TRAJ | THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY JOURNAL

Annal, Isabel and Sian Therese. 2025. Emerging from the Shadows: Building New Narratives of those Enslaved by the Empire. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 8(1): 1–15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.27256

Emerging from the Shadows: Building New Narratives of those Enslaved by the Empire

Isabel Annal, UCL, isabel.annal.13@ucl.ac.uk
Sian Therese, UCL, sian.therese.20@ucl.ac.uk

The editorial of the eighth volume of the *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* explores the necessity of producing new narratives, theoretical as well as public facing, concerning the lived experiences of those enslaved in a Roman world. This editorial reflects on both lost opportunities and examples of good practice to disrupt narratives that normalize exploitations of power and violence. It acknowledges the contributions of curators, artists, scientists and authors of theoretical, historical and speculative texts, and encourages a growth in their deliberate collaboration to achieve this endeavour. It concludes with some suggestions for a way forward to maximize the material currently available in permanent museum collections.

The *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the Open Library of Humanities. © 2025 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/.
OPEN ACCESS

In the editorial for the eighth volume of the *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, we consider the continued normalization of slavery within the study of the Roman past and recent work which has attempted to learn more about the experiences of the enslaved. We comment briefly on the diversity of investigative strategies currently in use and presented at RAC/TRAC 2024 and TRAC 2025, in recent publications and in public facing curated spaces and electronic platforms. These examples of good practice offer a firm foundation from which to disrupt normalizing narratives and to construct a way forward. We conclude our editorial by offering some practical suggestions that draw on the expertise across our discipline and beyond.

The narratives dividing human society into those who are considered ‘us’ and those dismissed as ‘them’ seem all too familiar. These narratives rely on the perpetuation of a belief in the legitimacy of an asymmetry in power relationships between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that is ‘central to the construction of otherness’ (Staszak 2009: 43). Archaeologists and some historians (Brandão et al. 2023) with an interest in the Roman world have variously drawn attention to manifestations of otherness, a device that perpetuates inequality (Hanscam and Witcher 2023; Mol 2023), maintains stereotyped identities (Gardner 2025), marginalizes communities (Redfern and Booth 2024), continues the systems of power that emerged from processes of colonization (Kamash 2021; Mattingly 2023) and normalizes or leaves unchallenged enslavement (Kamash 2025). It is on this last issue that our editorial places a particular focus, we begin by highlighting a few lost opportunities for challenging enslavement before looking at studies which are advancing our understanding of enslaved persons living in the Roman world.

Lost Opportunities for New Narratives of Enslavement

There is some recognition in museums and other curated spaces that enslavement formed an important part of the Roman economy (Bernard 2025), and that the public should be encouraged to encounter narratives of ownership and physical restraint. But we would argue that our encounters need to encompass more than just the act of looking. Comments on the British Museum’s temporary exhibition ‘Legion: life in the Roman army’, noted lost opportunities to problematize the violence of the army’s treatment of civilians (Millington 2025), as well as a more general failure to see objects as ‘conduits for story telling rather than inert ends in themselves’ (Kamash 2025). Further lost opportunities are seen in the curatorial text accompanying the museum’s online catalogue of permanent collections. The curator’s notes accompanying the copper alloy tag bearing the words ‘Hold me, lest I flee, and return me to my master Viventius on the estate of Callistus’ (BM 1975,0902.6) confirm the nineteenth century interpretation that it was worn by a human and not a dog, and acknowledge the frequent use of such

collars in the fourth century AD (Walters 1899). No attempt is made to encourage any reflection on the circumstances of the wearer, what they might have wished to escape from, or the dehumanizing tone of the inscription.

Opportunities for an empathetic archaeology of enslavement are also lost at Roman sites, for example at the remains of the city of Wroxter in Shropshire and the second century AD bath complex at Cassinomagus in France. Both sites have retained evidence of heating systems for living and bathing spaces, and at both sites the presence of enslaved people is incorporated into the curated narratives. Neither site raised questions about the risks associated with maintaining furnaces and shifting huge quantities of ash from spent fuel, or about the methods enslavers may have used to keep the workers engaged in such dangerous labour. Instead, the furnace workers at Cassinomagus are mocked in the accompanying audio guide, and at Wroxeter the slaves are described as bathing before the baths were warm, supervising clothes and grooming kits, or participating in the giving of massages and hair removal. These accounts present enslavement as unproblematic, suggestive of actions by consenting participators, rather than taking the opportunity to raise questions about unwanted physical contact and sustained physical violence. In devising these uncontested narratives, presumably to ensure a pleasant encounter with the past for people of all ages, what have we lost? And does it always have to be this way?

One of archaeology's greatest strengths is its ability to give a voice to the disenfranchised. While the historical record is so often written by and for powerful adult males, archaeological remains can be used to gain an insight into the lives of those without power. Given the origins of Roman archaeology in Britain's imperial age (see Hingley 2001), it is unsurprising that there has long been a 'naivete or reluctance on the part of modern scholars' (Redfern 2024: 148) to acknowledge some of the darkest consequences of imperial expansion. With divisive politics on the rise, we ask, what recent attempts has archaeology made to address the asymmetry in power relationships that perpetuate beliefs in 'us' and 'them'? Are we succeeding in extending understandings of the diversity and value of lived experiences? How can we give a voice to those whose wishes and concerns are deemed unimportant by colonizers (Cooper 2025: 3), in particular the enslaved population?

Balancing Empathy and Scientific Rigor

The most recent Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conferences (RAC/TRAC 2024 in London, and TRAC 2025, held online) both reflected the discipline's growing interest in adopting an empathetic approach to archaeology. The opening keynote of TRAC 2025, given by Dominik Maschek, called for 'human-centred scholarship', and an 'ethically

engaged vision of the human past'. A 'scientific' approach has been advocated by mainstream archaeologists since the 1960s, but as Mauro Puddu pointed out in the abstract for his TRAC 2025 paper, this methodology, 'for reasons of rigour, reduces lived lives to accurate, yet far-from-human-sentiment, data'. Although enslaved people are regularly referenced in archaeology, they are traditionally treated as passive objects — a necessary part of the Roman economy — with no thought for their lived reality. As discussed below, some recent work has begun to explore ways of centring their experience.

Narratives of enslavement in the Roman world have tended to use written records as their primary sources. These documents are almost exclusively written by the enslavers, and therefore somewhat pre-empt an empathetic insight into the viewpoint of the enslaved person. Recent work, however, has attempted to read 'between the lines' of these texts, to glean as much information about the lives of the enslaved as possible. For example, April Pudsey and Ville Vuolanto (2022) take advantage of the superior preservation of papyri from the Egyptian province, and Oxyrhynchos in particular, in considering what these documents may allow us to learn about enslaved children in Roman Egypt. Whilst acknowledging that these documents by their very nature '[reflect] the concerns and attitudes of the slave-owning echelons of society', the sheer volume of material means that the authors are able to discuss the experiences of around 75 enslaved children (Pudsey and Vuolanto 2022: 210–211). Through the study of census returns, notifications of birth, city registers, bills of sale, marriage contracts, work and apprenticeship agreements and receipts, notifications of death and private letters, the authors can depict some of the different life events that enslaved children in Roman Egypt were likely to experience.

A joint paper at RAC/TRAC by Alexander Meyer, Alex Mullen and Roger Tomlin, which has since been published in *Britannia*, considers the bill-of-sale of an enslaved person from Vindolanda (Meyer et al. 2024). There is a clear desire in their article to foreground the enslaved people in the discussion. The authors show how the tone of the language used in different tablets conveys the varied statuses of enslaved people at Vindolanda (Meyer et al. 2024: 248). Similarly, Ivana Protić's talk at RAC/TRAC, '*Servi* on the Frontiers: Records of Slaves in the Roman Provinces on Today's Serbian Territory' used documents written by enslavers to try to emphasize the diversity of the experiences of enslaved people in the Roman world. Protić (pers. comm.) argues that even though the enslaved did not leave a written record themselves, considered interpretation of the writing we do have can provide insight into such things as 'their personal names, their masters, their occupations, and family relations — showing that they were not truly 'archaeologically invisible'.

In her 2015 article 'On Reading the Material Culture of Ancient Sexual Labor', Jen Baird advocated against relying solely on textual and visual depictions of enslavement, looking instead to the material culture. She emphasized the importance of considering everything 'from the storage of surplus indicative of a slave-owning household, to places where slaves worked and were held, to landscapes transformed by the labor of the unfree' (Baird 2015: 163). Along those lines, the abstract of Amy Baker's RAC/TRAC 2024 paper on craftworking maintained that the remnants of craftworking visible in the archaeological record can 'highlight the presence and labour of different identity groups, including soldiers, civilians, slaves and women'. Similarly, Fenella Palanca's RAC/TRAC 2024 abstract argued that the textile industry in the Republican period was far larger and more complex than previously assumed, 'owing to the (often invisible) economic contributions of slaves and women to this industry'. In addition to the fruits of their labour, we also have the evidence of the skeletal remains of enslaved persons from the Roman world.

Rebecca Redfern's chapter in Andrew Gardner and Jeremy Tanner's *Materialising the Roman Empire* (2025, reviewed in this volume) advocates studying the skeletons of enslaved people in order to reconstruct their lives. Redfern (2024: 148) cites the theoretical frameworks of Black Feminist archaeology, embodiment and archaeologies of the heart as the basis for her approach to studying enslavement, in addition to a web of violence model. Evidence for dietary insufficiencies, disease and trauma, and perhaps a lack of medical care are some things which we might expect to find on the skeleton of an enslaved person in the Roman world. Although the presence of any of these skeletal observations in isolation does not necessarily indicate that the deceased individual was enslaved, taken together to create an osteobiography we reach a point where it is not unreasonable to consider that this was the case (Redfern 2024: 162). Redfern (2024: 167) contends that 'inequalities and violence become embodied and can be investigated by looking at osteological evidence for disease and trauma', thus providing us with an insight into the actual lives of the enslaved.

Although it is clear that opportunities to derive new narratives have been lost and continue to be lost, there is also evidence emerging from different scholarly disciplines that previously hidden voices are now being heard; in the next section we give some thought to increasing this multivocality.

Transhistorical Comparisons

Some level of historical analogy may also help to understand the experiences of enslaved persons in the Roman world. Since Jane Webster (2005; 2008; 2010) argued that Roman archaeologists would benefit from adopting the methodologies of 'New World'

slave trade studies, transhistorical approaches have become a popular strategy for exploring the Roman slave system. One technique which archaeologists are beginning to implement from studies of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade is critical fabulation, first developed by Sadiya Hartman (2021) to address the notable absences inherent in any archival record concerned with oppressed peoples. While the perspectives of enslaved people have been omitted from the historical record, speculative narration can attempt to fill some of these gaps, drawing on the necessity of investigating both the physical and emotional experiences of the people involved. Multiple critical fabulations can even be constructed from the same evidence set. Far from weakening the scientific merits of archaeological work, posing a variety of possible readings of the evidence 'encourages more reflexive and reflective interpretations, enabling the challenging of, rather than replication of, power structures' (Baird 2015: 164).

In her study of the House of the Vettii at Pompeii, Sarah Levin-Richardson (2023: 100) uses Sadiya Hartman's methodology of critical fabulation 'as a means to think through, about, and with the material evidence', and to offer readers a holistic sense of the experiences of the enslaved victims of domestic violence'. Writing from the perspective of Eutychis, an enslaved woman whose name appears in graffiti on the house's entryway, Levin-Richardson (2023: 108) ultimately succeeds in her aim of 'making vivid the physical and social environment that enslaved individuals like Eutychis had to navigate on a daily basis'. Similarly, Sabrina Nogueira's paper at TRAC 2025 applied critical fabulation to Valerius Maximus's account of Caesar's siege of Ategua to imagine how two women with different lived experiences (one of whom is a manumitted slave married to her ex-master) might have responded to a coin depicting a female personification of Hispania. As described in the paper's abstract, Nogueira's (2025) critical fabulations do not claim to be factual accounts of specific women, but rather an attempt 'to redirect studies about the "dark sides" of imperialism' onto the lives of its victims.

Dark Histories in Museums

The abstract for the closing keynote at TRAC 2025, given by Manuel Fernández-Götz, considered how the 'darker' sides of the Roman Empire, including slavery, are currently presented in museums and heritage sites, 'reflecting on ways to communicate the more 'uncomfortable' aspects to the broader public'. It is our responsibility as archaeologists to engage with the ancient lives we encounter in an empathetic way, and to encourage the public to do the same. One way of embracing this responsibility might be to learn from the recent transhistorical approaches that were employed to find the hidden voices and identities of people forced into labour through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

We were able to speak to Vicky Avery, one of the curators of two recent temporary exhibitions at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, 'Black Atlantic: Power, People Resistance' and the follow-on show 'Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition' (Avery and Kimani 2025).[1] From this conversation, we were able to understand how critical the collaborations between academics, political historians, local archivists, archaeologists and contemporary artists were in finding a range of human stories from the past. Also, that devising new narratives takes courage and a willingness to challenge the status quo, while working within legal and organizational constraints. Vicky talked about the desire to create a multisensorial visitor experience that included, for example, an audio recording of the names from a slave register that could be heard as visitors encountered the original written edition. In a Roman context, text associated with those enslaved might be used to make their lived experiences more concrete and disrupt the stereotypes and preconceptions of enslavement. Vicky and Wanja Kimani, the co-curator, worked with archival material to find local connections with abolitionists working in Cambridge. In a Roman context, critical fabulations might be devised that reimagine the daily experience of enslavement, weaving in particular dangers encountered at specific Roman sites. How might it have felt working the furnaces at Woxeter and Cassinomagus, hour after hour, fighting for breath, exhausted and overwhelmed with the heat? In this way the visitor may encounter hidden voices.

Both exhibitions at the Fitzwilliam Museum brought together archaeological and modern material to develop their curatorial narratives and two installations are worthy of closer reflection. The first, 'Ar'n't I a Woman: Woven Bodies' by Karen McLean,[2] used repurposed hessian sacks, reclaimed from the transportation of tea and coffee harvested and processed by enslaved labour for European consumers. She created a floor to ceiling corridor space that visitors were required to walk through. On the sacking, McLean incorporated screen printed images of female freedom fighters and the names of women working on the Gale plantation in Jamaca. To the sacks she added printed images of women's reproductive organs as reminders of the sexual violence and trauma that women experienced. By drawing parallels between the lives of women enslaved by British colonialism, and some of the issues contemporary female viewers might still face today, the exhibition encouraged visitors to relate to the women whose lives were being presented. In a Roman context, the materials associated with oppression, such as shackles, goads, collars and other objects of constraint might be reconceived, perhaps abstracted as Karen McLean has done, to move away from a passive act of looking to one of experiencing.

The second installation in the 'Rise Up' exhibition, created by Jacqueline Bishop, titled 'Nana', reconceived a slave blouse made from Jamaican lacebark and sugar sacks

depicting the countless unrecorded Jamaican market women of West African heritage.[3] Bishop reflects on women's agency as makers, healers and people with knowledge to share. These works do not shy away from the brutality of slavery but construct moments when women retained some control of their lives. In a Roman context the expertise of those enslaved in agricultural practices in Britain might be given voice and their understanding of seasonal sowing cycles or animal husbandry might be a way of reflecting on their agency.

Although the narratives at the Fitzwilliam Museum centred on more recent episodes of enslavement from the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the curatorial approach of drawing historical and modern objects together to facilitate more unsettling narratives might be useful in a Roman context, as discussed below. The real work starts with conversations between artists, curators and academics to borrow or commission work that is as inspirational such as those at the Fitzwilliam. For further inspiration, we may also look to those reimagining atrocities from the recent past. Two brief examples are Edith Birkin's paintings,[4] based on her time in captivity at several Nazi concentration camps and the installation at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, 'Trying to Remember the Color of the Sky on That September Morning',[5] which is made from steel recovered from the towers; behind the wall on which the artwork is hung, thousands of unidentified fragments of human remains are housed in a private repository.

A Way Forward

While the development of temporary exhibitions offers curators new narrative opportunities, most public facing encounters with past lives are conducted using objects from permanent collections. A conversation with Frances McIntosh from English Heritage was a helpful reminder that information panels at open air sites might be expected to last 15 to 20 years before refurbishment or revision, and the refurbishment timeline for permanent collections in museums may be even longer (pers. comm.). Given these constraints, we wondered how it is possible for permanent collections to engage with emerging theoretical narratives. We agree with Jona Piehl's observation (2023: 245) that it cannot be the responsibility of the visitor alone to find new narratives but redesigning or even updating all existing exhibitions is impractical. Piehl (2023: 254) offers a third way, which she calls 'intervention' — the aim of which is to use 'graphics as a critical practice within the wider efforts of reflexive museum making'. In what follows, we will briefly explore how this approach may be applied to existing Roman collections and consider how these collections might present Roman slavery without seeming to condone it.

Method 1: Adding further interpretation to exhibits

In the first part of this editorial, we drew attention to the range of current research interest in Roman enslavement. This developing body of work has the potential to provide additional interpretive narrative to existing exhibits. This intervention requires the continuation and development of collaborations between curators of public spaces and academic scholar with an interest in the Roman world. The voice of someone enslaved, using the device of critical fabulation, might be heard or recorded as text associated with the object on display.

Method 2: Adding further interpretation by creating links between exhibits

While it may not be possible to alter fixed gallery installations, digital encounters or audio/paper trails to be followed within the museum might enable groups of objects from permanent collections to be considered in a new way. By creating associations between different groups of objects, as we have discussed in the previous section, the visitor has an opportunity to engage more closely with past lives.

Method 3: Reframe content by intervening with the existing exhibits

One strategy might be the removal or the concealment of an exhibit. Alternatively, other objects (historic or modern) might be co-located with the exhibit. The encounter of Roman slave shackles, for example, might be seen alongside objects such as the 'Cabinet of Freedom' objects collected by the anti-slave trade campaigner, Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), from the docks of London, Liverpool and Bristol, currently at the Wisbech & Fenland Museum (WISFM 1870.13). These objects invite discussion about human lives as commodities and economic systems underpinned by free labour. Further analogies might be made to the use of 'free' labour in a modern world.

Method 4: Surfacing connections between exhibits, either by undermining common themes or by making visible the voice that link them

As we have suggested in Method 2, creating new gallery spaces might be one longer term solution. A more immediate possibility might be the creation of space in existing galleries and the introduction of new objects, ancient or modern. The co-location of Roman slave collars with other objects exploring systematic violence, such as Birke Gorm's modern work 'Woman Cut in Half' (**Figure 1**) may create new ways of looking at objects from antiquity. Additionally, the recent work of Mauro Puddu (2025) with the Museum of Broken Relationships resulted in the 'Shards of the Past' collaborative exhibition which juxtaposed artefacts from Roman Sardinia with contemporary objects to enable audiences to relate more empathetically to past peoples.

Figure 1: Woman cut in half. Two elements of a four-part installation by Birke Gorm. CAPC Musee d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux (Source: Sian Therese 2025).

Method 5: Taking a position as an explanatory agent in relation to the narratives on display

Revising the notes by curators accompanying online catalogues would also seem to be an effective and timely way of taking a revised position. York Museums recently did just this, publishing an extended narrative relating to the auburn hair found at a Roman inhumation site at what is now York Railway (Cavanagh 2023). The hair was presented as a metaphor for enslavement and its detachment from the head of the deceased, of which nothing survives, as a symbol liberation.

Method 6: Opening dialogues with audiences and other stakeholders and making these visible in the display

Some objects in permanent collections elicit a strong reaction from visitors, such as stereotypical depictions of European encounters with indigenous populations or the display of ancestral or spiritually significant objects out of context. In a Roman context, objects tend to be seen as more emotionally distant, however, suggestions made by Mary Beard regarding the racial diversity in London's Roman past has stimulated much, often abusive, debate (Boseley 2017). There are many popular misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding the Roman past and to address these we need new narratives.

Some of these narratives might surface from unsolicited comments made by visitors or might be facilitated in conversation and collaboration with museum staff who are willing to engage in the 'transformation in the perspective of experts' (Brulon and Witcomb 2022: 2). In this way, visitors' texts might be incorporated into the exhibition space, appearing alongside text written by curators.

In this editorial we have given some thought to how hidden voices might be heard and new narratives might be advanced. We have paid particular attention to how academics and curators of Roman spaces and artefacts have developed new narratives regarding enslavement and have observed some lost opportunities. The recent explorations of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade demonstrate some approaches that our own discipline might embrace, and we have taken the liberty to propose some ways forward, building on the observations of Jona Piehl (2023). Continued dialogue between different sectors of practitioners within Roman archaeology will undoubtedly be crucial.

In this Volume

The eighth volume of the *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* contains five research articles and 13 book reviews; it was our hope as guest editors that this edition of *TRAJ* might surface ancient voices that are often unheard and difficult to reach or whose narratives are unproblematized. The book reviews of this volume certainly reflect the diversity of our discipline, geographically and materially.

New voices did surface in Siân Thomas' paper that extends our understanding of Roman urbanism in Wales. Through her close reflection on the cycles of construction, revision and abandonment of domestic, commercial and military properties at Moridunum, and her exploration of the material evidence associated with the daily habits of appearing, eating and negotiating, she enables a diversity of new identities to be heard within the context of an invigorated urbanism in the Roman world. Jessica Tilley's analysis of the roles of Roman mourners at funerals draws attention to how normative gender binaries could be subverted in certain circumstances. Adding to the burgeoning field of Queer Death Studies, Tilley uses literary and iconographic representations of Roman funerals to assess gender performance and its situational mutability. Similarly, Alexis Daveloose focuses on Etruscan women during the Hellenistic period, considering their societal status through an analysis of the ratio of male to female names in Etruscan epitaphs. She highlights how we may move beyond the old tropes based on Romanization which present a monolithic view of 'an Etruscan woman', using funerary epitaphs to emphasize instead the many subcultures within Etruria.

There is an uneasiness expressed among our peers that our discipline operates in methodological, conceptual or subject silos, resulting in intellectual confusion and the dissipation of effort. A remedial response offered by Paul Kiching, in his exploration of analogy to inform decision making at Hadrian's Wall, strengthens the epistemological formation of our inquires to ensure a balance is struck between effective metaphors and strongly warranted arguments. Other responses to this feeling of fragmentation have coalesced around a common concern (see Tanner and Gardner 2024), where the experience of new opportunities and new oppressions in a Roman world are articulated through contrasting material forms.

Finally, Anthony King, Grahame Soffe and Kate Adcock give us a new perspective on the Iron Age and Roman religious landscape of southern Britian in their exploration of potential processional and pilgrimage routes between Chichester and the nearby Hayling Island temple. Throughout, they emphasize the continuities in practices from the Iron Age and Roman periods, allowing us to see how preexisting religious and political structures from this area of Britain may have survived the Roman conquest.

Notes

[1] https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/black-atlantic-power-people-resistance; https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/exhibitions/rise-up.
[2] https://karenmclean.co.uk/work/blue-power-arnt-i-a-woman/ [Last accessed: 21 December 2025].
[3] https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/fine-art/news/article/2878/work-by-postgraduate-researcher-jacqueline-bishop-on-display-at-fitzwilliam-museum-and-royal-museums-greenwich [Last accessed: 21 December 2025].
[4] https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/2322 [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].
[5] https://www.911memorial.org/connect/blog/trying-remember-color-sky-september-morning [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Vicky Avery from the Fitzwilliam Museum for her generous support and encouragement, also Frances McIntosh, the Curator of Hadrian's Wall and the Northeast for English Heritage, and Glynn Davis, Senior Curator at the Yorkshire Museum. Last but not least, to the Editor of *TRAJ*, Emily Hanscam, who provided invaluable advice on this editorial and welcoming support to us as guest editors for Volume 8.

References

Avery, Victoria and Wanja Kimani. 2025. *Rise Up: Resistance, Revolution, Abolition*. Cambridge University & The Fitzwilliam Museum. London: Philip Wilson Publishers.

Baird, Jennifer A. 2015. On reading the material culture of ancient sexual labor. *Helios* 42(1): 163–175. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/hel.2015.0001

Baker, Amy. 2024. Craftworking in Roman military communities – developing a fresh understanding. In: *RAC/TRAC 2024*, London, on 11–14 April. Available at: https://www.romansocietyrac.ac.uk/live/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RACTRAC-2024-All-Abstracts.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Bernard, Seth. 2025. Slavery, prosperity, and inequality in Roman Pompeii. *Past & Present*: gtaf006. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtaf006

Boseley, Sarah. 2017. Mary Beard abused on Twitter over Roman Britain's ethnic diversity. *The Guardian*, 6 August. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/06/mary-beard-twitter-abuse-roman-britain-ethnic-diversity [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Brandão, José Luís Lopes, Cláudia Teixeira and Ália Rodrigues (eds). 2023. *Confronting Identities in the Roman Empire: Assumptions about the Other in Literary Evidence*. London: Bloomsbury.

Brulon Soares, Bruno and Andrea Witcomb. 2022. Editorial: towards decolonisation. *Museum International* 74(3–4): iv–xi. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13500775.2022.2234187

Cavanagh, William. 2023. A knotted history of slavery in York: Roman hair and Ovid's Amores. York Museum Trust Blog. Available at: https://www.yorkmuseumstrust.org.uk/blog/a-knotted-history-of-slavery-in-york-roman-hair-and-ovids-amores-by-will-cavanagh-english-literature-student-at-the-university-of-york/ [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Cooper, Frederick. 2025. Decolonising colonisation. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 67(4): 890–915. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417525100108

Fernández-Götz, Manuel. 2025. Darkness unveiled: Confronting Roman imperialism… and why it matters for the present. In: *The 33rd Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, online, on 22–24 October. Available at: https://www.trac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TRAC-TiDA2025Abstracts_Final_161025-2.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Gardner, Andrew. 2025. Roman military identities. In: Joseph Skinner, Vicky Manolopoulou and Christina Tsouparopoulou (eds). *Identities in Antiquity*: 414–428. Abingdon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351003148

Hanscam, Emily and Robert Witcher. 2023. Women in *Antiquity*: an analysis of gender and publishing in a global archaeology journal. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 48(2): 87–101. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00934690.2022.2143896

Hartman, Sadiya. 2021. Intimate history, radical narrative. *The Journal of African American History* 106(1): 127–135. DOI: https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/712019

Hingley, Richard. 2001. *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*. London: Routledge.

Kamash, Zena. 2021. Rebalancing Roman archaeology: from disciplinary inertia to decolonial and inclusive action. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 4: 1–41. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.4330

Kamash, Zena. 2025. For Men, About Men: A Review of *Legion: Life in the Roman Army*. *American Journal of Archaeology* 129(3): 439–443. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/736685

Levin-Richardson, Sarah. 2023. Domestic violence and servile vulnerability in the House of the Vettii, Pompeii. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 66(2): 97–110. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/bics/qbae007

Maschek, Dominik. 2025. Roman Archaeologies in 2025: Reflections on Theory and Practice. In: *The 33rd Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, online, on 22–24 October. Available at: https://www.trac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TRAC-TiDA2025Abstracts_Final_161025-2.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Mattingly, David J. 2023. *Between Sahara and Sea: Africa in the Roman Empire*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.12308685

Meyer, Alexander, Alex Mullen and Roger Tomlin. 2024. Slavery on the northern frontier: a stylus tablet from Vindolanda. *Britannia* 55: 233–255. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068113X24000230

Millington, Claire. 2025. Exhibition review: Legion: Life in the Roman Army, British Museum (1 February – 23 June 2024), and Women Doing Everything, Everywhere, all at Once, Verulamium Museum (8 March – 4 July 2024). *European Journal of Archaeology* 28(1): 123–131. https://doi.org/10.1017/eaa.2024.49

Mol, Eva. 2023. New materialism and posthumanism in Roman archaeology: when objects speak for others. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 33(4): 715–729. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774323000124

Nogueira, Sabrina. 2025. The 'Mother' and Wife': Using Critical Fabulation to Unlock Women's Lived Experiences of Abuse from Roman Soldiers. In: *The 33rd Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, online, on 22–24 October. Available at: https://www.trac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TRAC-TiDA2025Abstracts_Final_161025-2.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Palanca, Fenella. 2024. Modelling Textile Production and Consumption in the Roman Republic: A Novel Approach. In: *RAC/TRAC 2024*, London, on 11–14 April. https://www.romansocietyrac.ac.uk/live/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RACTRAC-2024-All-Abstracts.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Piehl, Jona. 2023. Visual interventions: exhibition graphic design as critical practice. In: Kate Guy, Hajra Williams and Claire Wintle (eds). *Histories of Exhibition Design in the Museum: Makers, Process, and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Protić, Ivana. 2024. Servi on the Frontiers: Records of Slaves in the Roman Provinces on Today's Serbian Territory. In: *RAC/TRAC 2024*, London, on 11–14 April. https://www.romansocietyrac.ac.uk/live/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RACTRAC-2024-All-Abstracts.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Puddu, Mauro. 2025. Shards of the Past, meanings of the present: Broken relationships beyond Roma imperialism. In: *The 33rd Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, online, on 22–24 October. Available at: https://www.trac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TRAC-TiDA2025Abstracts_Final_161025-2.pdf [Last accessed: 22 December 2025].

Pudsey, April and Ville Vuolanto. 2022. Enslaved children in Roman Egypt: experiences from the papyri. In: Chris L. de Wet, Maijastina Kahlos and Ville Vuolanto (eds). *Slavery in the Late Antique World, 150 – 700 CE*: 210–223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108568159.012

Redfern, Rebecca. 2024. 'Becoming darkness' and the invisible slave economy: archaeological approaches to the study of enslavement in the Roman world. In: Jeremy Tanner and Andrew Gardner (eds). *Materialising the Roman Empire*: 147–180. London: UCL Press.

Redfern, Rebecca and Thomas Booth. 2024. Changing people, changing content: new perspectives on past peoples. In: Trish Biers and Katie Stringer Clary (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Museums, Heritage, and Death*: 130–152. London: Routledge.

Staszak, Jean-François. 2009. Other/otherness. In: Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (eds). *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*: 43–47. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Tanner, Jeremy and Andrew Gardner (eds). 2024. *Materialising the Roman Empire*. London: UCL Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781800083981

Walters, Henry Beauchamp. 1899. *Catalogue of the Bronzes in the British Museum. Greek, Roman & Etruscan*. London: British Museum Publishing.

Webster, Jane. 2005. Archaeologies of slavery and servitude: bringing "New World" perspectives to Roman Britain. *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 18: 161–179. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1047759400007261

Webster, Jane. 2008. Less beloved: Roman archaeology, slavery and the failure to compare. *Archaeological Dialogues* 15(2): 103–123. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203808002596

Webster, Jane. 2010. Routes to slavery in the Roman world: a comparative perspective on the archaeology of forced migration. In: Hella Eckardt (ed.). *Roman Diasporas: Archaeological approaches to mobility and diversity in the Roman Empire*. JRA Supplementary Series 78. Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology.