

The RAG

The Roman Archaeology Group Four Years On

IN THIS ISSUE

'The Girl In Question' 2—3

Emilia Oprandi

A Short Visit to the Island of Hvar 3—5

Francesca Radcliffe

Romans and Egyptian Temples 6—8

Norah Cooper

Book Review 9

Marian Cross

A letter from Silchester 10—11

Rebecca Banks



Ancient baroque?

See page 8

With the Roman Archaeology Group about to reach the fourth anniversary of its formation it is well to recall its original aims. These were introduced and set out in the first issue of this Magazine in September 2004 as follows:

“The success of two recent three-week tours of Roman Britain has revealed a wider group eager to participate in promoting the subject and helping, in the face of limited official resources, in sustaining an intelligent and informed connection with a major component of our shared cultural roots. We have taken the initiative therefore to form the Roman Archaeology Group and to report on Roman Archaeology to a wider audience. An immediate objective is to draw in a still wider circle of people of all ages, backgrounds and interests to join us in enjoying the subject and, if possible, supporting our broader aims which include the following: (a) the provision of financial support to tertiary students in Western Australia to further their studies in Roman Archaeology; (b) the creation of fieldwork opportunities in Roman Archaeology for students and members resident in Western Australia; (c) fostering the arrangement of joint ventures with other interest groups to participate in investigations of Roman archaeological sites; (d) the endowment of an additional teaching and research position in Roman Archaeology in a tertiary institution in Western Australia; and (e) arranging exhibitions, publications, lectures and courses for the community.”

Four years on these remain the aims of the Roman Archaeology Group and the aims are steadily being achieved. Some of the aims were always understood to be of a long term nature. The development of joint ventures and the endowment of a research position were ambitious, however, the success of RAG so far has made even those aims seem a little less ambitious than they seemed at the outset.

Scholarships :

A primary aim of RAG was and is the provision of scholarships and other financial support

to tertiary students wishing to pursue studies in Roman Archaeology.

In its very first year RAG provided travel scholarships to the site of Tropaeum Traiani in Romania (see the article in RAG Volume 1 Issue 2 of January 2005 by students Karen Henderson and Felix Hudson).

In June 2006 the generous support of a RAG committee member Don Boyer led to the establishment of the Don Boyer Roman Archaeology Travel Scholarship. As can be seen on the RAG web site, the first of these endowed scholarships allowed Rebecca Banks to participate in Roman period excavations in Spain. Last year Leonard Goulds and Martina Müller went to study replicas of Roman structures in western Europe.

Other Activities:

The activities of the Roman Archaeology Group are of a wide variety and they continue to develop.

An especially important development has been the establishment of lecture programmes held on Saturday afternoons in Summer and Winter. The programmes began in the winter of 2006 and lectures have ranged over a wide variety of topics including: Roman Athens, Constantine, Roman Britain (British emperors, Saxon Shore Forts, Richborough), the architectural layout of the imperial capital, Hadrian, Roman Judaea/Palaestina, Masada, and replication of Roman buildings.

As a further development of this initiative RAG has begun to make special provision for lectures to secondary students studying TEE Ancient History. The first Saturday afternoon session for this purpose was held on 26 July this year with an attendance of some 170 (100 or so being TEE students and their teachers). The subject was ‘Caesar’. The great success of this first initiative for TEE students will certainly mean that such programmes will become a regular activity of RAG.

'The Girl In Question'

Emilia Oprandi



Emilia Oprandi is a Barrister & Solicitor and a RAG Committee member. She is a presently a senior legal officer with Edith Cowan University.

In the modern law it is commonplace to reduce agreements for the sale of valuable property to writing. This provides evidence of the bargain and of the terms of the agreement and avoids or at least endeavours to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty about the transaction. Such documents normally identify the vendor and the buyer and describe with some particularity the item being sold. There is invariably some undertaking by the vendor as to the fitness for purpose of the thing being sold and warranties as to title and the right to sell. It is the usual practice for each party to such a transaction to receive a duplicate or counterpart of the signed document to avoid any possibility of the agreement being changed without the consent of the other party. Any amendments to the document require the parties to initial the changes in each copy so that each party has an exact replica of the document.

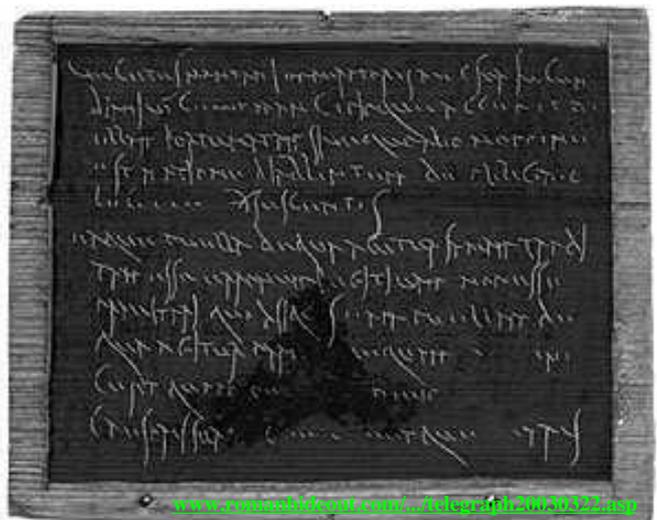
In Roman times, transactions involving the sale of valuable assets were also reduced to writing and duplicates of the document were made and sealed so that the authenticity of the unsealed document could be verified.

In recent times there has been an interesting discovery in the excavation at 1 Poultry in the City of London of a stylus tablet "page" recording the sale of property. The tablet is a significant find as it is the first Roman deed of sale to have been found in Britain but it is in its terms a document which may have been executed anywhere in the Roman empire.

The find and the particulars of the tablet are described in detail by the finder, R S O Tomlin in "*The Girl in Question*" A New Text from Roman London" in *Britannia*, Vol 34 (2003), pp 41-51. The information set out in this article about the tablet is drawn from R S O Tomlin's article.

The tablet the subject of the discovery is described as a thin rectangular slab of silver fir, 140 by 114 mm, 6 mm thick and recessed on one face only to take wax into which the text is inscribed. While there are some remnants of wax on the tablet the actual inscribed surface has disappeared. There is no trace of writing on the other surfaces of the tablet. Following examination of the tablet the deduction which has been made is that the tablet was the first "page" of three such "pages" which were bound together (*tabulae triplices*) to form a legal document. The legal document, as was the custom, would most likely have been prepared in duplicate as a precaution against illicit alteration with an outer text being duplicated by an inner sealed text. It is believed that the subject tablet formed part of the inner text.

The tablet (picture below) is quite damaged and much of the inscription is lost. What there is of the inscription has been deciphered from marks made by the stylus on the wood, the wax having been lost. However, what does remain and what can be deciphered from the tablet serves to remind us that Roman society was a society in which slavery was an important element of the economy and in which human beings were bought and sold much as we would buy and sell a horse or a piece of furniture. The use of slave labour in the Roman Empire was so extensive and commonplace that there were extensive laws in place governing the ownership of slaves. For example, in the Institutes of Justinian, Book 1 Title III, Of The Law Of Persons the preamble provides "*In the law of persons, then, the first division is into free men and slaves.*"



Despite the inherent difficulties of deciphering such a damaged artefact, the portion of the tablet bearing lettering has been deciphered and transcribed. The mechanisms employed to achieve this are extensive and detailed but in summary involved cleaning the tablet which made it more fragile but which preserved the minute bruises and cuts left by the stylus, thus making it more legible. Examination of two black and white photographs lit from left to right under magnification revealed the text. Once the nature of the document was ascertained reference was made to similar documents to provide an idea of the type of text which may be expected. The photographs were supplemented by the use of digital colour scans and then finally the original tablet was examined under raking light by means of a low power binocular microscope.

The inscription on the tablet has been transcribed in the Latin and translated in to English as follows:

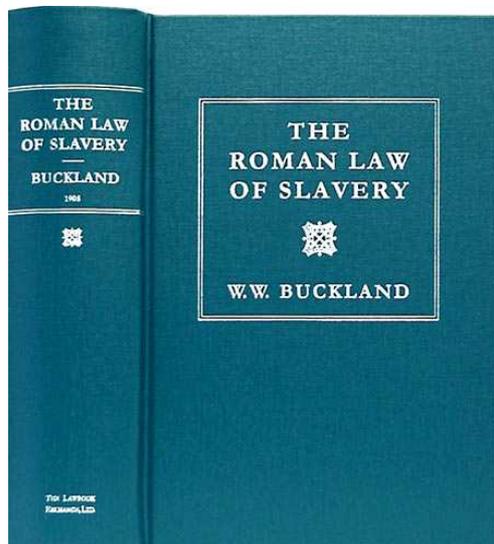
“Vegetus, assistant slave of Montanus the slave of the August Emperor and sometime assistant slave of Lucundus, has bought and received by mancipium the girl Fortunata, or by whatever name she is known, by nationality a Diablintian, from Albicianus [...] for six hundred denarii. And the girl in question is transferred in good health, that she is warranted not to be liable to wander or run away, but that if anyone lays claim to the girl in question or to any share in her, [...] in the wax tablet which he has written and sworn by the genius of the Emperor Caesar [...]”.

The form of words used follows formulaic terminology found in similar documents echoes of which remain in our modern day contract for the sale of livestock: that the animal is in good health and disease free; that the vendor has title in the animal and that title is transferred unencumbered. The contract for the sale of a slave was drawn by the Romans in terms and executed in the manner applicable to contracts for the sale of real property and transport animals. What is particularly striking about the contents is the offhand manner in which the object of the sale, the girl Fortunata (not so fortunate perhaps) is referred to in the document “...or by whatever name she is known” and on several occasions “*the girl in question...*”.

Because of the price paid, it is thought that Fortunata was a young woman rather than a young girl and that she was sold either into domestic service or concubinage.

The Roman law provided that all property purchased by slaves belonged to the owner and not the slave. In this case it is the slave of a slave who is purchasing the property. Both slaves are imperial slaves and form part of the emperor’s household. It is thought that the emperor was either Domitian or Trajan and the estimated date of the transaction is between 75 and 125 AD. The actual date and place of the transaction would have been recorded on one of the pages now lost.

For those wanting to go into the detail of the Roman Law on the subject of slavery they could do worse than refer to W. W. Buckland’s famous ‘The Roman Law of Slavery’, Cambridge, 1908. (Ed.)



A Short Visit to the Island of Hvar Francesca Radcliffe



Francesca Radcliffe is a freelance aerial Archaeologist living in Dorset. She has a keen interest in the Aerial Archaeology of her native Italy and recently arranged the publication of John Bradford’s pioneering essays on Apulia.

When a friend suggested that we should go for a short holiday to Hvar I readily agreed.

The name Hvar did ring a bell, but it was not until I translated it to ‘Lesina’ in Italian, that I really knew where it was! And I remembered that in *Ancient Landscapes*, John Bradford writes about this island. In fact he has quite a lot to say about the Roman centuriation in Dalmatia, and Hvar in particular (1).

It was the reason why I was keen to see the ‘*plain adjoining the town of Stari Grad.....covered by remains of an ancient grid of roads and boundaries*’. (2) And so it was that at the beginning of June I found myself flying in a small ancient Cessna (“but it is American” said the young pilot, which was meant to reassure me) over this remarkable & beautiful landscape: a regular pattern of grey walls criss-crossing bright patches of red fields, on a backdrop of dark green Mediterranean pine woods and all surrounded by the emerald sea.



View of Hvar central plain from the west, towards Jelsa. Hvar airfield, the pink long field, centre left, is the air strip from where we took off & landed. It looks abandoned and I suspect it was realised that building a proper airfield would destroy the archaeology.

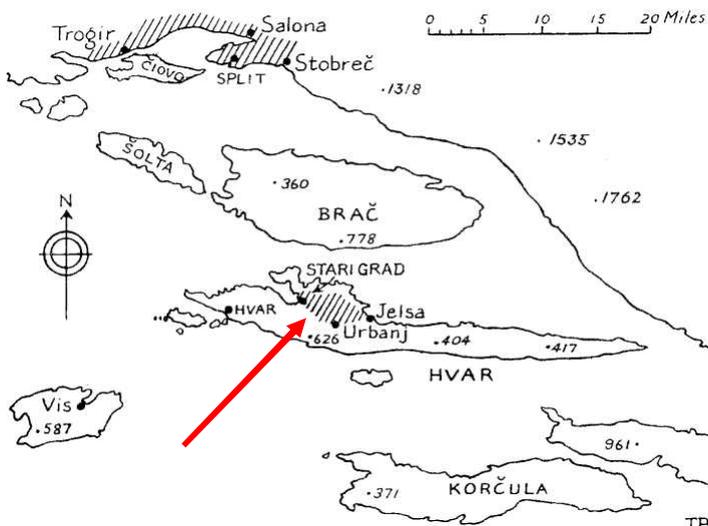
Hvar is a long and thin island (map below), stretching east-west, about 70 km long and about 15 km wide. On its northern central section, a fertile plain, situated between the towns of Stari Grad (Old Town) and Jelsa, is in striking contrast to the mountainous ridge which runs the whole length of the island. The early settlers (as well as many others who followed through the ages) were no doubt attracted by the many natural harbours, inlets and havens all sheltered from the fierce northerlies, westerlies, easterlies and southerlies & set in a perfect strategic position. Added to the mild climate and the fertile soil these conditions still make this delightful island one of the most attractive in the world and not only to the sailing community!

a deep harbour, was founded by Parians from the Greek island of Paros in 385/4 BC. (4) The remains of the Greek city walls have been found and are partly excavated.



In the foreground, the remains of the first church built in Stari Grad and in the island Hvar in the V century AD, a basilica originally probably dedicated to St Mary, & on the left, the apse of its twin Church, built in the 6th C, originally probably dedicated to St John.

On the fertile plain, south-east of the city, the foundations of the walls laid out by the first Greek settlers when creating their land division, or Chora, are still there. These walls were subsequently re-used by the Romans when in the 1st century BC Pharos became Faria. (5) Surveys and excavations carried out by the Adriatic Islands Project (6) on the plain have discovered numerous sites of Roman villas, some extensive, but only a small number of Greek sites: the Romans either destroyed or settled on top of the early occupation, and in medieval times these walls were still used and repaired when needed. (7) This, I suppose, is one of the reasons for their amazing survival (survey map below).



Map of Dalmatia, after Bradford's. Drawing of the Dalmatian islands. The shaded area between Stari Grad & Jelsa is the Chora, the 'territory' where the Greek land division and the later Roman centuriation have survived for two millennia.

Hvar was the first of the Dalmatian Islands to be colonised by the Greeks in the early 4th century BC, (3) and the substantial remains of a number of Illyrian fortresses, surrounded by woods of maritime pines, are still dotted around the island, and they can be easily detected from the air (photograph below).



Hvar, Mapping from aerial photos and ground surveys of the Chora, between Stari Grad and Vrboska, showing the Greek land division.

In 1989 at the beginning of the Adriatic Islands Project an international team of archaeologists carried out an extensive survey in Hvar town and of its Castle.

The Castle is a fortress set in a strategic position above the town; it overlooks the stretch of sea, on the south-western side of the island, sheltered by the Pakleni archipelago. The survey confirmed the long held belief about the ancient history of the island itself & of the site. It was occupied during the Neolithic, in Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age; pottery was found dating from the 4th to the 9th centuries BC, imported from Greece as well as from Italy and Apulia in particular. (8)



Photo I took on 2 June 2008 of Hvar's largest prehistoric Illyrian fortress at Gra iš e, on the south side of Vrbanj, from the south.

Stari Grad, ancient Pharos or Faros, built at the sheltered end of



This imposing fortress was built by the Venetians mainly in the 16th century on a much older fortified site.

I was hoping to see some of these finds in the St Marko Museum, in Hvar. It was closed when I went to visit it, but by a fortunate coincidence Marinko Petri, an archaeologist and Curator of the museum, was there and he explained the problems they were facing. Due to the appearance of ominous cracks on the walls of the old St Marko's church where the museum is housed, they could not let visitors in for safety reasons. The Museum is in urgent need of repairs & funding for its restoration. It is hoped that help towards this will soon be forthcoming. As my interest in the archaeology of Hvar was apparent Marinko Petri told me that the following day he was going to visit the remains of a Roman villa 'rustica' in the neighbouring island of St Klemente and I could join him.



Map of St Klemente. The Roman villa lies on the eastern side of Soline's bay, arrow centre left. The arrow, on far the left, marks the site of another Roman villa, a short distance further west, in the area of Momi a Polje where the adjacent tiny plain is also cultivated with vines and olives trees.

His visit was to prepare for the excavation (planned for this Summer) of some trial trenches a group of American students and volunteers from the University of St Thomas (St Paul), assisted by a team of Croatian archaeologists from Split, would be carrying out. They hope they will be able to determine the size and extent of the villa. A number of finds: fragments of *tegulae*, bricks and *hypocaust* & pottery sherds were collected last year during an initial field walking survey; a geophysical survey was also carried out. The following day we walked to the site on the south-easterly side of the sheltered bay of Soline, at the edge of a small fertile plain where vines (which produce excellent wine) and olive trees have grown for more than two

millennia. Records show that in past centuries salt was also extracted in the bay. In the long grass we came upon a large wall, 16m long by 2.5m high (photograph below).



The wall, part of the remains of the Roman villa in Soline's bay

A number of foundations criss-crossed the site and to the south, adjacent to an accumulation of stones, was a half buried square building with its walls (showing traces of plaster) standing up to a height of 2 metres. As we walked & looked around, Marinko Petri told me about the island & its history. We later wandered through the village of Vlaka, dating back the 15th century, charming white-washed cottages, geraniums cascading from the ancient walls and then on to the recently restored Chapel of St Klemente which stands on a little eminence facing the island of Hvar.

The records kept in Hvar's rich archives go back many centuries and they, together with the excavation, should help shed some light on the history of the building which is about to be excavated.

And in Hvar there are wrecks of Roman ships as well, dotted around the islands which I have not even mentioned ... it will be for next time!

My thanks for their help & kindness to Marinko Petri, Branko Kirigin and Aldo avičić.

July 2008.

1. By kind permission of Marinko Petri, St Marko's Museum
2. J. Bradford, *Ancient Landscapes Studies in Field Archaeology*, London G Bells & Sons Ltd 1957: 183-91
3. J. Bradford, 1957, 191. John Bradford interpreted the walls boundaries seen in the vertical aerial photos of this plain as being part of the Roman centuriation, but when the ground surveys that he advocated were finally carried out, the earlier Greek lay-out was discovered.
4. Polybius, Strabo, Appian and Diodorus Siculus in particular, have all left accounts of the early history of Illyria, modern Dalmatia.
5. B. Kirigin, *Pharos An Archaeological Guide*, Centre for Culture, Stari Grad 2003, 11 & 13.
6. *The Adriatic Islands Project*, BAR International Series 660, 1997 and to know more about the results of the Project their website is excellent: <http://www.iaa.bham.ac.uk/bufau/research/aip/aip.htm>
7. B. Kirigin, 2003, 7
8. B. Kirigin, 2003, pers. com.

Romans and Egyptian Temples

Norah Cooper

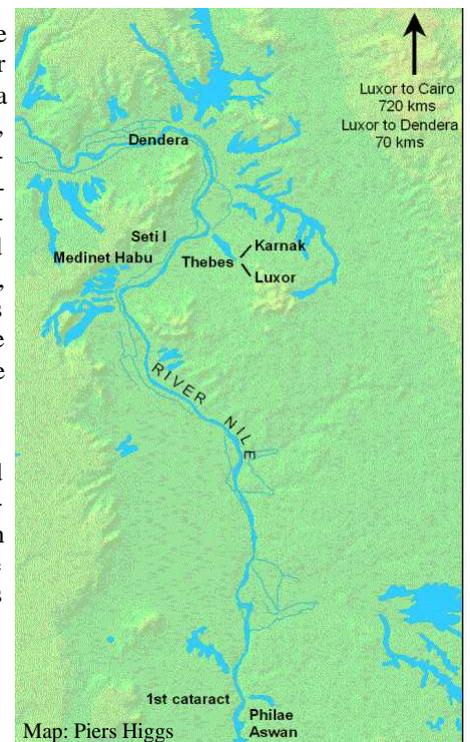


Norah Cooper, a RAG committee member, is a biologist with a lifetime's interest in Classics and Ancient History.

The pyramids, tombs and temples of Egypt hold an enduring fascination for tourists. A land of mystery and mysticism, where ancient pagan gods and goddesses held religious sway over a land ruled by mighty pharaohs. Little does the average tourist realise that many of the soaring columns, elegant porticoes and enigmatic figures belong not to the early dynastic period of Egypt but to later rulers from Macedonia and Rome. The Graeco-Roman rulers of Egypt left their marks in ways at times quite subtle, because they did so in the Egyptian mode.

In fact, many of the most visited, recognised and best preserved temples in Egypt, e.g. Dendera and Philae, (see map), are from this period. To many, these Graeco-Roman temples are their main experience of Ancient Egypt.

Egyptian temples like Luxor were built, redeveloped and used for religious purposes for millennia from the Dynastic (3007-332BC), Macedonian (332-310BC), Ptolemaic (305BC-30BC), Roman Imperial (30BC-AD324), Byzantine-Coptic Christian (324-641AD) and finally Moslem (632AD onward), periods. As a result, archaeologists excavating these sites have to make decisions about which era of the temple's life should be restored.



Egypt became a Roman province in the Roman Imperial period (30BC-AD324), and temple monumental building commenced with Augustus (30BC-AD14). The Romans in Egypt continued their practices of both absorbing local gods into their own pantheon (e.g. Isis, the mother goddess, became an important god throughout the Mediterranean and as far away as London), and of assimilating local traditions, this included the building of temple monuments and their decoration.

Dendera

At Dendera, 70km north of Luxor, you enter the temple complex through the grand gateway built by Domitian and Trajan in the 1st century AD (photo below). Once through the gateway, on the right, is the Roman birth house or *mammisi*. Mammisi were small temples used on ceremonial days for procession of the gods to celebrate the birth of the god-child with whom the king and then Roman Emperors were identified. This Roman *mammisi* (photo top right of opposite page) was built in the time of Augustus and decorated under Domitian and Trajan. Decorations were still being added in the 2nd century AD. The external walls of the building include a representation of Trajan wearing the crown of Lower Egypt.



Photo: Norah Cooper

During the reign of Tiberius (14-37AD), the famous monumental façade (pronaos) was built (photo). Above the central doorway of the pronaos there are three lines in Greek text written in AD35 proclaiming that the temple was “for the Emperor Tiberius Caesar, the new Augustus, son of the divine Augustus, under the prefect Aulus Avillus Flaccus”. Inside the pronaos the scenes on the left side of the front wall show the emperor wearing the crown of Lower Egypt and on the right side he wears the crown of Upper Egypt.



Photo: Norah Cooper

On the rear of the temple wall, Cleopatra VII and Caesarian, her son by Julius Caesar are featured. Behind the main temple stands a small temple of Isis built from blocks taken by the Emperor Augustus from earlier buildings on the site.

In pre Graeco-Roman times, the public were totally excluded from the temple proper which allowed access only to kings and priests. At Dendera, a small shrine to Hathor, (another Egyptian mother goddess), was built on the centre of an outside wall of the temple to allow the public to approach and offer prayers and petitions directly. Rome exercised strict control over Egyptian temples through newly developed institutions, and data about the indigenous Egyptian clergy are fragmentary.



During the reign of Tiberius (14-37AD), this famous monumental façade (pronaos) was built.

Philae

In the beautiful temple at Philae, now on an artificial island in Aswan, a Roman colonnade (photo opposite) in the outer courtyard draws you toward the main buildings which date from the Graeco-Roman period, with reliefs as late as the time of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (late 2nd century AD.) East of the main temple, a small shrine to Hathor, started in the Ptolemaic period was completed by Augustus who is shown making offerings to personifications of Hathor.

There is a small temple north of this shrine known as the Temple of Augustus.



Photo: Norah Cooper

Often Graeco-Roman temple decoration is regarded as a crude rendering of the original, dynastic style, particularly as the figures of the gods and people (photo, Kom Ombo) have a more curvaceous form than the pre Ptolemaic figures (photo, Karnak). However, the style is an evolution of an art form.

Kom Ombo

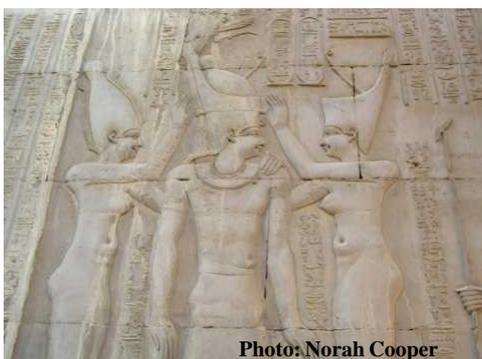


Photo: Norah Cooper

Karnak

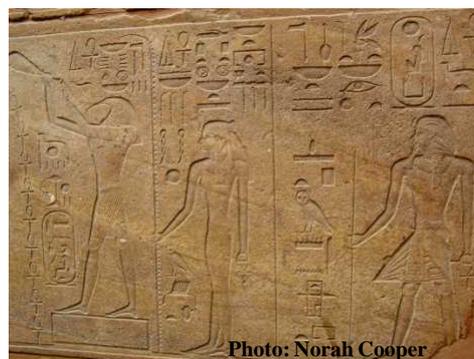


Photo: Norah Cooper

Today, one of the most recognised Egyptian temple structures is Trajan's Kiosk (photo below) at Philae. Kiosks are a characteristic Graeco-Roman form of architecture in Egypt. This magnificent structure is 16metres high with plant-motif columns which are rich in detail.



Photo: Norah Cooper



Photo: Norah Cooper

Luxor

Even in Luxor, one of the most quintessential of Egyptian temples, there are many Roman elements. At the entrance to the precincts of Luxor Temple there are the remains of a small chapel built by Hadrian (photo opposite) and a Roman fort. The Romans converted the whole area into a fortified garrison in the 3rd century AD. In fact the name *Luxor* is derived from the Arabic *al-Uksur*, meaning fortification and this itself is from the Latin, *castrum*, with the same meaning. The main temple at the centre of the defence complex became a temple to the Roman emperors who saw themselves as divine inheritors to the Egyptian kingship.



Photo: Norah Cooper



Photo: Norah Cooper

As you pass through the pillared Hypostyle Hall, to the first sanctuary known as the Chamber of the Divine King, there are images of Roman officials (photo opposite) painted on the walls plastered by the Romans and covering the Ancient Egyptian wall decorations. In this area there are friezes of Domitian and three other emperors and a room where Christians were forced to swear allegiance to Rome.

Most of the Graeco-Roman temples on the Nile, from Dendera south to Aswan, have examples of Roman monumental building and decoration which includes images of emperors. The presence of the Romans is visible in all the other temple complexes like Karnak, Medinet Habu and the Memorial Temple of Seti I.

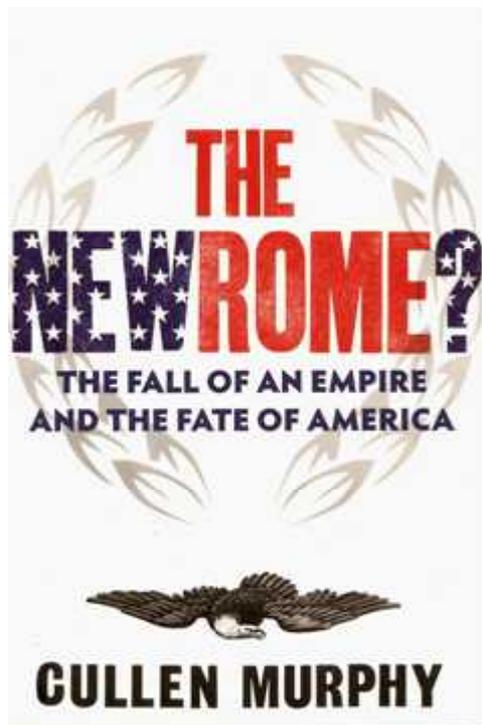
Egypt has left for those of us in the 21st century, an artistic and architectural legacy of styles and conventions which initially seems unchanging, but which to the discriminating and discerning visitor shows steady but significant development through the centuries.

Thus what may appear dynastic to the casual glance may well be the result of the careful building program of dedicated priests and bureaucrats serving a Roman Emperor.

BOOK REVIEW

Marian Cross

Comparisons between the Roman Empire and America have been made since the time America declared its independence. This is not surprising given that America's founding fathers consciously modelled their new sovereign state on much that had characterised Rome. From these first beginnings then a certain sense of destiny entered the American psyche. In his book *The New Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America* Cullen Murphy looks at whether this sense of destiny will impel America down the same series of paths the Romans took as they pursued their own destiny.



Although Murphy's comparative analysis begins with the Emperor Diocletian (284–305CE), the book extends across the centuries before and after Diocletian. Murphy also places America on a sliding time-scale from the time of her independence to the present. By holding one empire at a particular point in time then examining the other as it moves through its recorded history Murphy reveals how comparisons may be meaningful at certain points in time but irrelevant at others. The role of slavery in each culture is an example of this. In the Roman world slavery was an important economic input and at a social level ownership of slaves boosted the standing of those citizens wealthy enough to afford them. Romans valued slaves but not as human beings. When America first became independent of Britain slavery had become established as part of American society. The Americans though came to see slavery as a moral issue and rejected it. Rome never did. Over time then what was initially a similarity with Rome ceased to be part of the American story as a result of a very compelling difference.

As Murphy continues his analysis of the two superstates he ultimately identifies a handful of 'parallels' that dogged both empires and from which the Americans can draw some predictive value from the Roman experience.

These empire-challenging problems include how the citizens of the empire see themselves in relation to the world; how an empire's military power creates as many problems as it solves; how the devolution or 'privatisation' of some government functions opens up the potential for both corruption and a dangerous disconnect between a government's intention and the actual outcome; how borders of empires are porous and why empires tolerate this; and also how the vastness of an empire creates a level of complexity that courts chaos.

That such an array of meaningful comparisons to ancient Rome can still be made in the 21st century underscores Professor David Kennedy's view that '...all cultures are interesting and instructive. But some are much more important than others'. In his beautifully written book Murphy shows us how this is so as he combines his objectivity as an historian with his journalist's bent for recognising the geo-strategic implications of seemingly innocuous events in both empires.

When in Perth some months ago, Cullen Murphy said of his book that it 'looks to the magnificence and hubris of Rome for insights into modern day USA.' He might just as easily have said that the book looks to the magnificence and hubris of the USA for insights into ancient Rome. The book actually does both, with much style.

The Eagle as a Symbol

In this late Byzantine image of a two headed eagle the perspective is perhaps of one of the heads looking to the old Rome and the other head looking towards the new Rome, Constantinople.



The eagle was a symbol in Rome but it was a symbol also much earlier; it was used as a symbol by the Hittites and the Persians for example. The eagle can be symbolic for a variety of things. The fallen eagle, America's bald eagle, on the cover of Cullen Murphy's book, clearly stands for the idea of defeat; the fall of another empire.

One symbol that America certainly adopted from Rome is that of the fasces, the bundle of rods, symbolizing power. It appears on US coinage as here accompanied by the words: *e pluribus unum* 'out of the many, one', or, put another way, 'united we stand'. (Ed.)



A letter from the Silchester Townlife Project, Hampshire, U.K: Digging in Roman and Iron Age Calleva

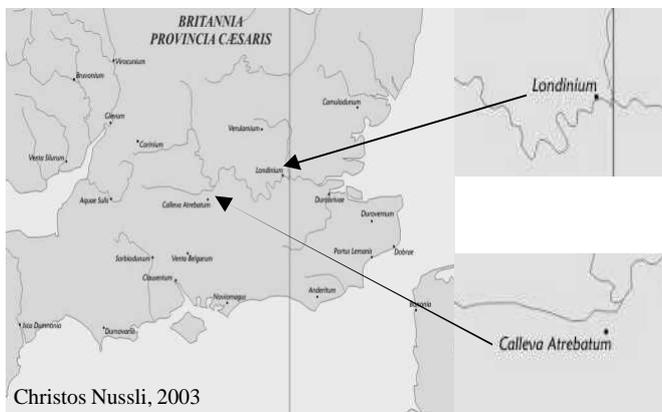
Rebecca Banks



Rebecca Banks graduated with Honours in Classics and Ancient History in 2007. She had previously held the first Don Boyer Travel Scholarship in Roman Archaeology which took her to an excavation in Spain. She is now overseas acquiring experience on further archaeological excavations.

Dear R.A.G. Members and Archaeology Enthusiasts,

I am writing to you having nearly completed four weeks participating in the 'Silchester Town Life Project', a training excavation run by the University of Reading. The Project is directed by Professor Michael Fulford of the university with his Associate Director Amanda Clarke running the excavation on site with the help of some forty or so other staff and about a hundred volunteers. The excavation is run to train archaeology students, as well as international students and archaeology enthusiasts, providing as much practical experience as possible. This has made it an ideal dig for me to participate in and is a perfect dig for people of any level of experience to enjoy. Some participants attend almost every year! Considering the dig is now in its 12th season, they are definitely doing something right.



Silchester is the modern name for the Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum*, located on the Iron Age site of the *oppidum* of the *Atrebat*es tribe. The site was previously excavated in the Victorian era with huge narrow trenches cut over the site to map any stone structures they came across and also to take out anything

'pretty' they found on the way. Naturally, the modern archaeologist winces at such tactics which ignored stratigraphy and the many subtle finds such as pottery sherds, mineralised organic deposits and imported stone that tell us so much about Roman life. Hence the town plan of Silchester which they created was only of stone structures and of any time period and gave us no window into the development of this town. Luckily, the opportunity remained to go back to the site and try again.

Mike Fulford had previously overseen excavations of the Roman Amphitheatre and the Forum Basilica of the town, both structures associated with the formal life of a Roman town. The current excavation is of *Insula IX*, located along the main north-south road of the Roman town. The goal of excavating this area is to try and create a window into the everyday life of the town and its occupants and how this changed over the course of its existence, hence the name 'Town Life Project'.

This season, we have come down into contexts associated with the mid-1st century C.E. The trench, being a huge open air trench of some 55 m square, is sectioned into areas under different supervisors. I have been working in the South-East corner of the trench of *Insula IX*, which is particularly busy and very confusing.



Amanda Clarke says that if you dig at Calleva, you can dig anywhere. One of the reasons for this is that the silt-gravel contexts are so difficult to distinguish, especially if you have only a developing archaeological eye like me! The other is that the trench is pock-marked by numerous depressions caused by wells and pits. This is because there was no natural water source at Calleva and they were forced to sink wells, but the type of soil was not partial to having huge holes cut into it and they probably regularly collapsed in on themselves! We know this because the six wells that have been excavated so far on site have been a constant trial to stabilise to allow them to be studied. One way in which these wells were stabilised in the past was with linings made from discarded huge wine barrels that each held around 800-900 litres! A near complete wine barrel was found by the Victorian excavators, and we were lucky enough to find fragments of one in the well that was excavated this year.



The area I have been working is made confusing by this constant digging of wells in the past because it causes slumping in the ground, making askew what would usually be a level surface, a floor for instance, or a straight line for a wall foundation. These wells also cut into earlier occupation layers, meaning that the level we are currently excavating has had portions of it erased by later occupants digging through it and effectively removing the material. The trenches of the Victorian excavations have also done this, but luckily left behind some notes and a plan to let us know some of what they removed. It is, therefore, like a massive jigsaw puzzle; luckily, one that the archaeologist in me and others relishes in putting together.

We are fortunate, however, that the site of *Calleva Atrebatum* does not have a modern settlement on top of it like so many other Roman sites in Europe. The preservation of the site is quite magnificent, the walls of the city standing at points up to four metres high, the point of the north and south gates preserved as well as some of the original ditch and ramparts of the Iron Age *oppidum*. It is a favoured walkway for the locals around Silchester, and the site is open to visitors while the Field School is running, with two open days being held in the season and anyone passing by welcome to have a peek. The interest of the locals in the project is encouraging. Many approach us at the local watering hole, The Calleva Arms, while we are having a well deserved end of day pint, and they are always curious as to where we are at and what we have learnt. Many come to the open days and donate to the excavation which helps to keep it open and running.



Sometimes, we feel quite isolated: the modern town of Silchester is a mile or so walk away and we are housed (well, tented technically, see below!) in a field on site with the bare necessities of running water and porta-loos. They look after us well, however, with chefs to make our meals, regular runs to the showers in a nearby town, and a marquee for all those social antics archaeologists like to get up to (beer companies would go broke if it weren't for archaeologists, I assure you!). I, myself, do not know how some of these seasoned archaeologists can dig, plan, record all day and then socialise all night. I am happy enough to eat my dinner, have a quiet beer and collapse in my tent. It must be a talent we acquire over time!



This season has been somewhat of a success. We have had very few instances of being rained out and had a few good weeks of solid sunshine to dig in (though the weather has been typically English I assure you!). The site is now getting down to the very early Roman stages, with some areas of the trench beginning to reveal what was going on before the Roman street grid was applied, and even getting down to some of the Iron Age deposits.



I will not steal Michael Fulford's or Amanda Clarke's thunder by telling you any more here. I encourage you to look for yourself at <http://www.silchester.rdg.ac.uk/> or join in the fun yourself in the next few years. Even maybe stop by if you are in the U.K. during July, or check out the Reading Museum where the Victorian finds are on display.

Yours,
Rebecca Banks
in a field with a Roman Town underneath it, Hampshire, U.K.

Roman Archaeology at UWA Membership of The RAG

Notes and News

Jordan Fieldwork 2008

This will be my longest season in the field, stretching 10 weeks from 30 August till 8 November. The season begins with the Jerash Hinterland Survey (see RAG 3.2) – whose existence this year we owe to the generosity of Don Boyer. Both Don and Anne are part of the team this year along with a current PhD student Ann Poepjes and a former student Andrew Card. We will be joined by 4 professional archaeologists from Scotland including the Co-Director, Fiona Baker.

While the survey is in progress, a start will be made in setting up arrangements with the Royal Jordanian Air Force for the succession of flights for the Aerial Archaeology in Jordan project and one or two initial flights will be undertaken. The bulk of the flying will be after the survey when my colleagues Bob Bewley and Francesca Radcliffe arrive from the UK. They will return in late October when we have been invited to carry out a second Workshop on Aerial Archaeology for Jordanians and other Arab archaeologists.

In between all of this will be numerous field excursions to examine on the ground the many archaeological sites seen from the air.

This is all hard work but also great fun. A highlight in between phases of the fieldwork will be a trip with Ann, Don and Francesca to the 'Desert Castles' of northern Jordan and out into the Basalt Desert beyond to try and find 'Maitland's Fort', a site named for Fl Lt Maitland of the RAF who spotted it in 1927!

Julius Caesar

Norah Cooper and, independently, Marian Cross, have drawn our attention to a new Roman bust found in the River Rhône at Arles in southern France. Arles had a long settlement history before Rome but its major transformation came in 46 BC when it was re-founded by

Julius Caesar as a Colony for veteran soldiers of one of his legions *Colonia Iulia Paterna Arelatensium Sextanorum*. The new bust is marble, of a "realist" style popular in the Late Republic and is identified by French scholars as Julius Caesar himself. Portraits of Caesar from life are rare so this bust, if correctly identified, may depict Caesar a couple of years before his death – face lined, hair combed forward to hide his receding hairline.

<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/art/news/story/0,,2279991,00.html?gusrc=rss&feed=networkfront>

Winter Programme 2008

The second of our lecture afternoons took place on 26 July 2008, the subject being Julius Caesar. The programme was longer than usual and had four (slightly shorter) lectures. It was a huge success, drawing not only the 'usual' c. 70 Members but about 100 TEE high school children and a few parents and teachers.

The season is not yet over; a final afternoon session is due at the end of the month:

Saturday 23 August 2008

Food and Diet in the Roman World

Preparation of Roman Recipes

Sampling

Marg Dorey

Archaeology of Roman Food

Dr Smadar Gabrieli

Refreshments will be available at the mid-session break when we will have an opportunity to sample some Roman recipes. To cover the additional cost the charge on this occasion will be \$10 (reduced in the case of Members)

Where: Social Sciences Lecture Theatre at University of WA

When: 1.30 pm

Lecture Cost: Free

Please RSVP for yourself and friends to Maire Gomes by telephone 9439 2828

Membership of the RAG is open to anyone interested in Roman Archaeology or classical studies generally. There is an annual membership fee of \$25 (inclusive of GST), students \$10.

To apply, complete and post the form with this edition of the RAG or contact the committee members at the addresses below.

The RAG Inc

www.romarchgroup.humanities.uwa.edu.au/

Chairman

Professor David Kennedy
M205 Classics and Ancient History
University of Western Australia
Stirling Highway
CRAWLEY WA 6009

Tel: 08 64882150 Fax: 08 64881182
 E-mail: dkennedy@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

Deputy Chairman

Rodney Greaves

Secretary
Michael Manley

M209 Reid Library UWA

Tel: (08) 64882330
 E-mail: mmanley@library.uwa.edu.au

Treasurer

Maire Gomes

M205 Classics and Ancient History UWA

E-mail: gomescm@bigpond.com

The RAG

Newsletter

Correspondence to the Editor:

Kevin J. O'Toole

PO Box 3277

PERTH, Adelaide Tce, WA 6832

Tel: (08) 92276979

E-mail: kjotoole@westnet.com.au