
TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

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Paper Information:

Title: Front Matter and Editors' Preface

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Pages: i–viii

DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/TRAC2009_i_viii

Publication Date: 25 March 2010



Volume Information:

Moore, A., Taylor, G., Harris, E., Girdwood, P., and Shipley, L. (eds) 2010. *TRAC 2009: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Michigan and Southampton 2009*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

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TRAC 2009

TRAC 2009

Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual

THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

which took place at

The University of Michigan
3–5 April 2009

The University of Southampton
17–18 April 2009

edited by

Alison Moore, Geoff Taylor, Emily Harris, Peter Girdwood
and Lucy Shipley

Oxbow Books

Oxford and Oakville

Published by
Oxbow Books, Oxford

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ISBN 978-1-84217-972-7

This book is available direct from
Oxbow Books, Oxford
(Phone: 01865-241249; Fax: 01865-794449)

and

The David Brown Book Company
PO Box 511, Oakville, CT 06779, USA
(Phone: 860-945-9329; Fax: 860-945-9468)

or from our web site

www.oxbowbooks.com

Printed in Great Britain by
Short Run Press, Exeter

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Preface

The nineteenth annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference was held in two locations. The first, run in conjunction with the Roman Archaeology Conference, was hosted by the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on 3rd–5th April 2009. The second conference, held in the United Kingdom for those who could not attend in the United States, was hosted by the Archaeology Department of the University of Southampton on 17th–18th April 2009. Papers were delivered in both thematic and general sessions; of the seventeen papers presented in the USA and eighteen in the UK, twelve appear in this volume, representing a cross-section of the themes and topics represented at both TRAC conferences.

The volume opens with a critique of Romanization from a feminist perspective by **Louise Revell**, who argues that marginalized areas of research, such as gender and family structures, need to be brought into the mainstream. She uses published studies to demonstrate how this can provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of cultural change.

The next two papers are concerned with the physical construction of the Roman Empire, exploring approaches to understanding how vital resources were developed, maintained, accessed and utilised. **Ronald Visser**'s paper draws on a number of sources to consider what knowledge of silvicultural systems existed in the Roman period and the evidence for their use in managing forests in the Lower Rhine area. Addressing the Roman exploitation of stone as a resource, **Bradley Sekedat**'s paper highlights the importance of the interplay between agent and location to development of an idea of place associated with the quarries of Roman Anatolia.

A theme of both TRAC conferences was the implementation and use of new technologies to further develop our understanding of the Roman world – here concerned with the context of material culture, artefact distribution and the environment. **Gareth Beale** and **Graeme Earl**'s paper, seeks to undermine many of the assumptions made about the permanent, unchanging nature of classical marble statuary. To this effect they make particular reference to the use of digital simulations of classical statuary and an applied understanding of sculptural polychromy. Utilising GPS technology, **Annick Lepot** maps the distribution of cooking ware vessels in northern Gaul, identifying regional variations in pottery fabrics and styles and tracing the impact of Roman production technologies and typologies on pre-Roman pottery forms. In comparison to Beale and Earl, and Lepot's emphasis on the use of computer technology, **Ivo van der Graaf**, **Robert Vander Poppen** and **Thijs Nales**' paper is concerned with new applications for well established field techniques. Through a discussion of a field study of the Mugello Valley, they advocate the advantages of coring as a survey methodology, allowing for the discovery of potential occupation sites that may otherwise have been overlooked.

Three papers then focus on the use of space, considering both urban contexts and the impact of Rome on the wider landscape. **Cecelia Feldman Weiss** uses performativity theory to illustrate the active role of water in creating an idea of 'place' in the city of Ephesus, exploring the interactions and relationships created between this fluid resource and the population that depended upon it. **Simon Wood** traces the development of *horti* in Rome from Republican kitchen-gardens to public pleasure gardens under the emperors, reaching their peak in Nero's *Domus Aurea* which continued to influence the development of green space in Rome. **Rick Bonnie** looks at the possibility of cadastres (centuriation) having been imposed in the north-western provinces, deconstructing previous arguments against their existence and providing strong evidence of a cadastre in Belgium.

Identity has been a particular theme of TRAC conferences, both past and present. Utilising funerary evidence, **Alison Moore** explores whether the elderly could be seen as a distinct grouping in southern Britain; her life course analysis shows that differences in identity are visible both between genders and between rural and urban sites. **Rafael Scopacasa** also uses funerary evidence to examine the relationship between grave goods and gender in pre-Roman Samnium, identifying that communities acknowledged different forms of gender relations, particularly in regard to communal drinking practices.

Finally, **Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews** addresses issues relating to the evidence for sub-Roman activity at Baldock, emphasising the important role which ‘small towns’ have to play in developing a clearer picture of both everyday life, and wider issues of cultural change, in post-Roman Britain.

The Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference continues to attract dynamic scholars from across Europe to present and discuss their work, providing an environment that allows new and challenging approaches which can provide new avenues for future research. Holding TRAC 2009 in both the USA and Europe this year has further widened participation and, as TRAC continues to develop and expand, it is hoped that Roman scholars from even more countries will be able to participate.

This volume was edited by members of the Southampton TRAC organising committee, Alison Moore, Geoff Taylor, Emily Harris, Peter Girdwood and Lucy Shipley. A great many thanks are due to all the students and faculty at the University of Michigan, particularly Lisa M. Anderson and Katherine Marino who organised the American TRAC conference. Particular thanks are also due to Dr Louise Revell, who organised the UK conference at short notice.

We would like to thank all those from the University of Southampton whose efforts allowed the UK conference to be held, particularly Sue Niblock, School of Humanities, for facilitating the conference, Dr Jon Adams in Archaeology for support and refreshments and all the student helpers who ensured the conference ran smoothly. Our thanks go to those who chaired sessions at both conferences, including Professor Simon Keay, Professor Tim Champion and Dr Louise Revell. We would also like to thank Nicola Terrenato and John Humphrey, organisers of RAC Michigan, and Ronald Visser, who edited last year’s TRAC volume, for his advice and support. Special thanks to Val Lamb at Oxbow Books for her advice in regard to the editing process, and her continued commitment to the publication of the TRAC proceedings, as well as to Helen Richmond for providing the artwork for the cover. We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their prompt and helpful comments on the papers; their input within the editorial process remains invaluable. Finally, we would like to thank the many people who presented at both TRAC conferences and those who submitted their papers for publication in these conference proceedings.

Alison Moore, Geoff Taylor, Emily Harris, Peter Girdwood and Lucy Shipley