
TRAC Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

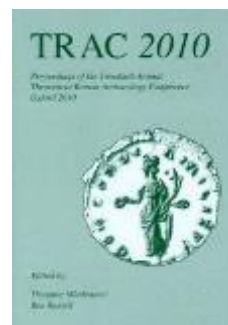
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TRAC 2010

Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual

THEORETICAL ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCE

which took place at

The University of Oxford
25–28 March 2010

edited by

Dragana Mladenović and Ben Russell

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Preface

TRAC 2010, the twentieth meeting, was held between the 25th and the 28th March, at the University of Oxford. As has happened previously, TRAC this year was held in conjunction with RAC, under the aegis of The Roman Society. A total of almost 300 delegates attended the conference at which 120 papers were delivered, 42 of them in TRAC sessions. Four of these sessions were organised around specific themes – globalisation, clothing, gender, and religion – while a further three general sessions gathered together a range of papers submitted individually in response to an open call for papers. The 49 speakers involved at this year's TRAC represented an astonishing 37 different academic institutions and professional bodies in 15 different countries; 32 of the speakers were women. These numbers clearly demonstrate the international interest in TRAC which can only have been furthered by the recent Amsterdam and Michigan conferences.

This volume contains ten of the papers presented at TRAC 2010. **Philip Mills and Ulla Rajala** open with a paper examining what the pottery finds from the Nepi Survey Project can tell us about how the local landscape was used and inhabited. In response to criticism of the lack of theoretical approaches in Italian landscape archaeology Mills and Rajala introduce and test the notion of a 'ceramiscene landscape' – a landscape in which human activities are defined by the creation, consumption and disposal of ceramics. This is followed by a contribution from **Marion Boos** on the much-neglected subject of poliadic deities in Roman colonies in Italy. Focusing on Cosa, Luni, Pompeii, Satricum and Signia, Boos shows that there is good evidence for the worship of tutelary deities at different types of colonial foundation, and often at temples in prominent positions within the urban landscape.

Next come three papers on Pompeii. The first, by **Melissa Ratliff**, approaches the thorny issues of globalisation and consumerism through a study of metal production and consumption in the city. **Heini Ynnilä** makes a case for examining Roman urbanism, and especially the supply of amenities, through the lens of single insula blocks, arguing that such studies can bridge the gap between work on individual houses and work on whole cities. **Taylor Lauritsen** then makes a plea for doors, and other partitions, to be acknowledged as integral features of Roman domestic space. As Lauritsen convincingly points out, the evidence for doors in Pompeian households significantly alters traditional views of these spaces as largely open and empty with clear lines of sight running through them.

Two papers on the pertinent topics of recycling and re-use follow. **Beth Munro** introduces a model for rural architectural recycling. Using the evidence from Late Roman villas in Italy, Munro shows that recycling of architectural material was systematic and widespread, and proposes that this might well also have been the case in earlier periods too. In his paper, **Simon Barker** demonstrates that this was indeed the case; even in imperially-funded projects in Rome materials from earlier projects were extensively re-used. In an attempt to understand the cost-effectiveness of this kind of re-use Barker tests the extent to which we can use nineteenth-century building manuals to reconstruct the labour involved.

The final three papers in the volume are all concerned to some degree with personal adornment. The use of textile remains from funerary contexts in Austria for the study of social identity in the Roman period is explored by **Karina Grömer** and **Eva Hölbling-Steigberger**. Close analysis of these new finds allows the authors to make a number of important observations about the kinds of materials used by different people in this area. **Caroline**

Pudney then looks at what brooches reveal about the materialisation of identity and negotiation of personhood in the area of the Severn Estuary in Britain in the Late Iron Age and Early Roman period. Also looking at brooches, specifically British-made ones overseas, **Tatiana Ivleva** discusses the extent to which these objects can be used in conjunction with epigraphic evidence to trace British emigrants in the Roman Empire.

It has become something of a convention in the prefaces of these proceedings for the editors to comment on the perceived health, or otherwise, of TRAC as an institution. There are a number of aspects of these conferences, and their proceedings, which have attracted criticism, albeit generally constructive, in the past. It was for this reason that the Oxford TRAC Conference Committee decided on a slightly different organizing strategy for this meeting. Traditionally sessions have been proposed prior to the call for papers and then filled by relevant submissions as they come in. Though egalitarian, this approach makes the final composition of the session somewhat unpredictable; there is no way to control whether there will be enough papers to maintain the session or whether these papers will stimulate debate. To counter this tendency we felt it necessary to trust session organisers with greater responsibility for shaping their sessions. We asked session proposers, therefore, to provide session titles and abstracts along with the names and paper titles of three confirmed speakers, leaving at least half of the session to be filled with papers submitted individually in response to the call for papers. Promising papers on topics unrelated to the themes of the organised sessions were also grouped together into three general sessions which covered a range of subjects. While reluctant to abandon altogether the traditional way of doing things we felt that this approach encouraged structure within sessions while also ensuring that the conference remained suitably inclusive. This was something of an experiment, but the popularity of many of the organised sessions is testament to its success.

Something else that we feel needs attention are the proceedings. This printed volume is supposed to be a reflection of the conference itself but this is difficult to achieve. On the one hand, there is simply not the space to collect together enough papers to really reflect the range of subjects discussed at the conference. On the other, in the current format the editors of the proceedings are hostages to fortune, with little control over which papers are submitted for consideration and how many of these can be published. This is a situation that we tried to improve. Following negotiations we have managed to secure a contract, to replace the previously informal agreement, between TRAC and Oxbow guaranteeing publication of at least the next three volumes; we hope this will enable future editors to take more control.

The problem still remains that it is not really possible, at least currently, to translate effectively the lively session format of TRAC into print. This is a real shame because in the proceedings we tend to lose much of the best bits of TRAC, that is the debates before and after papers, the questioning and the probing of the audience. This is far from a new observation – Ray Laurence made many of these points in his article in the 2005 proceedings – but it remains a problem. How do we satisfactorily recreate the stimulating atmosphere of the individual sessions in the proceedings? The TRAC 2011 Newcastle conference is proposing to use a blog format, in addition to the proceedings, which they hope will encourage debate before and after the conference, and hopefully preserve that aspect of the conference in an electronic format. This is a novel idea which hopefully will prove successful, but it still leaves open the question of the proceedings. It is clear that in the 160 pages available not every paper can be published, but it is crucial that efforts are put into ensuring that more than one paper from each session is selected. This year that was not generally possible because not enough papers from the organised sessions were submitted for consideration. There are a number of possible reasons

for this. TRAC represents for many a useful platform for presenting new research orally, and for receiving feedback, but the proceedings tend to be looked on less favourably. For more senior academics the pressure to turn around a paper within a couple of months is understandably off-putting. Even for younger scholars journals are seen as more prestigious places to publish. TRAC continues to attract a predominately young crowd; most of the papers delivered this year were by doctoral students. This, of course, has long been the case, but we should remember that this was never the intention of TRAC and it is vital that it continues to attract established scholars too. In order to try and raise the profile of the publication we made sure that papers were this time peer-reviewed by experts in their fields, while at the same time exercising editorial control to make sure new ideas and approaches that might go against the mainstream were not stomped on. Above all, we need to ensure that the TRAC proceedings remain an appealing place to publish new and original research.

A twenty-year anniversary calls for a reflection. TRAC, however, is always a slightly different beast in those years when it is held with RAC, making it difficult for us to provide much insight based on our experiences. Over the years, though, it is noticeable that TRAC and RAC have become more alike. Theoretical debates are as much a commonplace in RAC sessions now as in TRAC sessions, and many who were once prominent TRAC contributors took part in RAC this year. Theory has entered the mainstream; indeed, one might put it, as Ray Laurence has, that 'TRAC may simply have won'. At the same time, however, not all of the developments that Andrew Gardner envisaged for TRAC in his paper in the 2005 proceedings are identifiable – TRAC has certainly not become more radical, though it may well now be more international. As it stands, with mainstream Roman archaeology becoming increasingly theoretical, TRAC is turning into a platform for younger scholars to present and publish, and while this is not a bad thing in itself, it does mean that TRAC will have to reinvent itself if it wishes to stay at the forefront of theoretical Roman archaeology. Perhaps next year, when TRAC is held on its own and it returns to its Newcastle roots, the Organizing Committee will be in position to provide a more pertinent reflection on some of these issues.

To end, the organisers of TRAC 2010 would like to thank the following institutions and bodies for their support, financial and otherwise: the various departments of the University of Oxford who provided venues and financial support, in particular the Faculty of Classics, the Craven Committee, the Ashmolean Museum, and the Taylor Institute. TRAC is once again indebted to the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and Barbican Research Associates, whose generosity provided grants for many speakers and attendees. We are also extremely grateful to TRAC 2008 Amsterdam for providing generous funds which enabled the organizers to offer for the first time exclusive bursaries to Continental delegates, which greatly contributed to the internationalisation of the conference. We would like to thank all the speakers and session organizers for making the conference such a success, as well as all the contributors to this volume for their cooperation in meeting tight deadlines. We are grateful to the referees for their time and invaluable comments. The conference, of course, would not have run so smoothly without the cooperation of the RAC Organizing Committee. The image on which the logo of the conference was based, a depiction of Concordia on the reverse of a rare coin of the little-known emperor Domitianus, found in Oxfordshire, was provided courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; the logo itself was designed by Rachel Wilson. Finally our gratitude goes to Oxbow Books for their continued support of the conference and their commitment to publishing its proceedings.

Dragana Mladenović and Ben Russell