento mori* serve as both aesthetic principles and spiritual truths. His aesthetic appreciation for Baalbek's ruins and Damascus's eternal freshness stems from their ability to transcend his perception of decay. Damascus in particular even transcends the march of time itself; it is 'eternal'. Perhaps Twain could have engaged with these sites as places that challenged his belief in the inevitable decay of human achievement. Instead, Twain imbued these sites with a mythical, super-natural status. They are exceptions to his rules, because Baalbek was built by gods or giants and Damascus has been blessed by its natural geography and the Garden of Eden. By framing these locations in this way, Twain implies a deeper cultural conviction: that true permanence belongs only to nature and the divine.

2.3 The past through stories

Perhaps it is not a surprise that Twain has an interesting relationship with the past through decay. Scholars such as Jacobs detail Twain's disdain for decay, particularly noting his sensitivity to the condition of pavements, streets, and buildings.[161] Jacobs describes Twain's emotions towards the passage of time as an experience of deep general discomfort combined with ambivalence. While the previous section seems to confirm this, this does not entirely define Twain's descriptions of the past. This section will explore a different side of Twain's representations of the past.

In "Revolutionary Ruins", Elodie Duché explains that during the Romantic age, ruins gained a status of environmental and social phenomena. Whereas before they were often aesthetically enjoyed as artificial decoration, they now represented a commemoration of historical events.[162] The exploration of ruins could offer a connection to past events that formed the foundation for the present. Twain's visit to the Parthenon, for example, was driven by a desire to experience these historical stories connected to the site. As the Quaker City arrived in Athens, it had to go into quarantine due to local cholera fears, and as such, its passengers were not allowed to leave the ship. However, at nightfall, Twain and a few fellow travellers snuck onto the shore, instead of waiting a full day on their ship. He wrote:

[161] Jacobs, *The Innocents Abroad*, xix-xx.
[162] Duché, "Revolutionary Ruins", 207-208.

> "[W]hat were sunsets to us, with the wild excitement upon us of approaching the most renowned of cities! What cared we for outward visions, when Agamemnon, Achilles, and a thousand other heroes of the great Past were marching in ghostly procession through our fancies? What were sunsets to us, who were about to live and breathe and walk in actual Athens; yea, and go far down into the dead centuries and bid in person for the slaves, Diogenes and Plato, in the public market-place, or gossip with the neighbors about the siege of Troy or the splendid deeds of Marathon? We scorned to consider sunsets."[163]

Afterwards, the Pilgrims snuck to the Acropolis, which had been retired as a military fort thirty years earlier and now served as an archaeological tourist site.[164]

The Pilgrims were greeted by the temples that stood upon that hill, described by Twain as the "nobelest ruins we had ever looked upon".[165] The decay of the Acropolis was not a point of critique, as it was in other places, but an indicator of the histories that this place held. Duché describes how in post-revolutionary France, ruined touristic sites often played to the imagination of its foreign tourists, creating a close connection to their imagined version of history.[166] However, Duché nuances this by explaining that for classical sites of the past, this imagination is often less vivid and engaging, since the distance to the source material requires a prior intellectual education on the subject. Twain does show he is familiar with the history behind the Acropolis. His representation of history takes the shape of vivid writing and aesthetic appreciation. He wrote:

> "The place seemed alive with ghosts. I half expected to see the Athenian heroes of twenty centuries ago glide out of the shadows and steal into the old temple they knew so well and regarded with such boundless pride."[167]

His negative perception of historical decay is far less present in his descriptions of this site of the past. Instead, he is able to conjure up some aesthetic appreciation for it. Reflecting upon his view of the ruins of the Parthenon overlooking Athens, he describes to the reader:

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[163] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad,* 246.
[164] Eric Moormann and Janric Van Rookhuijzen, *De Akropolis Van Athene: Geschiedenis van een mythisch icoon* (Prometheus, 2023), 263-264.
[165] Ibidem, 250.
[166] Duché, "Revolutionary Ruins", 215.
[167] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad,* 251.

> "Overhead the stately columns, majestic still in their ruin—under foot the dreaming city—in the distance the silver sea—not on the broad earth is there an other picture half so beautiful!"[168]

The example of the Parthenon exemplifies how Twain's engagement with history and decay was not one-sided. He was capable of aesthetically appreciating the product of decay. In his descriptions of the Parthenon, he explains how a shell dropped into the Venetian magazine inside the Parthenon is to blame for the destruction of its roof (even though it was actually a shell launched into the Ottoman garrison during a Venetian attack in 1687).[169] The inclusion of details such as these suggest that Twain had a pre-existing understanding of (or, at the very least, interest in) the history of this site, which could have influenced his appreciation of it and helped him look past its damaged state.

Another factor that could have impacted Twain's connection between the Acropolis of Athens and Greece's history could be the fascination with the site by the Romantics of the early 1800s. In Germany, many poems were written about Ancient Greece inspired by the ruined Acropolis, such as 'Antike' by Goethe and 'Griechenland' by Hölderin.[170] Within the English-speaking world there was a lot of interest in the structure as well. Lord Byron's poetry on Greece was a direct response to Lord Elgin's acquisition of the Parthenon marbles, opening a discussion that has lasted over two hundred years.[171] Throughout Innocents, Twain makes various references to Lord Byron. He references, for example, how Byron made famous the name of the Venetian doge Foscari through his work and how Byron swam across the Hellespont.[172] This shows that Twain had read, or at least heard of, Byron's work.

Similarly, in Rome, Twain reflects on the connection between the ancient sites he visits and the history he knows. At the Appian Way, Twain and his companions fantasise about long columns of Roman soldiers and chariots marching with spoils of conquest for their emperor.[173] From the top of the St Peter's Dome, Twain was reminded of the story of Romulus and Remus by the sight of an ancient ruined aqueduct and at the Forum Romanum, he made a conscious stop because it was the site of Caesar's murder. [174]

However, out of all the monuments of ancient Rome, Twain spent the most time describing the Colosseum. He writes that everybody knows what it looks like and that it is even

[168] Ibidem, 251-252.
[169] Ibidem, 250.
[170] Moormann and Van Rookhuijzen, *De Akropolis Van Athene: Geschiedenis van Een Mythisch Icoon*, 239-240.
[171] Ibidem, 254.
[172] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 166-258.
[173] Ibidem, 195.
[174] Ibidem, 196.

more beautiful in person. Twain places particular emphasis on the barbarity of the structure, telling the reader stories of Christians who were fed to animals here during Roman times.[175] Here, he once again references Byron, and congratulates himself for not using Byron's phrase "butchered to make a Roman holiday" because he considered it overused.[176] His description of pre-Christian Romans frames them as 'barbarians', who had to be taught love by the holy Mother Church and the Blessed Redeemer.[177] In a twist of irony, Twain explains that the Christians used the Colosseum for "pleasant Inquisition[s]", in which they convinced any non-believers of the "soothing" powers of Christ through methods like thumb twisting and flesh pinching. According to Twain, "One is the system of degraded barbarians, the other of enlightened, civilized people".[178] While Twain focusses on the brutality of the Coliseum, be it by the pre-Christian Romans or the early Catholics, he also describes his experience in an immersive way, with an almost Romantic undertone. He explains how its architecture and environment vividly tell the stories of the grandeur and fall of the Roman empire, the magnificence of its population and the majesty of its construction. He then dubs it "the monarch of all European ruins".[179] The brutal nature of the theatre is paired with a Romantic imagination of what it must have been like to visit this site in its prime. He even presents a whole (fictional) translation of a play bill and gladiator fight which immerses the reader (and himself) in the history of the arena in both its grandeur and barbarity.[180]

There are also many examples in which Twain uses biblical references to contextualise the history of a place they visited. His first reference upon seeing the African coastline refers back to Scripture, which described this part of Africa as cloudy and dark.[181] When visiting the city of Smyrna, the reader receives an explanation of the city's importance within the context of the Bible.[182] Upon sailing past the former location of Troy, Twain remarks that it is a pity that the Trojans died before they could see Noah's Ark.[183] One possible reason why Twain connected sites of the past to Christianity and popular history might have been to engage his readers at home. While sites like the Acropolis perhaps held aesthetic appeal, they lacked contemporary historical significance during Twain's visit. In his descriptions, Twain reconciles

[175] Ibidem, 195.
[176] Ibidem, 204.
[177] Ibidem, 195.
[178] Ibidem, 195.
[179] Ibidem, 196.
[180] Ibidem, 198-203.
[181] Ibidem, 39.
[182] Ibidem, 297-298.
[183] Ibidem, 257.

the popular imagination of history with the reality of the site itself to create an engaging narrative.[184]

2.4 Duality of the past

Twain's representations of history in *The Innocents Abroad* show a duality. On the one hand, Twain presents a rather grim and critical image of the past as a process of decay that will corrode human achievement. On the other hand, Twain also presents a rather Romantic image of history. His sensitivity to decay transforms into aesthetic appreciation in his encounters with the Parthenon and Baalbek, allowing him to reminisce about the heroes of antiquity. This duality points to a deeper tension for tourists: the reconciliation of myth with reality.[185] This tension has been explored by many scholars, most notably by Urry and Larson. They explain that tourist destinations have meanings associated with them, regardless of their reality.[186] These expectations are the result of stereotyping through brochures, photographs and stories. When arriving at a site, the tourist has to deal with the reality of their destination. Often this results in the tourist trying to look for the stereotypes they are familiar with, creating a tension between reality and their imagination.

The place where this tension is perhaps most visible is at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. This place holds an important place in Christendom, as it is seen as the place where Jesus Christ died, was buried and was reborn.[187] Twain's encounter with this site is initially marked by decay. He recoils at the beggars, "tawdry ornamentation," and the chapel's "dismal gloom," where monks chant amidst "dripping rock" like spectral figures.[188] Twain also notes how the Stone of Unction, upon which Christ was prepared for burial, has been covered with a marble slab to protect it from pilgrims chipping away pieces as souvenirs. This degradation mirrors Twain's broader disillusionment with the Old World, where holy sites have become stages for theatrical piety and financial exploitation. This sentiment can be seen through the various encounters the Pilgrims have with Christian relics in Europe. They saw so many pieces of the crown of thorns and so many nails and woodchips from the holy crucifix that it became a regular subject of Twain's mockery. In a Milanese church he wrote:

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[184] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books and Tourism*, 72.
[185] Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, 168.
[186] Ibidem, 173.
[187] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Church of the Holy Sepulchre | History, Significance, Map, & Facts," Encyclopedia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/place/Holy-Sepulchre. Accessed: 19-05-2025.
[188] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 418-424.

> "Among the most precious of the relics were a stone from the Holy Sepulchre, part of the crown of thorns, (they have a whole one at Notre Dame,) a fragment of the purple robe worn by the Saviour, a nail from the Cross, and a picture of the Virgin and Child painted by the veritable hand of St. Luke. This is the second of St. Luke's Virgins we have seen."[189]

The Holy Sepulchre, however, is different. While Twain doubts the authenticity of many of the images present within the structure, he takes a different stance towards his reader. Instead of ridiculing the sometimes dubious provenance of the relics present, he aims to convince the reader of the site's authenticity.[190] As proof, Twain offers that within the Sepulchre the genuine grave of Adam is located. This stirred so much emotion in him that he could not help but weep. It had to be the genuine grave, as he could sense that from intuition.[191] Furthermore, Twain tells the reader that the location of the Sepulchre has to be accurate to the death of Christ, as that event was so memorable that none could have forgotten it. [192] That he concedes authenticity to the Holy Sepulchre is unique, as Twain often takes a more sceptical stance towards the Bible as opposed to his more literalist travel companions.[193] Suddenly, Twain's Romantic notions about the Christian Holy Land take precedence over the critical approach to religion that usually characterises Twain's writing.

Twain's representation of history at the Holy Sepulchre ultimately highlights his identity as both a Christian and a (sceptical) tourist. As a Christian, he cannot wholly dismiss the sanctity of a site so central to his cultural and spiritual inheritance; as a tourist, he cannot ignore the decay and historical contradictions that undermine its authenticity. His portrayal of history at the Holy Sepulchre is neither purely empirical nor purely Romantic; it is a negotiation between the two. While there is not one clear representation of history in *The Innocents Abroad*, one thing is certain: Twain actively engaged with history: be it through the interpreting and reciting of stories such as those of Abelard and Heloise or relating the sites he visits back to the histories he knows and his faith.

[189] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 126.
[190] Ibidem, 423.
[191] Ibidem, 423.
[192] Ibidem, 427.
[193] Bush, "Religion", 171-173.

Chapter 3: Touching history

The largest difficulties with research into the experiences of historical figures are the sources. Emotions are, of course, highly subjective and consist of many elements. While the previous two chapters have primarily focussed on conceptual elements (context and history), this chapter will focus on the physical reality of tourism, also referred to as embodied tourism. This entails being confronted with the objects one has read about, travelling through the heat of the Middle East, and being stimulated by sounds and smells. I will analyse the embodied encounters in *The Innocents Abroad* by examining Twain's sensory and emotional responses to the objects and places he interacts with.

In a modern context, many different scholars have analysed the way in which sites affect our emotions. Geoffrey R. Bird, Hilary Leighton and Ann-Kathrin McLean, for example, have shown that the experiences of tourists visiting memorial sites are indeed "embodied". [194]

Their research highlights that embodied elements such as sound, materials and climate can have a deep effect on tourists. At a memorial site specifically, such embodied elements include silence, mist, graves, touch, movement, and more. This highlights that physical sensory experience is just as crucial to the overall tourist experience as experiences shaped by ratio and emotion (also referred to as cognitive or mental experiences). To what degree a tourist's own experience is defined by their senses over their cognitive experience differs per person, but Bird, Leighton and McLean suggest that the sensory environment of memorial sites create a base level of closeness or connection to the past among most or their research subjects. [195] All in all, their research confirms that the physical experience of a tourist site is intrinsically linked to the overall tourist experience, something that will be explored further in this chapter trough Twain's writings.

3.1 Opening a time capsule

Among all the sites of the past Twain visits, Pompeii is perhaps one of the most memorable ones. Pompeii itself had a long and storied history of tourism before Twain's arrival. The beginning of Pompeii as a major tourist destination can be traced back to the 18th century, when

[194] Geoffrey R. Bird, Hilary Leighton, and Ann-Kathrine McLean, "A Matter of Life and Death: Tourism as Sensual Rememberance," in *Tourism and Embodiment*, 1st ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 133-135.
[195] Ibidem, 134-135.

the king of Naples funded the excavation of the site.[196] With the onset of the Romantic era, the general fascination with slumbering ruins made Pompeii into a real tourist destination and a staple of the Grand Tour.[197] The site had a conscious conservation effort meant to protect the wall paintings from the weather and it had custodians patrol the grounds to protect it from tourists.[198] Part of this effort meant roofing a lot of the roofless houses to protect their interiors from the elements. However, this proved too great a task: By the time Twain reaches Pompeii, he notes the large number of roofless dwellings.[199]

The Romantic idea of Pompeii as a time capsule might not be entirely accurate. Temporally, the destruction of Pompeii was far away for the Pilgrims. Twain dates the event to "remote centuries ago, when the Disciples were preaching the new religion, which is as old as the hills to us now".[200] Unlike Herculaneum, the city had not been entirely covered by the eruption of the Vesuvius. Throughout the subsequent decades, the city had seen many visitors that had left their mark (mainly by repurposing valuable metals such as bronze and lead).[201] Since 1844 Pompeii was even accessible through the Naples railway, which is how Mark Twain would reach this site over two decades later. Nevertheless, the site embodies the *feeling* of a time capsule. Upon arrival, Twain writes:

> "I always had an idea that you went down into Pompeii with torches, by the way of damp, dark stairways, just as you do in silver mines ... but you do nothing the kind. Fully one-half of the buried city, perhaps, is completely exhumed and thrown open freely to the light of day; and there stand the long rows of solidly-built brick houses (roofless) just as they stood eighteen hundred years ago, hot with the flaming sun; … and there are the bake-shops, the temples, the halls of justice, the baths, the theatres—all clean-scraped and neat, and suggesting nothing of the nature of a silver mine away down in the bowels of the earth."[202]

Pompeii deeply inspired Twain to imagine the daily lives of its inhabitants: He was now so physically close to history, that everything he saw lightened up his imagination.

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[196] Nathalie de Haan, "Transporté Dans L'antiquité: De ontwikkeling van Pompeii als 'città Museo' in de 19de Eeuw," in *Ab Urbe Condita: Nieuwe Perspectieven Op de Cultuurgeschiedenis van Rome*, ed. J. Castricum et al. (Leeuwarden: Eisma Edumedia, 2025), 196.
[197] Johnston, "Mark Twain and the Innocents Abroad", 207.
[198] De Haan, "Transporté Dans L'antiquité", 199.
[199] Twain, *The Innocents* Abroad, 236.
[200] Twain, *The Innocents* Abroad, 241.
[201] De Haan, "Transporté Dans L'antiquité", 195.
[202] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 236.

> "Every where, you see things that make you wonder how old these old houses were before the night of destruction came—things, too, which bring back those long dead inhabitants and place the living before your eyes."[203]

When taking a stroll through the city, he notices a peculiarity in the sidewalk:

> "There was a temple on one corner, and it was a shorter cut to go between the columns of that temple from one street to the other than to go around—and behold that pathway had been worn deep into the heavy flagstone floor of the building by generations of time-saving feet! They would not go around when it was quicker to go through. We do that way in our cities." [204]

While Twain barely mentioned any parts of the conservation effort explicitly, he does show he was aware of it. He pointed out that "its streets are cleaner a hundred times than ever Pompeiian saw them in her prime".[205] Through his imagination, Twain is actively working around the sanitised, barren reality of Pompeii. He takes the reader through various scenes that breathe life into the place. He describes a scene at the theatre, where he imagines people lining up with tickets to enter, while they are heckled by the local youths. He then entered the theatre and sat among the imaginary crowd and watched an imaginary orchestra play. When the desolate reality of the site sank in, Twain's immersion was broken: "those empty benches tied my fancy down to dull reality."[206]

Pompeii presents an interesting case. On the one hand, it evokes that classic feeling of a time capsule in Twain. It has been so well preserved that Twain's imagination can be let loose and breathe life into these ruins. However, it is precisely the absence of life that breaks Twain's immersion. The streets are perhaps too clean, just when imperfections engage Twain's imagination the most. The element of sound in particular points to this lifelessness. He off-handedly describes Pompeii as "this old silent city of the dead".[207] He tries to break the silence by transitioning into the aforementioned theatre scene, but even there, the silent absence of life drowns out his imagination. He then imagines the market of Pompeii bustling with traders, but once again, he writes that: "the marts were silent".[208] Silence is such a defining factor for Twain's sensorial experience of Pompeii, that the breaking of it was the thing that brought him

[203] Ibidem, 239.
[204] Ibidem, 238-239.
[205] Ibidem, 237.
[206] Ibidem, 239.
[207] Ibidem, 238.
[208] Ibidem, 240.

back to the real world: “a shrill whistle and the cry of “All aboard—last train for Naples!” woke me up and reminded me that I belonged in the nineteenth century”.[209] Inside Pompeii, there were no sounds of traders yelling, no grinding mills, no orchestras playing, and no bustling crowds. There were only the silent, “ghostly”, remains of the people that had once lived there.[210]

Twain’s takeaway from having experienced the silence of Pompeii is relatively sombre. The last paragraphs of the Pompeii chapter offer the reader a reflection on decay. Twain’s experience confirmed to him that eventually, all human achievement is irrelevant:

> “Men lived long lives, in the olden time, and struggled feverishly through them, toiling like slaves, in oratory, in generalship, or in literature, and then laid them down and died, happy in the possession of an enduring history and a deathless name. Well, twenty little centuries flutter away, and what is left of these things? A crazy inscription on a block of stone, which snuffy antiquaries bother over and tangle up and make nothing out of but a bare name (which they spell wrong)—no history, no tradition, no poetry—nothing that can give it even a passing interest. What may be left of General Grant’s great name forty centuries hence? … These thoughts sadden me. I will to bed.” [211]

3.2 Tourist Fatigue

While Pompeii offered Twain an encounter with a silent, uninhabited site, most of his travels involved vibrant and bustling places. By the time that Twain arrived in Constantinople, he had been travelling for over two months. By this point, he was beginning to show signs of tourist fatigue.[212] This exhaustion frames many of his sensory experiences, primarily from the second half of his journey. Upon landing in the Ottoman capital Twain wrote:

> “Ashore, it was—well, it was an eternal circus. People were thicker than bees, in those narrow streets, and the men were dressed in all the outrageous, outlandish, idolatrous, extravagant, thunder-and-lightning costumes that ever a tailor with the delirium tremens and seven devils could conceive of. ... It was a wild masquerade of all imaginable costumes—every struggling throng in every street was a dissolving view of stunning contrasts. Some patriarchs wore awful

[209] Ibidem, 242.
[210] Ibidem, 237.
[211] Ibidem, 242-243.
[212] Melton, *Mark Twain, Travel Books, and Tourism*, 64.

> turbans, but the grand mass of the infidel horde wore the very red skull-cap they call a fez. All the remainder of the raiment they indulged in was utterly indescribable."[213]

While his discomfort was likely heightened by his bias against the Ottoman Empire and pre-conceived Orientalist notions (a subject deserving of its own research), the root cause is likely exhaustion. Being abroad for two months in foreign lands, can be a very tiring exercise. In contrast to the passage above, Twain's arrival in Tangier early on in his journey was one of excitement. He praises the clothing of the local inhabitants, he is interested in their religious beliefs (albeit somewhat mockingly) and admires the city for its long and coloured history. When contrasted to the passage above, the following quote illustrates Twain's shift in mentality between Tangier and Constantinople:

> "We wanted something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign—foreign from top to bottom—foreign from center to circumference—foreign inside and outside and all around—nothing anywhere about it to dilute its foreignness—nothing to remind us of any other people or any other land under the sun. And lo! In Tangier we have found it."[214]

Foreignness is not just an abstract concept, it is often deeply embodied.[215] When tourists enter unfamiliar environments, their sense of foreignness becomes a total sensory immersion that challenges their habitual ways of moving, seeing, hearing and even smelling the world. Often foreignness can induce a level of irritation or physical discomfort, giving way to negative experiences. While at first being overwhelmed by the crowded markets of Tangier was a curiosity, by the time Twain reaches Constantinople, it was "a picture which one ought to see once—not oftener."[216]

In Constantinople, the Pilgrims visited the Hagia Sophia. Immediately, Twain voices his opinion with the reader, explaining his ambivalence (and outright dislike) to the site. The "rustiest old barn in heathendom", was, according to Twain, dirty, dusty, filled with child-like Turks and "hoary" antiquity, overrated, and ought to be removed from guide-books.[217] He

[213] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 259.
[214] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 49.
[215] Christopher A. Howard and Wendelin Küpers, "Phenomenological Anthropology of Interactive Travel: Mediated Responsivity and Inter-placed Mobilities," in *Tourism and Embodiment*, 1st ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 205.
[216] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 260.
[217] Ibidem, 261-263.

attributes all interest for the site to the fact that it was once a Christian church. When entering, the Pilgrims were asked to remove their shoes:

> "They made me take off my boots and walk into the place in my stocking-feet. I caught cold, and got myself so stuck up with a complication of gums, slime and general corruption, that I wore out more than two thousand pair of boot-jacks getting my boots off that night, and even then some Christian hide peeled off with them. I abate not a single boot-jack." [218]

Taking off his shoes was clearly an unpleasant bodily experience to Twain. First, he specifically writes that "they made" him take off his boots. The act of taking off one's shoes is a standard practice within a Mosque and was not meant to make Twain feel vulnerable. That it did leave him physically vulnerable is evident by the next sentences, where he complains about catching all sorts of complications due to walking without shoes.

This discomfort with foreign cultural and religious practices continues throughout his stay in Constantinople. After the Hagia Sophia, the pilgrims visited the Dancing Dervishes, a group that practices Sufi whirling. Sufism is a mystical practise within Islam, and Dancing Dervishes embody this through ritual dancing. For the practitioners, the dance is a form of praise for Allah.[219] To Twain, it was "about as barbarous an exhibition as we have witnessed yet".[220]

Twain's time in Constantinople is an exemplary case of how his excitement for his journey gave way to exhaustion. What began as a search for the "thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign" becomes a confrontation with cultural otherness that he is struggling to enjoy. This is also seen in his interactions with his ship, the Quaker City. At first, being confined to his ship was an annoyance. The early chapters of *Innocents* highlight how annoying the fellow passengers can be and how badly Twain wanted to be free to wander the continent. However, after a few weeks of travel through France and Italy, Twain wrote:

> "We felt as though we had been away from home an age. We never entirely appreciated, before, what a very pleasant den our state-room is; nor how jolly it is to sit at dinner in one's own seat in one's own cabin, and hold familiar conversation with friends in one's own language. Oh, the

[218] Ibdem, 262.
[219] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Dervish | Mysticism, Poetry, Dance," Encyclopedia Britannica, July 20, 1998, https://www.britannica.com/topic/dervish.
[220] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 263.

> rare happiness of comprehending every single word that is said, and knowing that every word one says in return will be understood as well!"[221]

The familiarity of the environment became a source of comfort and stability. It became a break from the exhaustion of travel. This need for stability and both bodily and mental rest only grew as his journey continued. After a long, hot journey through the "God-forsaken barrenness and desolation of Syria", the Pilgrims reached Mohammad's hill, just outside of Damascus. They enjoyed the beautiful view laid before them, but most of all, they enjoyed the end of his long travel. Finally, there was rest again. Notably, Twain specifically praises the sleeping situation in Damascus:

> "Nothing, in this scorching, desolate land could look so refreshing as this pure water flashing in the lamp-light; … Our rooms were large, comfortably furnished, and even had their floors clothed with soft, cheerful-tinted carpets. It was a pleasant thing to see a carpet again, for if there is any thing drearier than the tomb-like, stone-paved parlors and bed-rooms of Europe and Asia, I do not know what it is."[222]

Twain's tourist experience became increasingly defined by the embodied exercise of prolonged travel. What began as a novelty of discovering foreign customs and crowded marketplaces turned into an irritation at the sensory overload and bodily demands of travel, such as removing his shoes or witnessing rituals he did not understand. Over time, the idea of foreignness gained more negative connotations. In contrast, returning to familiar environments, surrounded by familiar people becomes less of an annoyance, but more a time to recharge. Twain's shifting attitudes highlight how travel, while often romanticized, is also deeply embodied and comes to dictate large parts of his experience of tourist sites. Having a comfortable bed (and a carpet on the floor) becomes almost as important as the destination itself.

3.3 Experience of poverty

The subject of decay was for Twain not only an abstract concept, it was also a physical reality. Chapter 2 highlighted how, for Twain, the experience of history and decay were linked. In this

[221] Ibidem, 178.
[222] Ibidem, 337.

section, I will expand upon the notion of decay to include not only material deterioration but also social decay.

Poverty, in particular, was something Twain encountered everywhere throughout his travels. In cities such as Paris, Venice, Athens, Constantinople, and many more, he witnessed people begging for coins. Twain's language towards these beggars is at the best of times unempathetic and at the worst, dehumanising. Generally, the beggars are portrayed as unclean, disease ridden and lazy.

In his descriptions, Twain generally places an emphasis on the physical condition of the beggars, pointing out their scabs and scars. In Magdala he wrote:

> "As we rode into Magdala not a soul was visible. But the ring of the horses' hoofs roused the stupid population, and they all came trooping out—old men and old women, boys and girls, the blind, the crazy, and the crippled, all in ragged, soiled and scanty raiment, and all abject beggars by nature, instinct and education. How the vermin-tortured vagabonds did swarm! How they showed their scars and sores, and piteously pointed to their maimed and crooked limbs, and begged with their pleading eyes for charity! …. They hung to the horses's tails … and out of their infidel throats, with one accord, burst an agonizing and most infernal chorus[.] … I never was in a storm like that before."[223]

Twain's depiction of the beggars in Magdala is physical and deeply dehumanising. He does stop at merely noting the presence of poverty: Instead, he evokes an overwhelming embodied "storm" that speaks to different senses. His language dwells on the "vermin-tortured" people wearing "soiled and scant" raiment, implying an awful smell. He emphasises that their shouting (sound) is "agonising" and "infernal". Finally, he highlights how the crowd moves as a swarm around their horses, almost evoking a claustrophobic feeling.

Being confronted with people so far outside your social class can be one explanation for the emotional distance Twain keeps to these people. In "Re-encountering Bodies", Jenny Huberman explains how for modern tourists, the disgust for poverty often stems from a place of guilt.[224] This guilt originates from a feeling Huberman exemplifies through a quote by an American tourist she interviewed: "I'm fat, I'm carrying around my expensive camera, and they've got nothing".[225]

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[223] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 373.
[224] Jenny Huberman, "Re-encountering Bodies: Tourists and Children on the Riverfront of Banaras," in *Tourism and Embodiment*, ed. Catherine Palmer and Hazel Andrews, 1st ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 12.
[225] Ibid, 12.

If Twain had such guilty feelings, he did not outright state them. However, on numerous occasions, he does express his frustration with the wealth of local religious institutions in contrast to the abject poverty surrounding them. This was especially evident in Italy, where he, as a protestant, was disgusted by the wealth of the Catholic Church. Here, he remarked:

> "As far as I can see, Italy, for fifteen hundred years, has turned all her energies, all her finances, and all her industry to the building up of a vast array of wonderful church edifices, and starving half her citizens to accomplish it. She is to-day one vast museum of magnificence and misery. All the churches in an ordinary American city put together could hardly buy the jeweled frippery in one of her hundred cathedrals. And for every beggar in America, Italy can show a hundred--and rags and vermin to match. It is the wretchedest, princeliest land on earth." [226]

The poverty of the people at a site clearly impacted Twain. Through his descriptions, poverty is represented as a moral failure. This failure does not belong to the beggars alone, who overwhelm tourists with their pleas for charity, it also belongs to the local institutions such as the Catholic Church, who perpetuate it through their misuse of wealth.

Twain's remarks on the morality of the Catholic Church and the moral failure of living in poverty, can be contextualised through his Protestant American identity. The United States was home to a lot of abject poverty during the 1800s and this concerned the American Protestant Church to a large extent. Many aid programmes were founded to help lift people out of poverty, such as the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. These programmes were informed by Protestant values, such as personal enrichment through labour. Scholars have argued that these charity organisations were largely used as tools to police morality among the poor and ensure social control.[227] As such, these programmes were heavily informed by the belief that being poor was a moral failure, which is also highlighted in Twain's experiences.

As shown in this chapter, Twain's described experience was very much tied to his preconceptions about history, his imagination, his interests and his faith. Given Twain's identity as an American Protestant, his discomfort with the poverty he encountered in Catholic Europe make sense. After all, American Protestant morality dictated that the poor should be kept of the streets and put to work in poorhouses, something the Catholic Church was not doing.[228]

[226] Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 182-183.
[227] Michael B. Katz, *Poverty and Policy in American History* (Elsevier, 2013), 185.
[228] Ibidem, 185-186.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, the central question has been: "How does Mark Twain experience sites of the past in *The Innocents Abroad?*" While it is difficult to ascertain a historical figure's lived experience, this thesis has shown that through an analysis of their written work and context, an approximation can be made. As the first chapter has shown, Twain was a progressive American Protestant humourist and journalist with Romantic sensibilities. In the foreword to *Innocents*, he not only proclaims to write truthfully, but also that his book will be a major departure from the common travel literature of the time. By placing Twain in his historical context, it is clear that he indeed offered eager readers a different, more humorous writing style. However, much of his work still adheres to the staples of the previous generation of Romantic travel writers, evoking a familiar feeling for book-reading audiences in the United States. This reproduction of tradition, combined with his prominent personality (and a general public hype around travel literature) all led to the widespread success of *The Innocents Abroad*.

Throughout *Innocents*, Twain takes his readers on a journey where history becomes a recurring theme. By placing Twain's descriptions of sites of the past in a historiographical context, it becomes clear that his views on history were both informed by Christian theology and prior historical knowledge. The former primarily takes the form of a fascination with the passage of time and the inevitable decay of human achievement but also incorporates a reverence for the divine. The latter came about through a general fascination with history, as he actively engaged with what it meant to write history, adopting a relativistic historical lens in many parts of his work. The way in which Twain engaged with history must have been familiar to the Protestant American audience he wrote for. Particularly during his visit to the Holy Sepulchre, he displays a desire to tell a (Christian) story, one in which he tries to reconcile the discrepancies between his touristic imagination and authentic reality.

These discrepancies also revealed themselves in Twain's embodied experiences. In Pompeii, Twain had to use his imagination to liven up the place and break its "ghostly" silence. Precisely this silence reinforces the idea set out in chapter 2 that decay plays an integral role in Twain's experience, as the whole experience leaves him melancholic. The physical realities of travel also took their toll on Twain's body, as he increasingly grew weary of the uncomfortable and foreign conditions he found himself in. From an embodied perspective, Twain's journey became increasingly overwhelming and his attitude gradually became more cynical. However, simultaneously, he showed more appreciation for the small comforts in life, such as the companionship of his fellow travellers and comfortable lodgings, as his journey went on. It was

social decay, however, that continuously upsets Twain. This reveals that his notion of (social) decay was largely in line with that of other American protestants at the time, who also viewed poverty as a moral failure. By extension, Twain saw it as a moral failure of the Catholic Church, encountered in so many places, that the poor were allowed to roam the streets.

To conclude, Twain's experience of sites of the past was varied and multilayered. All aspects of his identity played a role in how he experienced his journey. Had had this experience on many levels, from embodied to cognitive. Perhaps many of us modern tourists can find ourselves in the experiences of Twain. When I go on holiday myself, I too seek out the stories I have heard so much about, and I too become overwhelmed by large crowds and long journeys. While this thesis has been extensive, more research could certainly be done on the topic. The aspects of Orientalism and religion are worthy of theses in their own right. Furthermore, it could be fruitful to explore the similarities between this era often seen as the dawn of modern tourism and the current state of the tourist industry. In examining Twain's encounters with the past, we are reminded that the act of travel is as much about seeing the world as it is about understanding the people in it.

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