

IV. SPOTLIGHT ON NEW RESEARCH

Kearn, O. 2023: *Building Roman Britons: The Use of Novel Construction Materials in the Development of Roman Bath*. Bournemouth University; supervisors: Kate Welham, Mark Brisbane and Derek Pitman. okearn6644@gmail.com

This study investigates the ceramic building materials (CBM) from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Roman Baths at Bath, UK. Ceramic building materials from much of Roman Britain are under-studied, yet our knowledge of the brick and tile from Bath is not limited solely by a paucity of research, but rather than by a lack of synthesis between academic, commercial work, and the study of the Roman Baths itself. This project aimed to create a unified understanding of Roman CBM in the Bath area, bringing together research in Bath and Gloucestershire with novel analyses of the Roman Baths assemblages to develop new understandings of production, procurement and use at the site, local and regional levels. This has been achieved through synthesis of previous studies in Bath, Gloucestershire and north-west Wiltshire to investigate diachronic supply of CBM to Roman Bath (particularly through the novel integration of finds of stamped and relief-patterned tiles) alongside a survey of the assemblages at the Roman Baths. The latter material was subjected to fabric and chemical analyses with portable energy-dispersive X-Ray fluorescence (pXRF) in order to suggest provenance. At the site level, two major phases of construction at the Roman Baths were found to be supplied by the Minety kiln site. This has enabled the redating of the construction of the Spring Reservoir Enclosure to the first century, substantially altering the developmental history of the Roman Baths. At the local and regional levels, it is clear that Minety supplied much of Bath and Cirencester, as well as more distant settlements. This unified picture therefore indicates that centralised production and routine long-distance transport was key to the supply and procurement of these novel building materials in the area of Bath.

Goodfellow, A. 2023: *Deconstructing and Reconstructing Local Identities in the Physical Landscape: The Role(s) of Roman Remains in the Social Changes of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries in the Former Province of Britain*. University of Durham; supervisors: Sarah Semple and David Petts. adam.goodfellow@dunelm.org.uk

This thesis examines the evidence for engagement with and avoidance of Roman remains in the landscape of Sussex and the eastern part of the northern military frontier. This information is used to consider the attitudes that local societies held towards the remains of the past, and how this engagement related to the social changes of the period. The thesis presents the state of current knowledge and prior approaches to studies of the landscape and the early medieval period, and places the study within the wider theoretical and methodological contexts of landscape studies, the use of GIS, and the consideration of 'the past in the past'. It then examines attitudes towards the Roman past as evidence in other forms of cultural expression, ranging from modes of displaying identity and authority to the recycling of Roman metalwork, considering the degree of consistency in attitudes towards the past. The thesis then focuses on engagement with Roman remains in post-Roman Sussex and the north-east military frontier, from southern Northumberland south to the North York Moors. The evidence is contextualised against the distribution of activity in the physical landscape and the presence of prehistoric remains, with a focus on identifying regional and chronological similarities and contrasts, and the reasons underlying these patterns.

Ratcliffe, M. 2023: *Landscapes of Continued Deposition: A Reinterpretation of the Burial of Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval Lead Tanks in Britain*. University of Durham; supervisors: David Petts and Benjamin Roberts. maxratcliffe@gmail.com

Lead tanks from the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods are one of the most distinctive classes of artefact in Britain. This thesis focuses on these artefacts from the late fourth century to the late tenth century for evidence of continuity and change in depositional patterns between these periods. Their findspots range from Cambridgeshire, Cumbria, Kent, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Suffolk, Sussex and Yorkshire as well as examples from Dumfries and Galloway and Scotland. As of 2022, a total of 63 had been discovered, with 38 from the Roman period and a further 25 of their later Anglo-Saxon counterparts. The thesis examines the evidence of continued artefact depositional practices including the condition in which they were buried and the environment in which deposition occurred. It assessed these practices alongside similar acts of deposition with Bronze and Iron Age cauldrons to demonstrate evidence of landscapes of continued deposition, as well as contextualising the burying of the tanks within broader depositional practices occurring in Roman and Anglo-Saxon Britain.

Clifford, K.E. 2023: *Action-Packed and Purpose-Driven: The Functions, Patterns, and Relationships of Extramural Areas Associated with Roman Forts in Northern Britain*. University of Glasgow; supervisors: Stephen Driscoll and Fraser Hunter. katonacliff@gmail.com

This thesis investigates the nature of the extramural areas associated with first- and second-century Roman forts within the northernmost frontier zone of Roman Britain. This frontier zone stretched from immediately before Hadrian's Wall along the Stanegate, north through the Antonine Wall, and into Perthshire where it encompassed the Gask System. Although the number of investigations into extramural areas continues to grow, a relatively small amount of fieldwork and comparative analyses have been conducted on the extramural areas compared to the forts. However, through the use of data gathered by citizen scientists and the reassessing of legacy assemblages, the author was able to supplement modern excavation reports to obtain a sufficient number of assemblages for analyses. Six case studies representing three positions in the Roman fort and road network were identified: Castledykes and Newstead represent forts at important road junctures; Inveresk and Cramond represent harbour forts; and Birrens and Elginhaugh represent road-side forts. By assigning functional categories to artefacts and analysing the compositions of both fort and extramural assemblages through descriptive statistics and correspondence analysis, the thesis identifies the primary activities occurring within these areas and conducts comparative analyses. These analyses showed that the fort and extramural assemblages were statistically different, and revealed the character of activity in the extramural areas and the nature of its relationship to the fort. Sites in similar positions within the Roman fort and road network were then compared to investigate the extent to which location determined primary activities. This resulted in the development of site-type profiles, or sets of characteristics found at each position, that could aid in future identification and analyses of similar sites.

Parker, A. 2022: *The Materiality of Magical Practices in Roman Britain*. Open University; supervisors: Helen King, Emma-Jayne Graham, and Ursula Rothe. adam.parker@ymt.org.uk

This thesis investigates the magical objects and magical materials of Roman Britain. It aims to demonstrate that contextual analysis of both images and materials, based on a provincial dataset, has the potential to shed valuable new light on ancient magical practices. The thesis rejects a top-down analysis of magical practices based on thematic intentions (e.g. love magic, divination, necromancy) and instead proposes a bottom-up approach that situates materials and the importance of materiality as central to these practices. At the heart of the thesis lies a specific definition of the rubric ‘magic’, which is used to create an internally consistent dataset of magical objects from the province of Roman Britain. The gathered data resulted in a dataset of 2,442 objects, representing 15 categories and 46 types of object. This unique dataset is used to approach the subject of magic critically from multiple analytical directions: (1) the analysis of the materials as cohesive groups of different objects; (2) a consideration of some of the most common forms of magical object in the dataset and the implications of their ubiquity; (3) the situating of these objects in spatial contexts and, in particular, a theoretically informed exploration of their material and sensory importance when embodied. The thesis concludes that materials and materiality were important elements in ancient magical practice and that the power of these practices could be drawn from either the inherent properties of certain materials or from specific shapes. Furthermore, it concludes that certain amulets probably had a spatially limited zone where they were most efficacious, that their use as clandestine or hidden objects was meaningful, and that there was greater complexity in the use of these objects than has been previously appreciated.

Miller, K.M. 2022. *Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon, or Both: Exploring Identity and Migration in the Fourth to Seventh Century AD through an Interdisciplinary Approach to Three Southern British Cemetery Sites*. University of Bristol; supervisors: Timothy Knowles and Kate Robson Brown. katherine.miller@shropshire.gov.uk

The transition from the end of Roman Britain and the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons to southern Britain is a pivotal moment in British history. With material culture and mortuary practices as evidence, scholars have long debated the chronology of these interactions and their impact on southern Britain’s landscape. Through an interdisciplinary approach to investigating populations within southern Britain, this thesis attempts to unravel the complexities of migration and identity in the fourth to seventh century A.D. Cemeteries, their material culture, the human remains within them (including the analysis of isotopic data) provide evidence to deconstruct shifts in cultural and social practices through time. The primary focus for this project was the isotopic analysis of three southern Anglo-Saxon cemeteries: Apple Down (Compton, Sussex), Droxford (Hampshire), and Pilgrim’s Way (Wrotham, Kent). The synthesis of archaeological material, osteological assessments, and isotopic measurements allows for a more complex and nuanced view of these sites’ population demographics and chronologies. The resulting research model challenges traditional migration theories and identity theory through mortuary practices and material culture to reveal the complex relationships between and within the populations of southern Britain across time, suggesting that any dichotomy and separation of the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods and peoples is false.

Knowles, V. 2022: *Corn Exchange: Archaeobotanical Evidence for the Impact of Social and Economic Change on Agricultural Production and Consumption in Roman, Saxon and Medieval Britain*. University of Sheffield; supervisors: Glynis Jones, Paul Halstead and Hugh Willmott.

This thesis investigates the influence of socio-economic conditions on crop cultivation and consumption practices in Britain during the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. The archaeobotanical remains of staple field crops (cereals, pulses and flax) are used as evidence for the decision-making of farmers and the consumers of their produce. The introduction, expansion,

contraction and discontinuation of crops consumed and under cultivation are considered against the backdrop of their environmental and political context, in order to identify the impacts of changing economic and social structures on agricultural practice and staple crop consumption. During the Romano-British period, changes in farming strategies were primarily aimed at increasing total cereal output, rather than meeting specific consumer preferences. Distinctive patterns of crop consumption were found at consumer sites (such as military sites, London and other large towns) that reflect the prioritisation of pragmatic concerns with the logistics and cost of food provisioning over Romanised ideals of cuisine. Decision-making in the Saxon period was, in contrast, demand-led. Each new introduction represented an improvement on spelt when utilised for a specific purpose. Instead of two general purpose crops (spelt and barley), the Saxon and Medieval crop spectrum comprised the 'best' bread-making grain (free-threshing wheat), the most nutritious animal feed supplement (oat), the longest and strongest straw for construction and craft-working (rye) and the preferred brewing grain (barley). The demands of farmers, rather than urban consumers, were the catalysts for innovation, although the new introductions were subsequently adopted as cash crops as opportunities for market sale increased. The dietary variety seen in late Saxon and High Medieval towns is less an expression of consumer choice and more a reflection of the stratification of wealth within these communities as a greater variety of culturally inferior foodstuffs was consumed by poorer households.

Burr (now ten Berge), M. 2022: *Living Standards and Market Integration in the Rural Economy of Roman Britain*. University of Oxford; supervisor: Andrew Wilson. tenbergem@hope.edu

Rural non-élites (i.e. 'peasant producers') are thought to have comprised 50–95 per cent of the Roman population, and yet, because they are seen as having operated largely at subsistence level, models of ancient economic development see them as having had little effect on the wider economy. The spread of commercial excavation across Britain (and in other parts of the former Roman world) has created a growing body of evidence pertaining to rural settlement and economy. Economic historians and archaeologists alike have used these data to make arguments about the Roman economy, but continue to debate whether or not excavated rural sites should be seen as representative of the ancient settlement landscape. This thesis examines data from four microregions in southern Britain, arguing, first, that the new archaeological data available since the passing of PPG16 provide representative samples of sites up and down the socio-economic spectrum. Second, it argues that farm sites of all statuses were integrated into local, regional, and supra-regional markets to a degree typically not recognised in current economic models of the Roman agricultural economy. The variegated landscape revealed by commercial excavations demonstrates that this integration was the result of the complex interaction of multiple macro- and micro-economic factors, changes in consumer culture (beginning in the late Iron Age), expanding markets, and site status alongside institutional changes (taxation) – that fostered widespread integration in the Roman world. These data suggest that models of the Roman 'peasantry' and the wider economy must be re-theorised to accommodate changes in rural demand, as well as production, as a possible factor in economic change.

Lee, A.M.R. 2022: *Gods Behind Glass: Exploring Lived Religious Experiences in Museum Displays of Roman Britain*. Durham University; supervisors: Richard Hingley, Ben Roberts and Robin Skeates. a.lee@nms.ac.uk

The archaeology of Roman Britain is commonly encountered in museums. Religion forms a significant element of not only those displays, but popular perceptions of life in the period. This research represents the first holistic study of its display and interpretation in museums, focusing on the lived religious experiences of ancient individuals and communities. This is

achieved through a multidisciplinary study, centred upon the application of the Lived Ancient Religion rubric (which focuses on the religious experiences of ordinary people) to museums. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of displays at 23 museums across Britain are presented, supported by curatorial interviews and an online survey. This study challenges paradigms of archaeological presentations of religious material culture which forefront description and categorisation, instead promoting approaches based upon the situational needs, actions and multisensory experiences of ancient individuals and communities. Moving beyond the detached, art-historical museum gaze requires new approaches to be embedded in documentation and display planning processes. More complex and culturally specific definitions of 'religion' require greater recognition of the significance of non-overtly religious material culture and non-temple-based acts such as structured deposition. Religious experiences can serve as a powerful catalyst for challenging popular perceptions of Roman Britain and the legacy of the Roman empire. This research explores the potential of creative 'storytelling' language, materiality, and multisensory experiences in the construction of displays, culminating in 12 principles for museums wishing to revitalise their approaches to ancient religion.

Lyons, A. 2022: *Aspects of Ceramic Use during the Late Iron Age and Romano-British Periods: A Study of Pottery, Place and People*: University of East Anglia; supervisor: Joanne Clarke. alice.lyons1@ntlworld.com

This short thesis, which forms part of a PhD by publication, concerns Roman pottery in eastern Britain and how the analysis of this material type, which was deeply embedded and entangled in everyday life, provides information on the society which made it. The main subjects covered are the introduction of new potting technology in the Late Iron Age and its adoption in the Early Roman era, a characterisation of pottery fabrics in use; a discussion of ceramic specialisation and the connectedness of mortaria workshops, a review of the manufacture of Black Burnished 'kindred wares', and finally an examination of the use of pottery in the Roman funerary rite.

Sotomayor, G.R. 2022: *Roman Gems and Jewellery: A Quantitative Study on Trends on Roman Gem Supply and Use from the 1st Century BC to the 4th Century AD*. University of Oxford; supervisor: Andrew Wilson. sotomayor.gabriela@gmail.com

Past scholarship on Roman gems has primarily focused on the style and iconography of engraved gems. Recent scholarship by H el ene Guiraud on provenanced gems from Gaul and by Ian Marshman on provenanced gems from Roman Britain has set forth methodological guides by which a collection of gems can be collated and assessed from a quantitative perspective, studying their type, style and iconography. This thesis builds upon the precedent established through their work by moving beyond the limits of a single Roman province, and instead cataloguing and assessing Roman gems from across the Roman Empire. The catalogue of this thesis totals 10,726 pieces from 318 collections, representing the largest assemblage of Roman gems to date. This dataset is not meant to be a complete cataloguing of Roman gems from this period, but instead of a size that mitigates any identification and misclassifications that can be common in the study of ancient gems. Probabilistic chronological distribution and a quantitative methodology are employed to identify broad chronological, geographic, and typological trends in Roman gem use from the first century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. focusing on Gaul, Britain and Egypt, as well as Carnuntum, Caesarea Maritima, Xanten and Aquileia. Gems from Roman coin hoards are also catalogued. The quantitative conclusions present evidence of chronological, geographic and typological trends in gem usage. The thesis

also looks to visual representations of gems and jewellery on Pompeian frescoes and funerary portraits from the Fayum and Palmyra, focusing specifically on how these carved and painted renditions relate to what is observed in the archaeological record. Where past scholarship has addressed Roman gems and jewellery in broad impressionistic tones, this thesis distinguishes itself by presenting quantitative evidence for commonness, rarity and use and assessing geographic and chronological patterns of use. Using this methodology gems become indicators of wealth, the safety of Rome's trading routes and the health of the Roman economy.

Burnett, A. 2022: *Roman Forts in their Landscapes*. Cardiff University; supervisors: Steve Mills, Guy Bradley and Peter Guest. aaburnett@hotmail.co.uk

This thesis examines the siting of Roman auxiliary forts and legionary fortresses within the topography of Wales and along the English–Welsh border. The study focuses on forts that were in use from the start of the Roman invasion of the study area up to the end of the Flavian period (A.D. 96). The siting of these forts has been referred to frequently in modern literature, especially in relation to the themes of control, supply, communication and defence. The siting data used are, however, often imprecise and researchers rarely state their methods of collecting the data. This research aimed to address these problems. A methodology was developed and applied to the forts in the study area. Both fieldwork and a Geographic Information System (GIS) were used to collect data using a systematic approach, so that each fort was considered equally. Location data were collected, including the forts' proximities to certain topographical features, their relative altitude to the surrounding landscape, their orientation, and views from the fort gates. Distance bands were used so that descriptions such as 'near' and 'far' could be defined. The results are used to contribute to and refine interpretations regarding the conquest and occupation of Wales. It is argued that views from the forts focused on sections of large valleys and that these areas were monitored from the forts as a method of control by reminding travellers of the presence and dominance of the Roman army. The results were also used to contribute to the arguments that forts were sited to provide access to local supplies, transport routes for imports as well as communication, and with a consideration for defence where possible. Variations within the results revealed that the evidence is not as clear-cut as that usually described in the literature, which tends not to account for variety in fort siting.

Smither, P. 2022: *Re-evaluating Richborough: A View from the Site Archive*. University of Kent; supervisors: Ellen Swift, Steve Willis, Joanne Gray. Philip.Smither1@westberks.gov.uk

In the early 1920s, the Society of Antiquaries took the decision to excavate the Roman shore fort at Richborough after noticing significant crop marks inside the walls. That initial finding led to 16 years of excavations from 1922 to 1938 over a large area of what was an island during the Roman period. The aim of this thesis is to return to the finds and features discovered during those excavations to understand the site better with nearly 100 years of hindsight and new archaeological techniques and perspectives. Since the early twentieth-century excavations, the Richborough collection has remained largely untouched apart from a few specific object studies and small archaeological interventions. By returning to the excavation archive the thesis provides a new interpretation and chronology for the site using published and unpublished data, with significant insights regarding the early 'military supply base', the quadrifrons monument and the shore fort construction as well as how Richborough relates to other sites in Britain and beyond. It also includes a detailed finds study which informs a reinterpretation of the site augmented with a finds catalogue of nearly 9,000 objects (included in the appendices). Finally, the thesis uses case studies to examine comparable sites; re-date the quadrifrons; examine

recycling at Richborough; conduct an object study (belt fittings) which sets fourth-century Richborough in its wider context; and examine a significant collection of objects from one feature (Pit 20), which demonstrate the potential for new stratigraphic and object studies. The results of this thesis show that the initial publication of the Richborough collection was very much a product of its time, much detail was missed and our current reading of the evidence when compared with evidence from other Romano-British sites makes us rethink both the beginning and the end of Richborough.

Richert, J. 2022: *Amphitheatres and Cultural Change in Roman Britain*. University of Leeds; supervisors: Penelope Goodman and Henry Clarke. james.richert@googlemail.com

Contemporary scholarship on amphitheatres, and those in Britain specifically, focuses heavily upon either the architecture of individual monuments, or on broader typological considerations. However, this approach does not allow for the broader study of the emergence and spread of amphitheatres through Britain in relation to both individual and wider provincial cultural change. This thesis brings these issues together, tracking the spread of amphitheatres and the cultural change that they manifested, including the transfer of knowledge and influence both from elsewhere in the empire and throughout Britain itself. The thesis demonstrates why amphitheatres emerged in Britain and how they differ individually, both architecturally but also as manifestations of a new localised spectacle culture, rather than one that could be considered traditionally Roman or British. It argues that this emerged organically without an agenda from the Romano-British administration or a single centralised drive to build them. While the local wealthy elite had a significant role in the emergence of amphitheatres, engagement from those throughout society was also crucial for this organic process of creolisation to occur on a localised level. The thesis highlights the significance of local choice with the willing adoption and engagement with this aspect of traditionally Roman culture regardless of the activities of the social and government elite. While these monuments are primarily representations of the local spectacle culture within associated settlements, considering the emergence and spread of this cultural change chronologically, many amphitheatres appear connected to the broader transfer of culture, knowledge, and construction capability. The thesis concludes that, while individually unique, these Romano-British amphitheatres also formed what can be considered a new and specifically Romano-British spectacle culture.

Phillips, R. S. 2022: *Beyond the Grave: The Extended Process and Performance of Burials in Roman Britain*. University of Chester; supervisors: Caroline Pudney and Amy Gray Jones. reanna.phillips@chester.ac.uk

Previous archaeological studies of Roman Britain have mainly categorised funerary evidence through grave construction, body treatments, or types of practice. While it is essential to organise large bodies of data for analysis and dissemination, these categorisations have reinforced research conventions which prioritise the excavated grave context as the 'final' and intended 'product' of burial. Furthermore, the underutilisation of theoretical approaches to funerary evidence in Roman Britain has resulted in the decontextualisation of the burial process, neglecting the experiences, motives, and remembrance of mourners in the enactment of funerary performance. In response, the thesis designed and implemented a contextual analysis of 2,653 graves from selected cemetery excavations at Cirencester, Lankhills, York, and eastern London – identifying previously overlooked evidence of the actions of mourners across a range of diverse funerary processes. Using theoretical approaches, these varied data are interpreted as signifying the enactment of commemorative performances and potent interactions between the

living and the dead. Elements of the extended burial process are discussed using evidence of the deposition of hobnail shoes, body containers and the engagement with remains, and the use of dress objects within graves. The thesis reveals how these emotive and varied funerary rituals negotiate the identities and relationships between the living, the dead, the community, and their understanding of the world. Significant elements of funerary performance can be seen within the stages of burial which indicate more nuanced processes than previously presumed. The results of the study demonstrate considerable variation within and between these major cemetery sites, enriching the narratives of these key burial assemblages. The thesis demonstrates the importance of investigating mortuary practices as extended and mnemonic processes, as well as the need to explore the experiences of mourners through theoretical approaches, such as the agency and materiality of the body, emotion, social remembrance, and performance.

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