In 1987 the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr Euan Page, made an outstanding appointment to the Chair of Classics at Reading. The successful candidate was Dr Andrew Wallace Hadrill who, at the time of his appointment to Reading, was lecturer in Classics at Leicester University. At that time Classics in Universities in the UK was subject to major reorganisation and reform. Demand for ancient languages, Greek and Latin, was in decline, and new approaches to the study of the Classical world were being developed to attract future generations of students. Classics at Reading was in the doldrums. However, Wallace Hadrill took the initiative to revive radically the subject at Reading: fresh perspectives were brought to bear and new courses developed. In response, recruitment soared and student numbers grew such that it was possible not only to absorb colleagues transferring from Classics departments which were closing elsewhere in the country, but also to make fresh appointments of new blood. Outstanding colleagues joined the department, a measure of their distinction being their subsequent appointments to senior positions at other Universities in the UK and the USA. By the early 1990s Reading Classics had gained a formidable international reputation.

Professor Wallace Hadrill had already begun researching the famous Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, remarkably preserved by the volcanic ash which buried them in the eruption of AD 79, before he took up his appointment at Reading. The application of modern social theory led him to develop significant new ideas about the use of domestic space in the ancient city and the publication in 1994 of his *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* represented the culmination of that work. More importantly, however, working in the ancient city, which had recently been damaged by a severe earthquake, drew his attention to its desperate conservation needs. He realised that there was no quick fix to the problem and that the city required continuous investment in its conservation. Working closely with the Superintendent, Professor Guzzo, he helped galvanise international support for the plight of the ancient city, this in turn putting pressure on the Italian government to do more. Even though each year sees setbacks with major and minor collapses of ancient fabric there is now a universal awareness of, and greater investment in the city’s conservation needs, a cause for which Wallace Hadrill has been, and still remains, a great champion.

In 1995 Wallace Hadrill was given leave by the University to take up the position of Director of the British School at Rome, or the BSR, as it is commonly known. ‘School’ in the title of this organisation gives a false impression of its purpose which is to provide a base for advanced research for UK and Commonwealth scholars in Italy’s capital city in the fine arts, architecture, humanities and archaeology. This includes studio provision for practising artists, usually at an early stage in their careers, to broaden and develop their distinctive repertoires. Established at the beginning of the 20th century, the British School at Rome sits alongside other research institutes established by most European countries as well as the USA. For over a century the BSR has supported a roll call of distinguished research, but Wallace Hadrill’s appointment brought new energy and focus to the organisation. Pompeii was now only a few hours’ drive away which made it possible to develop a research programme to work in tandem with the conservation of one of the residential blocks of the city and to continue to work with archaeological colleagues back in Reading.
Just as the fabric of ancient Pompeii needed constant attention, so too did that of the BSR. With great support from Jo, his wife, his Chairman, Professor Peter Wiseman, and the governing body, Wallace Hadrill raised large capital sums from a variety of charitable bodies to provide the School with better library facilities including state-of-the-art storage facilities for its priceless archives, a purpose-built auditorium for lectures and conferences and a new gallery to show the work of the artists in residence. Some of these new facilities were in place when the School celebrated its centenary at the beginning of the new millennium, but all had been finished by the time Wallace Hadrill had completed 10 years in post in 2004.

Close to Pompeii and suffering the same fate in AD 79 is the city of Herculaneum. Whereas at Pompeii the visitor can walk the length and breadth of the city and enjoy both public and private spaces of the city, only four insulae (city blocks) of Herculaneum have been excavated for the public to see and a visit requires a descent through a great depth of solidified volcanic ash to reach the ancient remains. Though much more difficult to excavate than the ash which buried Pompeii, the preservation of the houses, in all respects, but, perhaps, especially, of their wooden components – doors, windows, furniture, which were carbonised by the eruption, is incomparably better, but their condition is much more fragile. For a variety of reasons Herculaneum is less visited than its neighbour and has, as a consequence, attracted less funding for its conservation than Pompeii. By the 1990s the lack of investment in conservation was all too plain to see: houses were barred off from the public, roofing was collapsing, vegetation was rampant, water was dripping over delicate surfaces, frescoes were losing their pigments, plasterwork was disintegrating, carbonised wood crumbling to dust, ceilings collapsing, etc, etc. Urgent action was required.

With strong support from the then Superintendent of Pompeii and Herculaneum, Professor Guzzo, Wallace Hadrill succeeded in persuading David Packard, and his Packard Humanities Institute, to step in to fund a new conservation effort. So, in 2000 The Herculaneum Conservation Project was set up with Wallace Hadrill as its Director. In the years that have followed tens of millions of euros have been invested in carefully thought through programmes of conservation work, with the improvement of drainage and the restoration of roofing the priorities, and the acknowledgement that continuous care was also necessary to maintain the status quo. Out of this work has also come new knowledge of the city. Work on the drainage, for example, led to the recovery of remarkably well preserved deposits which are shedding new light on the diet and behaviour of its inhabitants. The incredibly rich story that Herculaneum has to tell of city life in the Roman Mediterranean has been brilliantly documented by Wallace Hadrill in his prize-winning *Herculaneum: Past and Future* (2011) and communicated to a worldwide public through his richly informed and engaging presentation of ‘The Other Pompeii: Life and Death in Herculaneum’ for the BBC in 2012.

The context of Wallace Hadrill’s leadership of this great project moved from Reading and Rome to Cambridge in 2009 when he was appointed Master of Sidney Sussex College. However, the demands of the Herculaneum project led him to stand down in 2012 to take up the post of Director of Research of the Faculty of Classics in Cambridge in 2012.

Mr Chancellor, in recognition of the vital and continuing contribution that he has made, and the leadership he is continuing to give, to Classics and to the conservation of two of the ‘greats’ of our European heritage, I present to you Professor Andrew Wallace Hadrill for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters of this University.