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# TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

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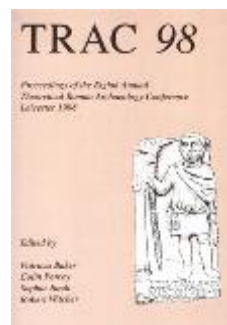
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# TRAC 98

Proceedings of the Eighth Annual

**THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE**

which took place at  
The University of Leicester  
April 1998

edited by

Patricia Baker, Colin Forcey, Sophia Jundi and Robert Witcher

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## Preface

We are pleased to present here 16 of the 27 papers presented at the eighth annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference held at the School of Archaeological Studies, Leicester University in April 1998. Following the trend of last year's volume, we have tried to allow for more substantial contributions rather than 'soundbites', whilst publishing as many of the papers as possible within the space available. The chronological scope of the papers ranges from the late Republic to the end of the Empire and beyond, utilising a wealth of evidence to explore a wide assortment of issues, from shoes to cities, and historical 'experience' to archaeological practice. However, we would like to highlight a remarkably persuasive theme concerning the construction of identities in the Roman world.

Starting with the politics of the centre, Ralph Häussler's paper demonstrates how the ideology of the Roman state and Imperial Cult was, quite literally, constructed through the built environment of the local municipalities of the Empire. Imperial cohesion was also maintained by the community of soldiers, whose distinctive identity as a corporate body within Empire is considered by Simon James. However, the hegemony of Rome was also dependent upon a negotiation of power between Roman and Other; the next four papers foreground this dialogue, in the context of Gaul (Kenny Aitchison), the northern frontier (Simon Clarke), the Fenland Iceni (Garrick Fincham) and the Silures and Cornovii of western Britannia (Louise Revell). Unlike traditional accounts of 'romanization', these papers demonstrate the active participation of the Other in the definition of identities.

Next, the papers by Richard Bayliss and Mark Jackson explore the construction of new Christian identities within the later Empire and emphasise how pagan religions were appropriated rather than destroyed in order to achieve this. The end of the Empire was marked by further transformations of identity, following divergent courses in different provinces. In sub-Roman Britain, David Petts shows how the Bible was used by the Britons to negotiate new definitions of self, whilst Howard Williams and Geoff Harrison consider the ambiguities of becoming Saxon through the contested interpretations of material culture and burial rite. Meanwhile, in North Africa, Anna Leone considers the redefinition of built space at Carthage consequent to the arrival of the Vandals and the removal of Roman power.

Next the symbolic significance of shoes as emblems of individual identity is considered by Carol van-Driel Murray, whilst Patricia Baker offers an intimate examination of Roman women as reflected in contemporary medical literature. John Pearce then assesses the rural burial evidence of Roman Hampshire and argues for a range of different mortuary identities to those found in the context of the better known urban cemeteries. Finally, we return to the centre of the empire, with Giovanni Ricci and Nicola Terrenato, to look at the self-identity of the archaeologist and the hopeful prospects for archaeology in the city of Rome itself.

Thanks are due to the all of contributors to the original conference and for the participation of delegates; we also thank the authors published here for adhering to our tight schedules. We are immensely grateful to staff, postgraduates and others, especially from Leicester and Southampton, for helping to organise and chair sessions and generally ensuring the conference ran smoothly – special mention must go to Mel Barge, Sam Burke, Neil Christie, Ken Dark, Simon Esmonde-Cleary, Lin Foxhall, Mark Gillings, John Hawthorne, Kris Lockyear, David Mattingly, Deirdre O'Sullivan, David Petts, Sarah Poppy, Jane Webster, Howard Williams and Rob Young. Thanks are also due to the referees and to Mike Durkin, Philip van der Eijk, Alice Hiley, Jeremy Patterson and Pam Thornett for their assistance and support.

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