

Editorial

GRATIARUM ACTIO

It is now thirty-five years since the first volume of *Britannia* made its appearance. In a short time the journal established itself as a publication worthy of being considered alongside major national period journals such as *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* or *Medieval Archaeology*, or international equivalents such as *Gallia* and *Germania*. One of the distinctive features it inherited from the long-standing interest of *The Journal of Roman Studies* in matters Romano-British was the annual round-up of work on Sites and Inscriptions of the Roman period in Britain. The annual recension of newly-discovered inscriptions, on whatever material, has not only kept other workers abreast of new material and its significance but has also hugely aided the compilation of the various volumes and fascicules of *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, with the result that the epigraphic corpus for Britain is probably the best-known and most easily accessible for any province of the Roman Empire.

So it is a real pleasure to record here the remarkable fact that the compilation of the Inscriptions section has now been in the hands of the same two people, Mark Hassall and Roger Tomlin, for thirty years (along with Richard Wright in the earlier years), their first collaboration appearing in Volume VI of the journal for 1975. A quick count of these thirty volumes reveals that Hassall and Tomlin have been responsible for preliminary publication of 1,875 new inscriptions (360 Monumental, 1,515 Instrumentum Domesticum) together with 136 Addenda et Corrigenda, largely revisiting their own initial interpretations. They have also identified 18 pieces as Falsa and 9 as Aliena, as well as noting 32 Changes of Location. These figures are in fact an underestimate as individual entry numbers often comprise several items. Moreover, individual notices are accompanied by footnotes whose length and erudition have few parallels and which are an immense resource in themselves.

All readers of this journal (even those with ‘small Latin and less Greek’) as well as those concerned with epigraphy, literacy, language and the study of many aspects of Roman provincial life and society owe a huge debt to Hassall and Tomlin for their patient labours and committed scholarship. These few words can only be but a partial acknowledgement of the two who *omnibus honoribus apud suos functi*. May they long maintain their epigraphic habit.

BRIAN HARTLEY

Sadly, another contributor from the early years of the journal died this year; the death of Brian Hartley on 26 April took from us one of the outstanding experts on samian ware. Excellent obituaries of him in *The Times* and *The Independent* give a full picture of the scholar and the man; for readers of *Britannia* one must point above all to his great paper on ‘The Roman occupation of Scotland: the evidence of samian ware’, published in Volume III (1972), 1–55. This paper combines profound knowledge of the material with clear appreciation of how it can contribute to our understanding of a series of wider questions. That profound knowledge was the fruit of long years of familiarising himself with a huge corpus of material spread over Western Europe, much of it not easy to come at or to master. It was only by such sustained effort that this mastery and its consequent insights could be arrived at. Brian Hartley also enjoyed the transmission of this expertise and the formation of the succeeding generations of workers in these recondite but fruitful corners of the discipline. And it was not only in this country: after his retirement he and his co-workers of the ‘Pegasus’ group devoted much time to working on

the unpublished material from the great factories of La Graufesenque at Millau in the Aveyron. As one who works in the same *région* I can attest to the way in which French workers were both awed by the extent of the knowledge Brian Hartley and the other *anglais* displayed and delighted by the way in which they shared that knowledge freely: the sense of loss at news of his death was very real.

MANIFESTO

As observed above, *Britannia* has established itself as a major national and international academic journal. This is in large measure due to the efforts of the succession of distinguished editors, and any new editor must be conscious of the need to maintain what they have created and to hand it on at least undiminished and preferably enhanced. To do this requires continuing effort and continuous attention as to how to improve the journal. *Britannia*'s editors have over the years sought to publish authoritative and significant papers, resulting in its current status as a major, refereed journal, thereby giving material in it a certain cachet. For those under the harrow of the Research Assessment Exercise the journal has standing in the hierarchy of publication types envisaged by the RAE. But these virtues can also be seen as vices, ones inimical to the continuing development of the journal. Briefly put, the very reputation or perception of *Britannia* as a 'journal of record' coupled with the exigencies of the refereeing process can discourage some workers from submitting material for consideration. This can mean that the journal is missing out on significant new work that could and should be published in it and that *Britannia* thus risks no longer being representative of the full range of inquiry on Roman Britain. Whatever the realities of this situation, perception, as is well known, generally trumps reality.

The *Britannia* sub-committee of the Roman Society's Editorial Committee has been considering various ways in which the journal might attract as broad a spectrum as possible of contributions. It has considered imitating the route taken recently by *Gallia* of having themed or part-themed volumes; this remains a possibility but has obvious implications in terms of organisation of authors and submissions to the necessary deadlines. There is also the journal's expanded title — A Journal of Romano-British and Kindred Studies — and whether papers from an expanded chronological and geographical range might be sought. This too remains a possibility, and papers from such areas would be welcome. But it was agreed the simplest and most effective route would be for the editor and members of the sub-committee to take a more active rôle in seeking out material which might be suitable and encouraging people to submit it for consideration. Like all journals, *Britannia* can only publish from what has been submitted to it in the first place. So may I take the opportunity of my first editorial to encourage those working on Romano-British and Kindred Studies to consider whether *Britannia* might not be the right vehicle for publication?

PROCESS

It may be helpful to potential contributors to lay out the process and timetable for publication in *Britannia*. The editor can be contacted at any time of year over whether a proposed piece might be suitable for the journal, or a text may be submitted at any time. Once received, a submission will be sent out to two referees chosen for their knowledge of the area of the article, who are essentially asked three questions: (i) is this piece of publishable quality; (ii) is *Britannia* the right place for it; (iii) what, if any, modifications can be suggested to improve it? The refereeing process, as in all refereed journals, is partly to act as 'quality control' for the journal, partly to help the author(s). Anonymised referees' comments are forwarded to the author(s) along with a decision on acceptance or rejection based on those comments. If accepted, a finalised version

of the paper and any illustrative material has to be returned by the end of the calendar year for publication the following autumn. Clearly, the earlier in the calendar year the process is initiated, the easier for all concerned.

N.B. Because of the length and complexity of modern excavation reports with their attendant and necessary suite of specialist reports, the sub-committee has had to take the decision that excavation reports will henceforth not normally be considered for publication in the journal unless they are: (a) of national importance; (b) short.

Simon Esmonde Cleary, Birmingham

June 2005