
TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

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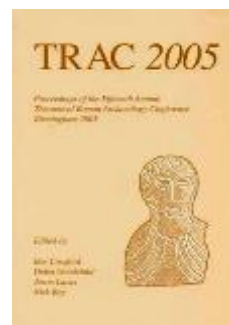
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Author(s): Ben Croxford, Helen Goodchild, Jason Lucas,
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TRAC 2005

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THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

which took place at

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31st March – 3rd April 2005

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Preface

TRAC 2005 was held at the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, The University of Birmingham, under the auspices of The Roman Society. The conference was held in conjunction with RAC and in all twenty-three papers were delivered in the sessions organised as part of TRAC. This volume presents eight of these papers and also includes three special contributions.

These three papers were commissioned to mark the fifteenth year of TRAC with the intention that they should take stock of TRAC to date and look to where it may go in the future. In the volume of conference proceedings for the tenth TRAC, the preface was devoted to reflections of a similar nature. As five years have now passed since that consideration appeared, it was decided that an evaluation along the same lines was in order but that it should occupy a more prominent part within the volume than it had on the previous occasion. The first of these papers, by **Eleanor Scott**, charts the origins and restates the goals of TRAC, reminding us where the conference came from and what it was supposed to achieve. The second of our special papers, that by **Ray Laurence**, is concerned with the present, examining what has occurred since the last major evaluation of TRAC. Laurence looks at the volumes published since TRAC 2000 and discerns the patterns of development that they contain; furthermore, he highlights some of the shortcomings of TRAC. This leads nicely into the third and final contribution from this section, that by **Andrew Gardner**, which looks to the future of TRAC in order to urge further change and suggest some possible ways in which this might be achieved. These three papers combined certainly make apparent the origins, successes and omissions of TRAC as it currently stands. A very clear message is conveyed: that TRAC must continue to evolve and that a continued existence in its current form, though possible and not entirely condemnable, will ultimately fail to realize further success of the same order as that already achieved. In seeking to engage with new ideas and theories, the endeavour symbolised by the first conference, to bring theory from the margins of Roman archaeology, continues today.

Having marked the fifteenth year of TRAC accordingly with the offering of a contemplative triad, we may turn now to consider those papers in this volume that represent the current research on display at TRAC. These eight papers are a selection of those delivered in Birmingham in 2005, representing some of the sessions that were organised and the range of themes that were considered. **Rob Collins** examines the frontier of Roman Britain, viewing the soldiers stationed there as a community of occupation; subsequently he questions the implications this may have had upon the situation at the end of the Roman period. **Melissa Moore Morison** takes us further afield, looking at patterns in the consumption of pottery and how this relates to Roman conquest (and establishment of new towns) in the area of Epirus in Greece. This theme of consumption is maintained in the following paper, that of **Nick Ray**, who examines material from Pompeii with the stated intention of considering the role of consumption theory in relation to Roman archaeology and the ancient economy.

This theme is continued in a different direction by **Helen Goodchild** who combines demographic concepts with those of agricultural production and subsequent consumption in

order to model the surplus food production necessary for the maintenance of urban and rural populations in the Tiber valley. **E-J. Graham** continues this interest by also focusing upon this particular part of the Roman world, and indeed on one of the very groups that would have been fed by the products at the heart of Goodchild's examination. Examining the lower classes of Rome and the way in which they were disposed of once dead, Graham critically approaches the traditional accounts of mass graves that emphasise functional disposal, adding humanity to an overlooked class of people in the ancient world.

Cécilia Courbot-Dewerdt moves us on from the Tiber valley and its inhabitants, taking us to Western Gaul, to consider an area that according to some can be held up as an example of failure in terms of integration with the Roman Empire (what has in the past been called Romanisation). Our final two papers deal with religious aspects of the ancient world. **Martin Goldberg** returns us once more to the British Isles and examines a body of sculpted material that may display evidence of the priorities of the communities that had them erected. Goldberg's paper provides some definition to the frequently encountered notion of 'fertility' as a divine responsibility or symbol common in many carved or cast images (or at least the interpretations of them). Lastly, **Günther Schörner** focuses upon the nature of the animals used in religious practices and offerings, scrutinizing the role of wild animals within Roman rituals.

The Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference is now an established annual feature, for better or for worse, and continues to grow year-on-year. Its future direction is one that is as yet undecided but it is well known where it came from and who is to thank for its existence. Indeed, in relation to TRAC 2005 specifically, we must acknowledge the people and organisations that make this continued success possible. TRAC 2005 was generously supported by the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and by Barbican Research Associates, to both of whom a debt of gratitude is owed. The volume here presented would not have been possible without the continued and much appreciated support of the individuals that make up the anonymous review panel, whose comments are invaluable in the editorial process. We must also thank David Brown from Oxbow Books for his continued commitment to the publication of these proceedings.

The volume was edited by the conference organisers, Helen Goodchild and Ben Croxford, together with Jason Lucas and Nick Ray, all of whom would like to thank the many people who spoke at TRAC 2005 and those who submitted their papers for publication in these conference proceedings.

Ben Croxford, Helen Goodchild, Jason Lucas and Nick Ray