

Lucerna

Roman Finds Group
Newsletter 45

Contents

Two obsidian objects from London.....	1
RFG Autumn Meeting 2013.....	3
PAS finds from 2012.....	4
Review of RFG Spring Meeting in London	8
Do you Tweet?.....	11
Historical Metallurgy Society news.....	11
Meet the Committee.....	12
Some more fish pendants.....	12
Later Prehistoric Finds Group News.....	13
Two prehistoric objects from London.....	14
Books.....	16
Conferences.....	17

Notes for contributors

Contributions are always welcome – particularly on new finds –so please send them to us, and share them with the rest of the Roman Finds Group!

The address for e-mailed contributions is:

emma.durham@reading.ac.uk

Contributions by post should be sent to:

Emma Durham, Department of Archaeology,
University of Reading, Whiteknights Box 227,
Reading RG6 6AB.

Editorial

Welcome to the 45th^h Lucerna. We have a number of articles on Roman objects, including obsidian finds from London, bone pendants and a roundup of PAS finds, as well as a review of the Spring Meeting at the British Museum. Also included is part of the newsletter from the newly formed Later Prehistoric Finds Group. This group will no doubt be of interest to many members and included here is the introduction to their first newsletter, and to whet your appetites, an article on new prehistoric finds from London. The newsletter contains many more articles and is well worth a read. Check out their website for details.

Emma Durham

RFG DATASHEETS

We are always looking for datasheet contributions, so if you would like to share your expertise and knowledge please get in touch with Gill Dunn. It could be on a particular find type, an industry or present ongoing research, which will be a valuable resource to students, people just starting off in their finds career and curators alike.

Gill Dunn
Publications Co-ordinator
Historic Environment Service
27 Grosvenor Street
Chester CH1 2DD

e-mail: gill.dunn@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

TWO OBSIDIAN OBJECTS FROM ROMAN LONDON

Angela Wardle and Michael Marshall

Introduction

Recently the finds department at Museum of London Archaeology have dealt with two finds which, while very unusual, are near exact parallels for one another. These came from developer funded excavations at Crosby Square (CYQ05) and 20 Fenchurch Street (FEU08) in the City of London. These will appear separately in forthcoming MOLA publications but given their similarity and inherent interest the opportunity has been taken to bring them together here.

Description

Both fragments are made of a glossy brown 'stone' with black flecks and a distinctive fracture surface. Examination by Hazel Forsyth, has confirmed the initial identification of the material as 'mahogany obsidian' a naturally occurring volcanic glass. The Crosby Square example also has small white flecks of what may be 'snowflake obsidian' within its matrix.

The two fragments are clearly from objects of the same type. Each has an octagonal section neatly squared at the surviving end and broken off at the other. Both expand very slightly along their length. The Fenchurch Street example survives to 10.8 mm in length. It is 11.2 mm wide and 9.3 mm thick at the end and expands very slightly to maximum surviving dimensions of 11.6 mm wide and 9.5 mm thick over the 8 mm before the break. The Crosby Square example survives to 42.9 mm in length. It is 14.6 mm wide and 12.9 mm thick and the squared end and expands to 15.7 mm wide and 12.9 mm thick at the start of the break, 35 mm down its length.

Each has a hole drilled into the surviving end. This passes through the smaller Fenchurch Street fragment but tapers in width from an oval section 4 mm across at the end, to a circular section 3 mm across at the break. The Crosby Square perforation is 5 mm in diameter and

stops short at 15 mm in depth after which the handle is solid.

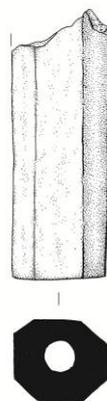


Fig. 1. Mahogany obsidian handle from London

Context and date

The sites both lie near the centre of the city, to the east of the Walbrook stream and sit either side of the site of the Forum. The 20 Fenchurch street example can be securely dated to the second half of the 1st century AD. It comes from a large pit/quarry feature which produced mid-1st-century glass and a large assemblage of pottery which probably belongs to the late Neronian / early Flavian period (Amy Thorp pers comm). On stratigraphic grounds it is assigned to site period 4 which runs from c. AD 70–100

The Crosby Square example comes from one of a series of destruction deposits in an open area. An East Gaulish samian bowl of Dragendorff form 37 gives an early 3rd-century date to the context but this area had previously been the site of both 1st- and 2nd-century buildings and residual finds of 1st/2nd-century date are common from surrounding destruction contexts. It is possible that this find too is residual especially given the early date of the Fenchurch street handle. Overall, an early Roman date seems probable though firm dating for the type is not possible based on so few examples.

Discussion

The most reasonable interpretation of these objects is as fragments of handles for implements in which the drilled perforations would serve to hold the tang of some sort of blade or head. Handles of similar width and octagonal section are found on a range of Roman objects including

surgical implements (e.g. Jackson 1986, spatulas nos 7-9 and bone chisels nos 17-18) and knives (e.g. Manning 1985, plate 53, Q1, Q6 and Q12). Our preferred interpretation is that they represent handles for small personal knives such as razors or pen knives. Given the short length of the tang hole it is likely that the blade was relatively small and it would probably not have been able to withstand heavy duty use.

High quality knife handles were made from a range of other luxury materials in the Roman period including jet (e.g. Hagen 1937 136-8; Allason-Jones 1996, 48) and amber (e.g. McCarthy *et al.* 1983) and these London finds are probably best understood against this background. However, at present we have no strong reason to believe mahogany obsidian was regarded as having anything of the same symbolic and magical properties as these electrostatic materials and its primary interest probably lay in its attractive colour.

Obsidian objects are rare in this country, though not entirely unheard of (e.g. a Roman obsidian vessel from the 1st-century AD native centre at Stanwick, North Yorkshire). There is no source of obsidian in Britain and the material must have been imported from continental Europe, or from further a field in Africa or Asia. Pliny mentions exploitation of sources of obsidian in Italy, Spain, Ethiopia and India as part of his discussion of glass (*Natural History* XXXVI). He refers to it as 'very dark in colour and sometimes translucent, but [having] a cloudier appearance than glass'. He is probably referring primarily to black obsidian, however different types of obsidian can co-occur and it is quite possible that our obsidian derives from one of these sources. He also discusses the use of obsidian for a variety of products including statues, mirrors and vessels but does not mention handles.

Given its rarity it seems likely that mahogany obsidian was a fairly exotic material in the Roman period and that these knives were valuable possessions. We know of no other mahogany obsidian objects from Roman Britain

and would be very interested to hear of any comparable finds in terms of material or form from Britain or elsewhere in the Empire known to members of the finds group.

Archive details and acknowledgements

The archival details for the objects are as follows: Crosby Square (Sitecode: CYQ05) Accession <232>, Context [698] Fenchurch Street (Sitecode: FEU08) Accession<1000>, Context [1624]

Many thanks to colleagues at MOLA in the field team who undertook the excavations and those involved with the projects in post excavation, especially to Ken Pitt and Robin Wroe Brown who gave permission to present details of the finds ahead of the site publications and to Amy Thorp for her work on the pottery dates. Special thanks also to Pinnacle No 1 Ltd who funded the archaeological work at Crosby Square and Land Securities Plc who funded the work at 20 Fenchurch Street.

Bibliography

- Allason-Jones, L. 1996. *Roman Jet in the Yorkshire Museum*, York.
- Hagen, W. 1937. 'Kaiserzeitliche Gagatarbeiten aus dem rheinischen Germanien' *Bonner Jahrbucher* 142, 77-144.
- Jackson, R. 1986. 'A Set of Roman Medical Instruments from Italy', *Britannia* 17, 119-167.
- Manning, W. H. 1985. *Catalogue of the Romano-British iron tools, fittings and weapons in the British Museum*, London.
- Marshall, M, forthcoming. 'The Roman registered finds', in Wroe-Brown, R, 'Excavations at 20 Fenchurch Street', MOLA Studies Series.
- McCarthy, M.R, Padley, T.G. and Henig, M. 1983. 'An amber knife handle from Carlisle', *Britannia* 14, 267-9.
- Wardle, A. forthcoming. 'The Roman registered finds' in Pitt, K. *et al.*, 'Excavations at Crosby Square London EC2: The Roman sequence', for submission as a paper to *Trans, London and Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.*

RFG Autumn Meeting Rediscovering Romans at Chedworth and in the Cotswolds

Friday September 27th at Chedworth Roman Villa and Saturday 28th 2013 at Corinium Museum

Friday September 27th - Chedworth

12-13.30 LUNCH [provided]

13.30-13.40 Welcome & Introduction

13.40-14.10 The redevelopment of the site at Chedworth

Martin Papworth, National Trust archaeologist

14.10-15.00 Current finds from Chedworth
Dr Emma Durham, University of Reading

15.00-15.30 TEA [provided]

15.30-16.00 The conservation and re-display of the Chedworth mosaics

Chris Cleere, Chris Cleere Conservation

16.00 Tour of the site at Chedworth
Nancy Grace, National Trust archaeologist

Please note that we have booked the Thai Emerald in Cirencester for a meal on the Friday evening – details to be confirmed.

Saturday September 28th - Cirencester

09.30-10.10 Early Roman quarrying and building stone use in southern Britain: a geological investigation into 1st-century tombstones and architectural fragments

Dr Kevin Hayward, Pre-Construct Archaeology

10.10-10.30 The Cirencester cockerel figurine: latest research

Ed McSloy, Cotswold Archaeology

10.30-11.00 Gods, men and ménage à trois: small finds and their iconography

Dr John Pearce, Kings College London

11.00-11.30 COFFEE [provided]

11.30-12.10 Re-presenting Chedworth Villa to the public

Professor Simon Esmonde-Cleary, University of Birmingham

12.10-12.45 Small finds in the countryside: some results from the Roman Rural Settlement Project

Tom Brindle, University of Reading

12.45-13.00 Capricornus: a new find from Burrington, Avon

Steven Minnitt, Somerset County Museum

13.00-14.00 LUNCH [not provided]

14.00-14.40 Gill Mill. Near Wantage (Oxon): an overview and some recent finds from a minor nucleated settlement

Paul Booth, Oxford Archaeology

14.40-15.00 You wouldn't drop this lozenge: an Anglo-Saxon brooch and three millennia of art and technology

Jörn Schuster,

ARCHAEOLOGICALsmallFINDS

15.00-15.30 TEA [provided]

15.30-16.00 Corinium Museum: a recent view from the curator

Amanda Hart, Corinium Museum

16.00 Summing up & close

There will then be the opportunity to look around the museum (closing time 5pm)

The cost (with Friday lunch and afternoon tea and Saturday coffee, afternoon tea only) **also includes entry to Chedworth and Corinium Museum:**

RFG members and students: £20 (for both days)

Saturday only rate: £15

Non-members: £25

General conference enquiries:

Emma Durham (emma.durham@reading.ac.uk)

or Sally Worrell (s.worrell@ucl.ac.uk)

RFG members should have received a booking form via email. The form can also be downloaded from the RFG website:

<http://www.romanfinds.org.uk>

A SELECTION OF ROMAN ARTEFACTS RECORDED BY THE PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SCHEME IN 2012

Sally Worrell and John Pearce

The 2012 finds recorded by the PAS comprise 21,077 objects, excluding ceramics. 17,242 individual coin finds, including 24 Greek and Roman Provincial coins were recorded in 2012 account for 82 per cent of the total of metallic finds and 2132 brooches. 2950 fragments of Roman pottery were also reported as well as small quantities of architectural material (tesserae, wall plaster and tiles) and ceramic and stone objects, including querns, weights and sculptural fragments. The range of artefacts recorded encompass a considerable iconographic stylistic and technical diversity including figurines of Mercury, Mars, Cupid, Capricorn, a giant and a riding figure as well as a garnet portrait of Socrates, animal figurines (goat and stag); likely military objects including belt and harness fittings and a hilt guard; personal ornament including a pair of headstud brooches linked by a chain, plate brooches with complex enamel inlay and zoomorphic decoration, household objects including a seal box with complex enamel inlay, mounts, handles and terminals with zoomorphic iconography, a vessel escutcheon, a miniature amphora and two perfume jars, one a complete balsamarium with highly classicizing decoration, the other a panel from a hexagonal enamelled vessel.

In 2012, some significant inscriptions, specifically tombstones from Cumbria and a dedication to a goddess from London were recorded. Building work near the auxiliary fort at Old Carlisle revealed reused fragments of funerary monuments, including a relief-carved bull, a pine cone finial and two fragments of epitaphs (LANCUM-273C82). One is a multiple memorial of seven or more individuals, including adults and at least one child, the other a single individual. The term '*macul.*' in the latter derives from the unusual commemorative phrase *sine ulla macula* or similar, i.e. lived a blameless life. The partly preserved text on the

votive plaque found on the foreshore at Wandsworth (LON-890B55) adds to our understanding of Roman religion in London. It records the fulfilment of a vow to a goddess of uncertain identity, most likely Bona Dea, a deity rarely met outside Italy, and to the *numina* of the emperors. The dedicator was from Pannonia, i.e. modern day Hungary.

Objects associated with religious beliefs and practises recorded in 2012 include 36 figurines, and 15 miniature objects. Of particular note is the figurine of Capricorn found at Burrington, Somerset (SWYOR-29B362). The figurine is 250 mm long, 37.5 mm high, 88.3 mm wide, weighing 886g and survives in very good condition, missing only a single horn. The head is held upright and the body, curving slightly upwards, tapers to the tail which expands into a three-pronged fin. The lentoid eyes are more fully modelled, being framed in raised sockets. The Capricorn has a pointed 'goatee' beard and the tail has moulded ribs separating the three fins. The figurine has no evidence of attachment, but it does balance upright on his elbows and chest and it is possible that a globe was held between the feet.

The sign of Capricorn is most famously associated in antiquity with Augustus. While the precise astrological reasoning for his adoption of Capricorn as symbol remains elusive, it not being his sun sign, diverse positive connotations can be identified, including rebirth of the sun after the winter solstice, association with the Golden Age of Saturn, rule over the West and, through Capricorn's hybrid nature, over land and sea (Barton 1995, 33-51). No other figurines of Capricorn are known from Britain and are uncommon elsewhere but are known from Wiesbaden and Martinsbühel bei Zirl (Tirol) near Innsbruck, both with globes and a socket beneath for attachment to a pole. Capricorn; a mythical creature being half goat and half fish was the tenth sign of the zodiac and the emblem of Legion II Augusta, which was based at Caerleon in South Wales. It was the birth sign of the emperor Augustus (31 BC - 14 AD), under whom the unit was formed and after whom it was named. The figurine has been acquired by the Museum of

Somerset, Taunton

<http://www.somersetroutes.co.uk/story/2013/01/21/roman-treasure-to-be-displayed-at-the-museum-of-somerset/23/>

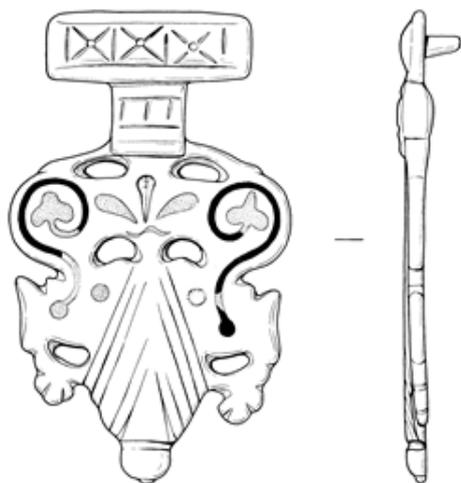
An extremely significant figurine depicting a bearded, armed Mars was discovered in Wrawby, Lincolnshire (LIN-A14AA2). He wears a Corinthian helmet, has luxuriant hair which emerges at either temple from beneath the helmet and the beard is uncommonly full. The god wears a muscled cuirass with tunic beneath, visible at the arms and the waist, and a kilt whose folds are sketchily rendered, a muscled cuirass, a kilt and greaves, his left arm is raised and his hand grasps a now missing object, almost certainly a spear. His right hand holds a sheathed sword, reversed, with its hilt, terminating in an elaborate pommel, in his hand and the tip of the blade at the right shoulder. The iconography combines elements of two types which are usually separated in representations of Mars in this medium. The sword is a rare attribute of Mars and other instances are all of Mars represented as a naked and armed youth type, who carries it, usually unsheathed, in his right rather than left hand. The findspot of this figurine is at the north-eastern extremity of its distribution which focuses on southern and eastern England (Durham 2012, 4.4.1). This figurine was in an exhibition at Keelby, Lincolnshire but was very unfortunately stolen.

An examination of the quantity and distribution of military equipment, namely weapons, vehicle fittings, belts and harness fittings and mounts and other horse gear recorded in annual summaries of PAS finds in *Britannia* (Worrell & Pearce 2012, 383-439). This data comprise *in toto* a small percentage of artefacts reported in any one year (typically *c.* 1% of metal objects). Nonetheless by accumulation over the last 15 years a substantial body of 2202 objects has been documented which may be associated with the Roman army and represent a substantial addition to the corpus of military objects. The offensive and defensive weapons include swords, spears, daggers, chapes, armour and helmets, vehicle fittings specifically those in the

form of an eagle's head above a hexagonal socket, buckles, plates and strap ends from belts and baldrics of the 1st to 3rd centuries AD; phalerae, harness elements such as junction loops, strap unions, strap fasteners; mounts for leather strapping in a variety of forms, square, rectangular, circular with or without a central boss, conical, vulvate, openwork, peltiform, *trompettenmuster*, swastika, phallic mounts, button and loop fasteners, pendants, strap-ends, buckles and baldrics of the 4th century AD, crossbow brooches and late Roman spurs. The highest numbers are found in the counties of eastern England from Yorkshire to Essex where intensive arable agriculture predominates and are frequent finds in the central and north-east Midlands, i.e. a zone between the Humber, Severn and Thames estuaries. With the exception of an arc from the Solent to the Severn few are reported in the coastal counties of southern England or from upland northern and western England and Wales.

Particularly elaborate copper-alloy 1st-century AD military fittings were recorded in 2012, and include the female part of a 'bar-and-keyhole' strap fastener decorated with scrolled curves and white-metal coated found at Owslebury, Hampshire (HAMP-F92224). A complete cavalry parade harness 'trifid' pendant, one of several which would have been suspended from a phalera, has a leaf-like plate decorated with perforations, inlaid niello and white metal and found at Thelnetham, Suffolk (SF-BCB2B5). The form and decoration of the pendant are characteristic of Early Principate equine fittings identified by Bishop and Coulston (2006, 120-1).





Two well preserved, near-identical furniture or box mounts in the form of lion faces or heads, one slightly larger and heavier than the other, found within 5 cm of one another at Wing, Buckinghamshire (BUC-F52027) and (BUC-F53C66) but without traces of other immediately adjacent objects. BUC-F52027 is 97.3 mm long, 35 mm high, 83.1 mm wide, the metal is 3 mm thick and it weighs 224 g. BUC-F53C66 is 83.1 mm long, 35 mm high, 79.4 mm wide, and it weighs 211 g. In both cases the face and especially the muzzle stand proud of the base plate, the fringe of mane around it, with separate curling strands delineated, in progressively shallower relief. The eyes are fully modelled, including brows, lids, pupils and irises. Lion-head mounts, albeit smaller, are relatively frequent finds in south-east England. Many excavated examples suggest that the smaller lion head fittings commonly derive from wooden boxes used as containers for cremated bone, an element of a wider association between funerary art and lion images (Hunter 2003, 59-67). Many examples have been recorded by the PAS. A non-exhaustive list of PAS examples from Gloucestershire to Norfolk includes WILT-3ABB97; WILT-19A504, HAMP-A02501, BH-29C003, BH-IA5EA7, BH-02F2E4, SUR-FCDE51, NMS-E15B77, NMS-DB80B4, NMS-DFC291, NMS-9A60E2, NMS-399314, GLO-0A4CB6. However the Wing mounts are much larger than most instances from Britain; several examples of mounts of comparable size from the lower Rhine, but without the square plate as backing (Menzel 1986, 137-40, nos 348-53, Taf. 130-131).



Thirty seal-boxes were recorded in 2012 including square, leaf-shaped, lozenge-shaped, rectangular, circular and oval examples. Seal-boxes are generally difficult to date due to their use across the Roman period but most can be dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD. However, the discovery of a complete leaf-shaped seal-box found at Wood Burcote, Northamptonshire (NARC-B9DE37) and decorated with red, blue and white millefiori glass inlaid into a red enamel background terminating in a knob which contains red enamel offers new chronological information. Of principal importance, on its discovery, this box was found to contain a Trajan denarius, (NARC-B9F672). Since the denarius is dated to AD 117, a *'terminus post quem'* date for the seal-box is available. While seal boxes have occasionally been found in association with coin hoards, plausibly as the seal for a bag, no parallel has been found to the placing of the coin within the seal-box. As an isolated instance with limited context information it is very difficult to interpret, but it might be suggested to have been a votive offering rather than to have been placed in it for safe keeping (Furger *et al.* 2009; Andrews 2012, 19-22).



A copper-alloy enamelled panel from a small hexagonal flask, broken at one end from Combs, Suffolk (SF-0349E2). The panel is trapezoidal in

shape with the front face with enamelled decoration that is separated into two recessed fields inlaid with blue enamel containing geometric decoration. The larger field carries two sinuous S-scrolls with pointed oval terminals extending into each of the corners. Within each terminal is a comma scroll with cusp; a leaf sprouts from the outside of the two smaller terminals. The second, smaller panel of decoration is mostly lost, but what survives closely resembles the decoration found on the very similar vessel from Corbridge, i.e. the tips of a leaf pair which rise from a pelta. (Hunter 2012, 91-2, 99, fig. 9.4).

On the outside edge of the enamelled fields is a notched border. This piece is very closely paralleled in most of the other vessels of similar form, one of which is a panel from a flask recorded by the PAS from Sutton, Suffolk (SF10415) (Worrell 2012, 75-6, figs. 8.6-8.7).

After coins, Roman brooches are the most abundant object type recorded. In 2012, 2073 Romano-British brooches plus 168 Late Iron Age to early Roman brooches. Of the 136 zoomorphic plate brooches recorded in 2012, 118 were found at Bosworth, Leicestershire and represent the largest assemblage of horse and rider brooches recorded from a single site in Britain. In addition, there are three particularly interesting zoomorphic brooches; a complete brooch depicting a stag moving forward with its head turned back towards its tail and with antlers which curve to form an almost complete ring of Feugère type 29a12c, (Feugère 1985), 383-7, fig.59) from Teversham, Cambridgeshire (SF-98F782. The stag is also represented in similar brooches, for example from Corbridge (Snape, 64, no. 127, fig. 13) and Coventina's Well (Allason-Jones & McKay 1985, 23, no.40), Hockwold, Norfolk (NMS-365796) and Castle Hedingham, Essex (SWYOR-201A54). Closer parallels for the form are recorded from Cirencester and South Ferriby, Lincs (Mackreth 2012, , 183, nos 8047 and 8048, pl. 125). Continental examples are also known, though this specific form occurs very rarely, being paralleled by only two

examples in Feugère's corpus (type 29a12c) (Feugère 1985, 383-7, fig.59).

Other zoomorphic brooches with round cells for enamel of continental type were recorded in 2012. The unusual brooch depicting a running wild boar from Downton, Wiltshire of Feugère's type 29a11a was found at Downton, Wilts. (WILT-5D5B17). The rather narrow head ending in an open mouth with upturned snout, a very high crest and thick neck which carries a double 'mane-like' grooved collar. It carries five enamelled dots in a quincunx, all red with the exception of the blue central dot. This brooch is closely paralleled in a small number of examples distributed across north-western Europe and is of likely continental origin.



Bibliography

- Allason-Jones, L. & McKay, B. 1985. *Coventina's Well: a Shrine on Hadrian's Wall*.
 Andrews, C. 2012. *Roman Seal-boxes in Britain*, BAR British Series 567.
 Barton, T. 1995. 'Augustus and Capricorn: astrological polyvalency and imperial rhetoric', *J. Roman Stud.* 85, 33-51.
 Bishop, M. & Coulston, J. 2006. *Roman Military Equipment From the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (2nd ed.).

- Borrill, H. 1981. 'Casket Burials', in C. Partridge, *Skeleton Green, a late Iron Age and Roman-British Site*, 314-8.
- Feugère, M. 1985. *Les fibules en Gaule méridionale*.
- Furger, A. et al. 2009. *Die römischen Siegelkapseln aus Augusta Raurica*, *Forschungen in Augst* 44, 58-61.
- Hunter, F 2003.. 'Funerary lions in Roman provincial art', in P. Noelke (ed.) *Romanisation und Resistenz in Plastik, Architektur und Inschriften der Provinzen des Imperium Romanum: Neue Funde und Forschungen*, 59-67.
- Hunter, F. 2012. 'Frontier finds, frontier art – views of enamelled vessels' in D. Breeze (ed.), *The First Souvenirs Enamelled Vessels from Hadrian's Wall*.
- Menzel, H. 1986. *Die römischen Bronzen aus Deutschland III Bonn*.
- Mackreth, D. 2012. *Brooches in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain*.
- Snape, M. 1993. *Roman Brooches from North Britain: A Classification and a Catalogue of Brooches from Sites on the Stanegate*, BAR British Series 235.
- Worrell, S. 2012. 'Enamelled Vessels and Related Objects Reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme 1997-2010', in D. Breeze (ed.), *The First Souvenirs Enamelled Vessels from Hadrian's Wall*, 75-6.
- Worrell, S. & Pearce, J. 2012. 'II. Finds Reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme' *Britannia*, 383-393.

POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM: RFG Spring Meeting

Ruth Fillery-Travis

PhD Candidate, Institute of Archaeology, UCL

The Roman Finds Group conference *The Life and times of the inhabitants of Pompeii and Herculaneum* took place on Friday April 19th 2013 at the British Museum, and was comprised of eight papers and entry to the temporary exhibition *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Having not been to an RFG conference before I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was certainly impressed by the large number of attendees; there must have been more than a hundred people in the lecture theatre. Despite the noticeable gender-disparity in academic archaeology it was good to see a broad balance in attendees and presenters, and whilst archaeology societies often seem to

suffer from having a top-heavy age distribution, there was an impressively wide and balanced age-range.

The organisation of the conference was a bit of an oddity, in the context of many I've attended recently, as the majority of the papers were at least 30 minutes long rather than the usual 15-20 minutes, and there was no time for questions. Whilst this was unproblematic for those papers which leant towards summaries of established evidence, for papers like **Ray Laurence's Pompeii: from the city streets to people and houses** where the presenter put forward several theses based on his intensive study of how street space was used in Pompeii, the lack of question time seemed a bit of a missed opportunity.

There was considerable variety in the layout and presentation of papers, but the overall standard was high. One of the best papers was the only short paper; **Andrew Jones** presented for ten minutes on *One pot and its story: a newly discovered amphora from a bar on the Via Consolare, Pompeii*. He synthesised evidence from multiple archaeological techniques, and managed not just to explain why this was important for our understanding of the object but to also use that find to then to hint at wider socio-economic changes in Pompeii, all in ten minutes!

Perhaps the most notable paper was **Hilary Cool's** *Becoming consumers: the inhabitants of a Pompeian insula and their things*. Here she discussed the rise of 'thingyness'; the clutter of finds that we see in Roman contexts from the 1st century, and she contextualised her discussion within theoretical approaches to Roman objects almost effortlessly. I suspect most people didn't even notice she was touching on theory at all! Not only did she counter the general British assumption of Roman society as always object rich, she also used recovery positions of loom-weights to demonstrate that even apparently functional objects may be used symbolically.

There were also two presenters giving papers based on their PhD theses; **Ria Berg** discussing *Did all Pompeian women have mirrors? Investigating gender, toiletries and domestic*

space in Pompeii and **David Griffiths** with a paper on *From dusk 'til dawn: lamps and lighting in Pompeii*. Whilst both were challenged by having to compact their work into thirty minutes, it was clear that the research they had undertaken was solid and significant in nature, and anyone interested in these subjects would do well to explore their work. In addition to the oral papers the conference fee also included entrance to the British Museum's temporary Pompeii exhibition, and at the beginning of the conference **Paul Roberts**, the designer of the exhibition, gave an accessible half-hour paper on its creation.

As a first-time attendee at an RFG meeting, the conference was impressive and an excellent show-piece for the organisation. The attractive nature of the theme drew in a lot of attendees, not just archaeologists but interested members of the public, and the papers chosen were generally solid and engaging without being too technical or challenging for the broad audience. The choice of relatively long papers was a definite success, allowing the presenters to go into greater detail and tackle slightly broader topics than I've seen at other conferences. Thanks to many of the presenters I left the conference with some new ideas running round my head, and look forwards to seeing what the next Roman Finds Group meeting brings.

Abstracts from the Spring Conference

Dr. Paul Roberts

Life and death in Pompeii & Herculaneum

Dr Paul Roberts is head of the Roman collections in the department of Greece and Rome. He is the curator of the Pompeii exhibition and author of *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum* and *Art in Pompeii and Herculaneum*.

Prof. Ray Laurence

Pompeii: from City Streets to People and Houses

Over the last two decades, research on the streets of Pompeii has emerged as a key area for understanding the nature of Roman cities in the first century AD. The body of research on the

wide variety of evidence for street use allows us to see into the public space of the city (some 19% of the city) and consider – what was it like to live next to the street in houses, fulleries and other structures? In the final section of the talk, we will look at ways to identify where children (50% of the population) fitted into the Pompeian landscape.

Ray Laurence's post-graduate research on the subject of Pompeian streets became the book: *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*. His other publications include *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space*, which drew together key researchers on Pompeii to consider the archaeologically ephemeral phenomenon of movement and with Alex Butterworth the popular book: *Pompeii: The Living City*. His recent work has focussed on trying to identify the place of children in Pompeii and will be published in his next book: *Written Space in the Latin West*. He is Professor of Roman History and Archaeology at the University of Kent.

Alex Croom

Housework in the homes of Pompeii and Herculaneum

Maintaining a Roman house - such as collecting water and fuel and throwing out the rubbish - would have occupied many hours of the working day. Pompeii and Herculaneum have provided evidence for many aspects of this work, revealing information about the associated finds that are otherwise rare or invisible in the archaeological record, covering everything from mattress filling to fuller's earth used in preparing or washing cloth, to the differences between what was stored in cupboards and chests.

Currently both Keeper of Archaeology and Archaeological Project Manager at Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, based at Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum, Alex studied Roman furniture to help furnish the reconstructed Commanding Officer's house there, and has also recently published a book on Roman housework.

Dr. Andrew Jones

One pot and its story: A newly discovered amphora from a bar on the Via Consolare, Pompeii

During excavations by the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii a broken amphora was discovered in a building tentatively identified as a 'bar' on the Via Consolare. The amphora was closely associated with a very large number of minute fish bones which are thought to be the residue of the famous Roman condiment garum or liquamen. This short paper will summarise the research that has been carried out on the ceramic vessel and its contents.

Andrew Jones is currently a research associate of the Department of Archaeology, University of York and the York Archaeological Trust.

Dr. Ria Berg

Did all Pompeian women have mirrors? Investigating gender, toiletries and domestic space in Pompeii

One of the unique features about Pompeii is the preservation of large groups of objects found inside its houses, often in places where they were originally used or stored. This paper examines the contents of Pompeian with a focus on one very strongly gender-associated object; the mirror. By looking at the relationship between Pompeian mirrors and their material context and setting them also in the larger spatial context of the houses where they were found, new and more realistic information can be obtained not only about the role and significance of such activities as adornment and grooming in the Roman daily life in particular but also about the general organisation of domestic activities.

Dr. Ria Berg is currently Assistant Director of the *Institutum Romanum Finlandiae* at Pompeii. Her doctoral thesis (University of Helsinki, 2010, currently being prepared for publication) was on the context of female toiletries in Pompeian houses. She has been working on the finds from several excavations in Italy: at Lake Nemi and ongoing work in Pompeii.

David Griffiths

From dusk 'til dawn: Lamps and lighting in Pompeii

The socio-cultural choice to create and consume artificial light is a significant one, and suggests a desire and/or necessity to extend the day, effecting behaviour and perceptions of objects and space. Nocturnal activities are structured by access to artificial light, and the use of lighting equipment is closely related to a Roman, Mediterranean urban lifestyle. This paper analyses lighting equipment from a wide range of functionally diverse structures at Pompeii to assess how the consumption of artificial light impacted and influenced social relations and the urban economy. The research presented here forms part of a project testing the hypothesis that a reliable and affordable supply of fuel and lighting equipment was a major constituent in Roman urban living.

David is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Leicester. He has worked as Ceramics Specialist with the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii since 2005; the results of this research will be presented in the forthcoming *An Urban Community at Pompeii. Research on Insula VI.1 by the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii: the House of the Surgeon Ceramics*. He also works as Ceramics Specialist for the Vagnari Vicus (University of Sheffield, UK) and Cemetery (McMaster University, Canada) projects in Puglia.

Dr. Hilary Cool

Becoming consumers: The inhabitants of a Pompeian insula and their things

In Britain we associate the Roman period as being one in which the amount of things people were using suddenly explodes. The excavations in Insula VI.1 have provided a wealth of material with which to explore when the transformation happens. The nearly 3000 small finds recovered allow us to plot the varying trajectories of object classes in the century and a half before the eruption. It can be shown that the 'thingyness' of Roman life only emerges in the final few decades of the Insula's pre-eruption existence. The insula's finds also provide a useful corrective to

the picture of life that can emerge from any exhibition on the Vesuvian sites.

Hilary Cool is a director of Barbican Research Associates, a post-excavation company which rescues unloved excavations and brings them to publication. As a small finds and glass specialist she works with many units in Britain, and is currently completing projects on sites in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. She has been involved with the finds from Insula VI.1 since 2001 and is currently working on the final publication.

Dr. Richard Hobbs

Small change in ancient Pompeii

The talk will discuss the 1,500 bronze coins recovered from excavations in Regio VI, 1 by the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii. The coins represent the first ‘small change’ used by the inhabitants of Pompeii from the 2nd century BC until the time of the eruption in AD 79. The coins themselves were imported from across the Mediterranean, but in particular from Ebusus and Massalia; they soon began to be copied locally. They therefore give an insight into the wider connections which developed between Pompeii, Gaul and Spain, which, when combined with other evidence such as shipwrecks, show us how Pompeii was a key component of a complex trading network in produce such as wine, olive oil, fish sauce and locally made pottery.

Richard Hobbs is curator of Roman Britain at the British Museum. For a number of years he has been studying the coinage of Pompeii, and has just published *Currency and exchange in Ancient Pompeii* with the Institute of Classical Studies. He is also working on a monograph concerning the late Roman silver plate from Mildenhall.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE RFG

The Roman Finds Group has been working on its communications for the last couple of years. RFG Secretary Nicola Hembrey curates the

RFG digital presence, via our website www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk and also on Twitter.

Nicola live-tweeted from our 2012 Spring Conference at the University of Reading; you can find those tweets under the hashtag #rfg2012. Nicola also live-tweeted from our 2013 Spring Conference at the British Museum, along with several other attendees; Ruth Fillery-Travis has kindly compiled these for us below. Live-tweeting offers a connection from Conference to a wider audience of people interested in the topic, who are able to hear several different perspectives on papers presented, and to interact with speakers and attendees. Nicola has recently set up the @RomanFindsGrp Twitter feed, so do please follow to keep up to date with our news!

To see the tweets from the Spring Conference see: storify.com/RuthFT/roman-finds-group-conference-2013-raw-twitter-feed

HISTORICAL METALLURGY SOCIETY

Justine Bayley

The Historical Metallurgy Society has just relaunched its website (<http://hist-met.org/>) but favourites like their datasheets can still be downloaded (<http://hist-met.org/resources/datasheets.html>). These are aimed at archaeologists at all levels from project managers and curators to fieldworkers. They are intended to provide brief introductions to particular processes or topics, with the emphasis on the types of structural evidence, artefacts and residues likely to be encountered on excavations.

The new series of datasheets are grouped into three areas:

1. Recovering, recording, understanding and managing archaeometallurgical resources
2. Processes involved in producing and working metals
3. Archaeological and other evidence for the development of specific metalworking processes

Nearly thirty datasheets are planned but so far about half are available; the rest will be uploaded as and when they become available. The old series is still available but these will eventually be replaced.

Metals and Metalworking: a research framework for archaeometallurgy was published in 2008 but can now be downloaded free of charge (<http://hist-met.org/images/pdf/metalsframeworkall.pdf>). Illustrated throughout, it provides a useful introduction to the finds and features that characterise metalworking at all periods, to the archaeological and scientific methods used to understand them, and to some of the archaeometallurgical topics of particular current interest. The book concludes with an agenda for future research, recommendations for further reading and a full bibliography.

The Historical Metallurgy Society's next Research in Progress meeting will be held in Exeter on 10th October; further details will soon be posted on their website (<http://hist-met.org/meetings.html>).

RFG Committee

President: Roy Friendship-Taylor, Toad Hall, 86 Main Road, Hackleton, Northants. NN7 2AD
e-mail: roy@friendship-taylor.freemove.co.uk

General Secretary and Website Manager: Nicola Hembry, English Heritage, Centre for Archaeology, Fort Cumberland, Eastney, Portsmouth, PO4 9LD.
e-mail: nicola.hembry@english-heritage.org.uk

Treasurer: Jenny Hall, 26 Park Hill Road, Wallington, Surrey SM6 0SB
e-mail: jenny.m.hall@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary: Angela Wardle, 1 Stebbing Farm, Fishers Green, Stevenage, Herts. SG1 2JB.
e-mail: awardle@molas.org.uk

Publications: Gillian Dunn, Historic Environment Service, 27 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD.
e-mail: gill.dunn@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Newsletter Editor: Emma Durham, Department of Archaeology, University of Reading, Whitknights Box 227, Reading RG6 6AB.
e-mail: emma.durham@reading.ac.uk

Committee members:

Justine Bayley, mail@justine-bayley.co.uk
Evan Chapman, Evan.Chapman@museumwales.ac.uk
Stephen Greep, sjgreep@gmail.com
Ellen Swift, E.V.Swift@kent.ac.uk
Sally Worrell, s.worrell@ucl.ac.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Please remember that membership is due in October. Membership is still only £8 for individuals and £11 for two people at the same address. Standing order is available; please ask Angela for a form or print one from the website.

In order to reduce costs and keep members better informed, we would be grateful if members could provide an email address. This will only be used to relay up and coming information on events such as the study days; the newsletter will continue to be printed.

It has been suggested that in order to facilitate communication between members, the RFG will keep a database of all members. This will include contact details (such as postal address and /or email and areas of interest or specialist interest. The list will be circulated to members only and you have the option to opt out if you do not wish to be included.

If you are happy to have your details circulated, please contact Angela with your name, specialist interest and contact details (postal or email address).

SOME MORE FISHES?

Stephen Greep

In *Lucerna*, 43 I published a short note on a number of bone pendants from Britain, with examples from Catterick, Caerwent, Kirby Thore and Wallsend (Greep, 2012). In a footnote to this short piece, I mention a group of pendants from Intercisa, Hungary. Further investigations have shown that these are indeed of a very similar form to those from Britain.¹

The Intercisa examples were found in a rubbish pit during excavations in the *vicus* by Eszter B. Vágó in 1970. Unfortunately the excavator died shortly after the completion of the excavations and the site remains unpublished. One of the pendants, however, was published in a general work on Intercisa and is reproduced below (Fig. 1). This is from a group of six similar pendants (on display in the Intercisa Museum) found together in a pit together with a shell-shaped pendant and two rectangular, perforated, plaques. It is not clear whether they all formed a part of the same pendant/necklace arrangement. In the discussion (Biro 2009, 69) they appear in a section dated to the end of the 2nd to the mid-3rd century.



Fig. 1 Pendant from Intercisa (reproduced from Biro 2009 Abb. 3,3).

In my previous note I also mentioned a similar pendant from Vertault, France, as an example of how far 'cheap' individual, personal items could be transported around the roman world. Those from Intercisa extend the geographical distribution greatly and indeed represent the largest number from any site. Although I have described these finds as fishes, both the Vertault

and Intercisa pendants have been called birds – either interpretation is possible.

I note above how the six Intercisa pendants were found together in a single pit and associated with other possible pendant types - the two from Catterick were also from a single pit and associated with two other pendant shapes (Greep 2012, Fig. 1, C-D), but not similar to those ancillary items at Intercisa. Whether, therefore, such fish/bird pendants were typically just a part of a much larger arrangement is a distinct possibility, although in my examination of the pendants from Catterick I did not think that this was likely. The true significance probably requires further finds from controlled excavations.

While I do not believe my central idea that these crude pieces were the product of one or a small number of hands requires changing (yet), as I was only to record a total of five examples from Britain, perhaps it was a Pannonian rather than British hand that fashioned them!

¹ I am grateful to Tamás Keszi of the Intercisa Museum for information on the objects on display and to Maria Bíró for the reference to her publication and on the find spot of the pendants, together with record shots of all six pendants and associated finds.

Bibliography

- Bíró, M.T. 2009. Historischer überblick der beinschnitzerwerkstätten in Intercisa, *Archaeologiai Értesítő* 134, 63–79.
 Greep, S. 2012. Five little fishes... or more? *Lucerna*, 43, 8–10.

LATER PREHISTORIC FINDS GROUP

The idea for the group was discussed last year at the European Iron Age Artefacts Symposium (EIAAS) held at the University of Leicester in October. The conference was well attended and a wide variety of papers were presented, demonstrating how much the study of Iron Age artefacts (and artefacts more generally) is thriving and developing at the moment. Given its success, at the end of the conference the organisers raised the possibility of setting up a group focusing on

prehistoric artefacts, which would offer a forum in which to continue discussion. This idea was well received by the conference participants and so an initial meeting was held at the British Museum in April 2013 to gauge interest and discuss the idea further.

As a result of this meeting it was decided that the group will focus on Bronze Age and Iron Age Britain, but that contributions dealing with European finds will also be encouraged. Given that groups dealing with prehistoric lithics and ceramics already exist, the LPFG will concentrate primarily on other materials, but no object types will be excluded. As the group is still in its infancy, for the present it will remain independent of any institution, open to all, free to join and informal in its organisation.

Over time we hope that the group will grow to offer a valuable means of building connections between individuals working in the field, sharing information and resources, keeping up to date with current research and connecting with the wider archaeological community. A provisional website and online discussion group have already been created to provide platforms within which we can continue to generate ideas, and we plan to hold the first formal group meeting at the British Museum towards the end of this year.

The newsletter will be published twice a year, and will be distributed electronically to all members as well as being available to download from the website. We welcome contributions, and are happy to receive notes or short articles (up to around 1,000 words) on any topic relevant to the group, such as new finds or resources, along with notices and reviews of any events or publications that might be of interest.

Our first formal meeting and day-conference will be held at the British Museum on 11th October 2013, and will be open to all. Please keep checking our website for more information!

Please have a look around our website and Facebook page, and feel free to get in touch. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this first issue!

The steering group for the LPFG currently includes: Anna Booth, Marta Fanello, Julia Farley, Anna Lewis (all University of Leicester), Michael Marshall (Museum of London Archaeology), Elizabeth Schech (University of Durham), Stephanie Smith (Portable Antiquities Scheme) and Neil Wilkin (British Museum).

Keep up with us online at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/lateprehistoricfindsgroup/>

E-mail us at:

lateprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com

A FIRST GLANCE AT TWO PREHISTORIC OBJECTS FROM ROMAN LONDON

Julian Bowsher and Michael Marshall

Two objects recently found by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) at Bloomberg Place in the City of London may be of interest to members of both the LPFG and RFG. They come from early Roman contexts on the banks of the River Walbrook but, while both may have circulated during the Roman period, their origins are earlier. One is a coin from the Late pre-Roman Iron Age, an East Anglian silver unit (as Cottam *et al.* 2010, no.1657) belonging to the first half of the first century AD, which has been perforated between the horse's legs. The second find is much earlier, a small polished stone Neolithic axe head, but again there are signs of secondary working. There are partially drilled holes and transverse grooves at the butt on both faces, either decorative or perhaps to enable suspension.

There was no major Late Iron Age centre on the site of *Londinium* but the landscape was not empty (e.g. Merriman 1990; Holder & Jamieson 2004), and finds from a range of prehistoric periods are regularly found in Roman contexts in the City. Many are redeposited from truncated prehistoric features but this needn't always be the

case, especially if there is evidence that objects had extended or multiple biographies.



Fig. 1. Late Iron Age silver coin (as photographed on site), from an early Roman context at Bloomberg Place, London. Photographs © Museum of London Archaeology

Iron Age coinage did not suddenly disappear in AD 43 and, given its late date, the coin could plausibly have come into the city still in the possession of its local owner, either perforated in this urban setting or beforehand. LIA coins may have circulated as currency to some degree in the decades immediately after the conquest but are extremely rare in London, and are very unlikely to have done so much after c.AD 60. Pierced IA coins are quite rare generally, many being metal detected finds without context, but a pair was reused as jewellery in an Anglo Saxon grave (Leins *et al.* 2008). Perhaps the Bloomberg Place coin too was reused as jewellery before finding its way into the Walbrook mud. The position of the hole preserves the design's integrity but if used as a pendant then the horse would have hung upside down, easily understood by the wearer looking down but less clear to anyone else. Other methods of suspension are also possible, or perhaps the wreath and crescent design faced outwards. Could this be an expression of local identity, still treasured in this very 'Roman' context, or perhaps an immigrant looking for a little 'local colour'?

It is less likely that the axe spent the intervening centuries above the ground, but the discovery of Neolithic stone axes on Roman sites is a recurrent phenomenon that has seen much discussion (Adkins & Adkins 1985; Merrifield 1987; Ferris 2012), and Pliny (*Natural History*, 37) describes Roman interest in *ceraunia*:

stones shaped like axe heads and associated with thunderbolts.



Figure 2: Neolithic Stone hand axe from an early Roman context at Bloomberg Place, London. Photograph © Museum of London Archaeology

Ralph Merrifield discussed some axe heads from London in this light and in relation to later folk beliefs that they could be protective charms. He noted several examples including a jadeite axe from Kings Street with secondary grooving (Merrifield 1987, 9-16), and more recently an axe hammer with a secondary perforation has been found at Gresham Street. Axes without signs of reworking are also known from Roman contexts in London but are more difficult to interpret.

These objects provide yet more evidence of how the Roman / Romano-British population engaged with older objects and landscapes in Britain and whether they are 'ancestor artefacts', charms or mere curios, context will be crucial in interpreting them. Neither of the Bloomberg Place finds came from within the Walbrook channel itself but, as Merrifield (1995) has argued, much of the bank material could be upcast from the channel to backfill revetments and our site has produced a range of evidence for votive activity. We're still digging and fuller details of context date, position and associations will become available during post-excavation. Both finds will be published in a forthcoming MOLA monograph. In the meantime we'd be very interested to hear if anyone else has prehistoric objects with clear evidence of reuse from Roman contexts and would gratefully receive suggestions for references on the topic of perforated Iron Age coins generally.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the developers Bloomberg for their generous on-going support for, and interest in, the archaeology of Bloomberg Place. Thanks also to Jon Cotton and Gary Brown for useful comments about the axe head. We are indebted to the many colleagues in the field and post-excavation teams at MOLA whom we are working alongside on this project, especially Pat Connolly and Jason Stewart who found these objects on site and drew our attention to them at an early stage. The photographs are by Jess Bryan (coin) and Andy Chopping (axe).

Bibliography

- Adkins, L. & Adkins, R. 1985. Neolithic axes from Roman sites in Britain. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4(1), 69–76.
- Cottam, E. *et al.* 2010. *Ancient British Coins*. Aylsham.
- Ferris, I. 2012. *Roman Britain through its Objects*. Stroud.
- Holder, N. & Jamieson, D. 2004. The prehistory of the City of London: Myths and methodologies. *Archaeological Journal* 161, 23–43.
- Leins, I. *et al.* 2008. 226 Streethouse area, Redcar and Cleveland: Two Anglo-Saxon grave assemblages (2005 T540 & 2006 T473), in *Treasure Annual Report 2005/6*. London: DCMS, 82–4.
- Merrifield, R. 1987. *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*. London.
- Merrifield, R. 1995. Roman metalwork from the Walbrook – Rubbish, ritual or redundancy? *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 46, 27–44.
- Merriman, N. 1990. *Prehistoric London*. London.

BOOKS

Late Roman Silver: The Traprain Treasure in Context edited by K.S. Painter & F. Hunter. 2013. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. ISBN 9781908332028. £50. 446 pages, col illus throughout.

Taking as its starting point a comprehensive reappraisal of the magnificent Traprain treasure, this fine collection of papers widens its focus to include detailed discussion of the phenomenon of hacksilber (the deliberate breaking and bending of silver artefacts in such hoards) and what it can tell us about Roman-barbarian interactions, identity formation on both sides of the frontier, and the end

of Roman Britain more generally. Papers cover the historical and archaeological context of Traprain Law, review current theories of the end of empire, and explore the uses and role of silver in the Roman Empire from coinage to donatives, and its role in diplomacy. They also provide a stimulating overview of current perspectives on hacksilber, and synthesise the latest evidence both from across Britain and Ireland, and from the Germanic and Danish contexts.

The Roman West, AD 200–500. An Archaeological Study by Simon Esmonde Cleary. 2013. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9780521196499. £75. 547pages, 95 b/w illus.

This book describes and analyses the development of the Roman West from Gibraltar to the Rhine, using primarily the extensive body of published archaeological evidence rather than the textual evidence underlying most other studies. It situates this development within a longer-term process of change, proposing the later second century rather than the 'third-century crisis' as the major turning-point, although the latter had longer-term consequences owing to the rise in importance of military identities. Elsewhere, more 'traditional' forms of settlement and display were sustained, to which was added the vocabulary of Christianity. The longer-term rhythms are also central to assessing the evidence for such aspects as rural settlement and patterns of economic interaction. The collapse of Roman imperial authority emphasised trends such as militarisation and regionalisation along with economic and cultural disintegration. Indicators of 'barbarian/Germanic' presence are reassessed within such contexts and the traditional interpretations questioned and alternatives proposed.

Colchester, Fortress of the War God: an Archaeological Assessment by D. Radford & A. Gascoyne. 2013. Oxbow Books. ISBN 9781842175088. £45, 352 pages, 100 b/w illus.

This volume is a critical assessment of the current state of archaeological knowledge of the settlement originally called Camulodunon and now known as Colchester. The town has been the subject of antiquarian interest since the late 16th century and the first modern archaeological excavations occurred in 1845 close to Colchester Castle, the town's most prominent historic site.

Since the 1960s Colchester has been subject to recurring phases of re-development, the most recent having ended only in 2007, which have had a significant impact on the historic environment. Fortunately the town is one of the best studied in the country.

CONFERENCES

18e Colloque International sur les Bronzes antiques 3rd-7th September 2013

University of Zurich and Paul Scherrer Institute, Villigen, Switzerland

The main aim of the conference is to provide an up-to-date overview of the many different areas that bronze research has dealt with in recent years. To this end we have invited eight internationally renowned experts to give keynote lectures on individual subjects, which will give an introductory insight into the current state of research. The themes are: 1. Greek and Italic bronzes from Iron Age Central Europe; 2. Greek bronzes in the Mediterranean region; 3. Large-scale bronzes; 4. Roman figurines; 5. Roman toreutics; 6. Manufacturing and restoration techniques; 7. Methods of analysis; 8. Written sources.

For further details contact bronze2013@bluewin.ch or see the website at www.prehist.uzh.ch.

RAC/TRAC 27th-30th March 2014 11th Roman Archaeology Conference 24th Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference University of Reading

RAC 2014: The call for sessions is now closed.

TRAC 2014: Call for Session Proposals

We are inviting proposals for sessions. Each should contain up to six papers of 30 min in length, which then leaves time for discussion. Proposals should comprise a title and abstract no more than 250 words in length. They should also come with a list of proposed speakers and draft titles (all of which should have agreed in principle). We welcome sessions of all kinds, but all should engage with

various aspects of current theory and practice in the field of Roman Archaeology, particularly those at the cutting edge or controversial in nature.

The deadline for proposals is **31st September 2013**. Proposals should be emailed to trac2014@reading.ac.uk

We already have an exciting range of RAC sessions in preparation covering: the Roman rural landscape, and the contribution to our understanding of it from developer funded excavations; Recent work on Roman Britain and also on the Roman Frontiers, Pompeii, Latium and Roman Italy; and sessions focusing on zooarchaeology, artefacts and ceramics.

Conference details can be found at: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/archaeology/Conferences/RAC2014/arch-RAC2014.aspx>

150 Years of Roman Yorkshire 9th November 2013

York St John University, York

The Roman Antiquities Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies present a day-conference celebrating 150 years of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society with paper that review past understanding and present research.

Speakers include Jenny Price (Retrospective), Colin Haselgrove (Stanwick), Patrick Ottaway (York), Pete Wilson (the Roman army), Peter Halkon (Rome and the Parisi), Sally Worrell (the PAS), Malin Holst and Anwen Caffell (human remains), Allan Hall (environmental studies) and Martin Millett (overview).

For a booking form go to: <https://www.yas.org.uk/content/2013/events.html>

Assessing the Impact of Commercial Archaeology on the Towns of Roman Britain

30th November 2013

University of Reading

A day-conference to discuss and debate the contribution of developer archaeology to the study of the major Romano-British towns (*coloniae* and *civitas* capitals). The papers will demonstrate the value of commercial work, and highlight the areas where much has been learnt, and also those where comparatively little progress has been made. The emphasis will be on those historic towns of England which have seen significant commercial work, as opposed to the largely greenfield sites where there has been much less developer work. The papers will help to inform future curatorial strategies and assist in the setting of research objectives for future investigations.

See full programme at:

www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/roman-towns

Prehistory in Shropshire dayschool 2013

Saturday 14th September 2013

Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury

This dayschool is a one-day meeting to review research into Shropshire during the Prehistoric period, and includes talks on the Pleistocene of Shropshire, the Bronze Age cemetery at Bromfield, the Broadward Hall hoard, recent prehistoric finds from the county, the relationship between hillforts, smaller enclosures and the wider landscape, and the search for the Cornovii.

The dayschool is organised by the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council. The cost is £20/person (£15 to members of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society), to include tea and lunch.

Please visit

<http://www.discovershropshire.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/theme:20130322120145> for a full programme and list of speakers.