
Remember to use our website for information and queries. If you would like to add an item, or suggest how the website may be developed, please contact
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Email: archive@aasps.org.uk

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E-mail: ajpeachey@yahoo.co.uk
Welcome...it may be a chilly Spring so far but the pottery within may provide the heat of cooking and imbibing to warm you through

Welcome to the Study Group for Roman Pottery Spring 2019 newsletter; in which we have a really interesting mix of new discoveries and developing work, combined with book reviews and announcements...and the details of our forthcoming annual conference that will take is into the heart of a major industry in the West Midlands.

Contributors to this newsletter have been diverse and eager, so I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to you all. If you are still only a potential contributor, then please see this as an encouragement to come forward; we are delighted to hear from you, be it a simple photo and a couple of lines or a couple of pages. I hope I will catch up with you all at the conference

Best wishes
Andrew Peachey

Subscriptions

Subscriptions were due on 1st January 2019. Annual subscriptions £15 (overseas £20). Cheques should be made payable to the Study Group for Roman Pottery. Payments by Standing Order would be preferred. Please contact Diana Briscoe (Hon Treasurer). Email: archive@aasps.org.uk Address: 117 Cholmley Gardens, Fortune Green Road, London, NW6 1UP. Individuals who are not up to date will be removed from the circulation list. Please contact Diana if in doubt.

The John Gillam Prize

We are constantly looking for nominations of articles or reports for the 2019 John Gillam prize. Please send your nominations to the Gillam Committee, consisting of the President and Publication Committee at robperrin@ntlworld.com. A wide range of work on pottery found in Roman Britain is eligible, so long as it was completed within the last two years. Nominations can include pottery reports (both published and grey literature), synthetic studies, websites, student dissertations, and theses etc. These contributions can range from day-to-day pottery or site reports to monographs and digital projects, as long as they highlight specific aspects of Roman pottery from a technological, regional or thematic perspective.

The Committee

The SGRP committee currently comprises the following members:
President: Rob Perrin
Treasurer: Diana Briscoe
Secretary: Jane Timby
JRPS Editor: Steve Willis
Ordinary Member (Newsletter Editor): Andrew Peachey
Ordinary Members: Jane Evans, Ed Biddulph, Jane Faiers, Alice Lyons, Roy Friendship-Taylor
Website: Ed Biddulph
COMMITTEE VACANCIES

The formal 3 year tenure of the position of Secretary (Jane Timby) is due to expire (after Jane has extended her tenure to allow for a new secretary to be found with no gap between incumbents). If any body would be interested in filling this vacancy, nomination papers are included below, and if you would like to discuss what this role entails then please feel free to contact the secretary or other committee members to discuss this, either by e-mail or in person at the forthcoming conference.

Secretary

The main role of the Secretary is to set the agendas and take the minutes at the Committee meetings (twice a year) and the AGM (once a year), to ensure various timetables are met and liaise with other members of the Committee when necessary, and to circulate information and enquiries to members. The secretary may assist in the organisation of conferences where required, and is fully supported wherever necessary by the President, Treasurer and other committee members.

NOMINATION FORMS

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Secretary (Jane Timby- term expired)

Nomination...........................................................................................................................................

Proposed by ....................................................................................................................................... 

Seconded by .......................................................................................................................................
STUDY GROUP FOR ROMAN POTTERY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 5th - Sunday 7th July  2019

Venue: Red Lion Hotel, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1BB

This year’s SGRP conference will take place at Atherstone, Warwickshire on the weekend of 5th-7th July, starting on Friday afternoon and finishing at lunchtime on Sunday. Atherstone is situated on Watling Street, near to Mancetter and Hartshill, so this forms the main focus of the weekend, but other papers will look at the wider regional context and pottery production elsewhere.

The conference venue, accommodation and meals will all be at the Red Lion Hotel (http://www.atherstoneredlion.co.uk), an independently owned coaching inn dating back to the early 1500s. Atherstone station is about 10-15 minutes walking distance from the Red Lion and has good rail links across the country. There is parking for residents at the hotel. Friday lunch and Sunday lunch will not be included, but the hotel will be serving food as normal if these are required. Most of the facilities at the hotel are very accessible, being on the ground floor. However, the building is listed so they are not allowed to install a lift to the bedrooms upstairs. They do have a double room on the ground floor which has a wet room and is ideal for a wheelchair user, and another twin room on the ground floor which has a step up to the shower. As you will see from the booking form, you need to book your own accommodation at the hotel.

We have arranged the following ‘meal deals’ for the Friday and Saturday evenings:

Saturday night: carvery dinner. Roast Beef, Pork or turkey all hand carved on the carvery unit OR Goats cheese and red onion croustade, Served with all the seasonal vegetables, potatoes and trimmings. Desserts: Sticky Toffee Pudding and Custard; White chocolate and raspberry cheesecake with Cream; Chocolate fudge cake with ice cream or custard; Apple pie and custard or ice cream.

DEADLINE FOR BOOKING 28TH JUNE.
Friday 5th July

Chair: Rob Perrin (SGRP President)

14.00 - 14.10: Welcome

14.10 - 14.35: Roger White, Department of Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, The University of Birmingham.
A region divided: material culture preferences in the Roman West Midlands

14.35 – 15.00: Martin Wilson, Souterrain Archaeological Services.
Finding Roman Mancetter

15.00 - 15.25: Margaret Hughes, Atherstone Civic Society.
Manduessedum in Mancetter

15.25 – 15.50: refreshments

Where east meets west: Late Iron Age and Roman pottery from two Warwickshire sites

16.40 – 17.05 Jerry Evans, Barbican Research Associates.
Recent finds from The Lunt cemetery

17.05 – 17.20 Hinkley Archaeological Society. Fieldwalking at Mancetter

17.20 – 18.00 Pottery viewing (The Lunt cemetery, Mancetter-Hartshill pottery, Hinkley Archaeological Society fieldwalking finds etc)

Saturday 6th July

Chair: TBC

09.00 - 09.25: Jane Evans, Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service. Thinking outside the boxes: the Mancetter-Hartshill archive project

Mancetter-Hartshill revisited: pottery production, mortaria and their makers

09.55 -10.20: Professor Caroline Jackson, Department of Archaeology, The University of Sheffield.
The Mancetter Roman glass industry (title to be confirmed)

10.20 -10.45: refreshments

10.45 - 11.10: Nick Cooper & Liz Johnson, University of Leicester Archaeology Services.
‘Must have come from Mancetter-Hartshill, surely’: Roman Leicester’s uncertain relationship with its nearest pottery industry

11.35 - 12.00: Mike Hodder, University of Birmingham and Friends of Letocetum. Excavations at Wall

12:30 Depart Red Lion by coach for lunch at the Heritage café, Mancetter

13:45 Short walk to Mancetter Broadclose for visit led by Mike Hodder

15:00 Depart Mancetter by coach to travel to Wall

15:30 Wall visit led by Mike Hodder with Cameron Moffett

18:00 Depart Wall for return to Red Lion, Atherstone

Sunday 7th July

09.00 – 10:00 AGM

Chair TBC

10:00 – 10:15 Ruth Leary, Independent Researcher. Update on the mortaria stamps project

10:15 – 10:40 Fiona Seeley, Museum of London Archaeology. Over the garden fence – new insights on the Moorgate potters from a contemporary consumer site

10.40 – 11:05: Tea

11:05 – 11:30 Julie Dunne, Organic Geochemistry Unit, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol. Taking stock - organic residue analysis (ORA) of Iron Age and Roman vessels from northern Lincolnshire

11:30 – 11:55 Eniko Hudak, Pre-construct Archaeology. More kilns of the Thameside ceramic zone: excavations at the former Mardyke Estate, Rainham, London borough of Havering


12:20:12:30 Closing comments
Study Group for Roman Pottery
2019 Conference Booking Form

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Please PRINT your details.

Conference Fees (please tick appropriate box/s)

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Dietary requirements: Vegetarian / Vegan / Gluten-free / Other:

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Please advise if you have any special access requirements:

__________________________________________ Do you need a receipt? Yes / No
Special Rate at Red Lion for delegates:

Bed and Breakfast £65.00 Single Occupancy PER NIGHT
Bed and Breakfast £50.00 per person when sharing a twin room PER NIGHT
Please book directly with the hotel: 01827–713 156 and quote SGRP
99 Long St, Atherstone, Warks CV9 1BB http://www.atherstoneredlion.co.uk/

News

✓ A Late Roman Lamp from the Thames Foreshore

The current ‘Collecting for London’ temporary display at the Museum of London includes a rare late Roman oil lamp in North African red-slipped ware.

These lamps were manufactured in factories in North Africa specifically the Carthage region, and date to the 4th-5th centuries AD (type Hayes IIA). The lamp discus has two holes one an oil pour-hole, the other an air vent typical of this type. On the discus, the lamp is decorated with a central moulded, possibly Christian image in relief, in the form of a running lion in profile facing right with the hind legs and tail of the animal extending over the length of the channel. The central motif has a boarder or sculpted garland on the shoulder above and below consisting of a circle motif, followed by alternating ivy leaves and squares.

The lamp has a wide-open nozzle channel and rounded nozzle. The lamp has an integral mould-made wedge-shaped handle with no perforation, typical of this type. On the base, there is a tear-shaped foot ring within which are two concentric engraved circlets. The lamp has a crack running around the body but it remains in one piece. The white concretion is Thames 'race' which has adhered to the lamp. Although relatively common in parts of the Roman Empire, this is an unusually late lamp with Christian iconography for Britain and has been noted as of regional importance.

Details of the exhibition can be found at: https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london/whats-on/exhibitions/collecting-london
...and more on the lamp at: https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/819415
On the subject of lamps...

The Roman empire was sprawling and vast and while we focus on Roman Britannia, with sojourns into Germainia, Gaul and amphorae imported from more distant shore, sometimes items grab the attention for other areas, so while I was reading around Roman lamps (above), I found the context of this discovery in Egypt irresistible. The excavation of a winery at a site in the Nile Delta to the north of Cairo recorded, among many artefacts, several lamps that speak volumes about functions that so often we can only infer.

![Image of lamps](Photo credited to the Ministry of Antiquities, Egypt)

The large winery complex, potentially active from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD, included apparently climate controlled rooms built from thick mudstone walls that incorporated limestone slabs to help cool the chamber and regulate the temperature if the stored wine. For practical reasons such rooms did not include windows; therefore the lamps may have been as necessary in the daytime as the night.

Further developments on the ‘Lyon?’ ware cup

Shirley Priest

The last newsletter contained an article by me on recent finds at Ancaster. One item was identified as Lyon ware, since the publication of the Autumn newsletter Kevin Greene of Newcastle University (who has studied these particular wares) and Jane Timby have been in touch with me. I was happy to send Kevin a couple of additional photos, and he in turn shared his thoughts on the origins of the “Lyon” cup. Kevin has since given me permission to quote from his emails, and share his opinion with the rest of the Study Group.

“The additional photos reinforce my feeling that this isn’t Lyon ware. Quite apart from the colour, Lyon cups with barbotine or applied decoration always have some kind of moulding or groove to delineate the rim. As Jane suggests, Spain is a possibility, but darkened by burning; there do seem to be traces of the distinctive honey/golden brown colour-coating so characteristic of Spanish finewares. Although the majority of Spanish cups and bowls have delineated rims, a feature lacked by this one, your cup has the almost invariable strong grooves below the decoration – which are not a feature of either Lyon or Italian cups.
If not the result of burning, the grey/brown colour and slightly haphazard barbotine on this would be compatible with Southern/Central Italian cups (North Italian versions tend to be more grey/black than brown). There are Southern/Central Italian cups from Colchester, Wroxeter and Skeleton Green in my 1979 Usk fine wares report (fig 34 p. 80), so this source would have been feasible, but I don’t remember seeing any with such pronounced leaves. Again, this favours Spain, where high-relief barbotine is characteristic of many cups and bowls.

Inspecting fine wares in Lisbon, and reading recent publications from Spain, have shown me that there was greater regional diversity than I was able to detect when preparing my 1979 publication. To complicate matters, some of the Spanish fine wares produced in eastern Spain and the Balearic islands look rather like Italian vessels. The key reference is: López Mullor, A. (2008), ‘Las cerámicas de paredes finas en la fachada mediterránea de la Península Ibérica y las Islas Baleares’. In Dario Bernal Casasola and Albert Rovira i Lacomba (eds), Cerámicas hispanorromanas. Un estado de la cuestión, Universidad de Cádiz, Cádiz: 343-384.

The consensus from my Portuguese contacts is that the colour has probably been changed by burning since production, although they do note that occasional vessels were made in brown and grey fabrics even in southern Spain. Personally, I would put the likelihood of the origin being Spain at about 80%.”

This situation has really brought home to me why I still enjoy archaeology after nearly fifty years of local amateur involvement, the opportunity to handle genuine artefacts, a puzzle to start with, and an intriguing answer that makes the pottery even more interesting, if that were possible. I would just like to end this item by thanking Kevin and Jane for their kindness and help, which is very much appreciated.

✔ Mysterious vessel and fabric types in Leicester?

Liz Johnson & Nick Cooper (University of Leicester Archaeological Services)

Recent excavations in Leicester city centre have produced an assemblage with tow anomalies, and we are hoping SGRP members might have some suggested ideas to identities of two pieces. At the moment the stratification and phasing is still a work in progress, but the slipped base is from a context with a 2nd century AD cornice rim beaker, some Dressel 20 amphorae sherds and some wall plaster.
The vessel with the hands handle (we love this!) was found alongside a Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware beaker sherd, so in Leicester late 2nd-early 3rd onwards, but also with a London-type grey ware. Neither context has very much material to help with an overall spot date and these vessels could be residual anyway, we’re not sure yet.

If anyone has seen something like these pots before, or has any idea what they might be/where they might come from, that would be great. Please reply to me at: embe1@leicester.ac.uk
✔️ A new kiln in Kent

Steve Willis

Swale and Thames (SWAT) Archaeology are currently investigating a Roman site near Newington, Sittingbourne, North Kent; which is not a great distance south from the major Upchurch and Thameside pottery industries. There is some good, well-preserved, late 1st century AD kiln evidence (photos below), which appears to be associated with the production of a variety of forms, notably flagons. The pottery is currently being recorded and written up and we look forward to more details emerging.

✔️ The forthcoming SFECAG conference

Franziska Dövener

SFECAG (La Société Française d’Étude de la Céramique Antique en Gaule) are holding a forthcoming conference this year from the 30th May to 2nd June, based at Maubeuge-Bavay (Nord), close the northern border of France with Belgium. This will include a trip to Bavay Museum and an opportunity to see some of the white wares and other imports we find in Britain. There are also several papers covering local production in the Pas-de-Calais region and beyond. A full programme and other details can be found at: http://sfecag.free.fr/ or https://gama.hypotheses.org/1093
A Civil War pot

A site near Edge Hill, Warwickshire produced a humble pot that contained 440 coins including 78 silver denarii, the largest ever collection of coins from a period of civil war in AD68-69. The find was made in 2015, but was revealed in February. The vessel was buried under the floor of a building dated to a period of great upheaval in the Empire, known as ‘the year of the four emperors’. After the death of Nero in AD 68; Galba, Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian were all in power over 18 months with each making their own coins to fund their armies. Very few of these coins from this turbulent time survive making this hoard particularly rare.

Re-building a Roman kiln at Aylsham, Norfolk

Sheila Denny

In SGRP newsletter 64 (Autumn 2017) we reported on a community excavation project at Aylsham Norfolk that was recording two very well-preserved coarse ware kilns, close to the major Brampton industry. The marvelous endeavors of this group continue and they have completed the re-building and firing of a kiln modeled on those they recorded. A full report on this can be found in the link below, as well as a Youtube video:


ENQUIRY – The Aylsham Roman Project are also interested in the future possibility of re-excavating one of their kilns so they can be displayed on the site. If any SGRP members have any ideas or expertise on how they might be best covered and preserved for this purpose, please contact the group via their website (www.aylshamromanproject.com), or via the editor of this newsletter.
The Stone Discs of Late Roman Wroxeter: an archaeology of kitchen paraphernalia

Many thanks to Jane Evans for bringing this to our attention; another important contribution to realising the function of Roman pottery in conjunction with other objects (and foodstuffs). The full article by Cameron Moffett appears in Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society 93 (2018), 57–70; and the abstract is presented below:

A recent reassessment of post-Roman slate discs from Tintagel Castle has directed attention to the only other large body of excavated stone discs in Britain, that from the Roman city of Wroxeter. Analysis of this varied group of discs has resulted in the production of a type series. It is suggested that the majority of the discs from Wroxeter were used to stop up flagons, and are a physical reminder that the flagon was a very portable vessel type. Also occurring at Wroxeter is a small number of discs of the amphora stopper-type seen at Tintagel, where the evidence indicated that they were used with recycled wine amphorae to make mead (fermented honey water). The evidence for honey both in Roman Britain generally and at Wroxeter specifically is also considered here.

Honey jars from the Wroxeter baths and macellum excavation. An extract from fig. 4.54, Ellis (ed.) 2000. © Historic England Archive.

Antiques Roadshow?

A samian ware bowl discovered beneath Antiques Roadshow presenter Marc Allum’s Chippenham back garden has been restored and is on display at Chippenham Museum (bowl and presenter pictured below). The bowl was uncovered in pieces during an excavation by archaeologists Mike Stone and Clive Green and features a design with a gladiator and a lion. It was associated with the remains of around 14 pots buried underneath what was once the floor of a medieval building, and is likely evidence for an earlier Roman farmstead. A facsimile of the pot is being made, and the bowl is hoped to be a popular attraction at Chippenham Museum.

Photo by Siobhan Boyle
The recent full publication of the site in Highgate Wood, north London, is a matter for celebration (A E Brown & H L Sheldon (2018), *The Roman pottery manufacturing site in Highgate Wood: excavations 1966-78*. Oxford: Archaeopress Roman Archaeology series 43). If it’s pot drawings which excite you, here are more than 1700 of them arranged by context. This amounts to more than 1200kg of material, dating from the mid 1st to later 2nd century AD.

The bulk of it is the sandy grey ware known as HWC, which characterises Phase 3, but it’s the earlier phases which interest me. The journey towards HWC production is interesting. The kilns and other features ‘followed each other in an intelligible way from phase to phase. The Highgate potters showed considerable adaptability in responding to the market, with the introduction of more Romanised types of pottery, and changing ideas about the way to make it...’ (p64). More could have been made of this, as it sheds some light on how local pottery production became ‘Roman’. This is how it seems to work:

‘Phase 1’: only about 9kg of the assemblage are assigned to this initial phase, comprising two quite different fabrics. HWA is vesicular and used for handmade bead-rim jars. The other (‘early HWB’) is grog-tempered and looks very similar to the pottery of late Iron Age Hertfordshire, an array of cordoned and carinated jars, butt beakers, and even a pedestal base: forms which are wheel-made or at least wheel-finished. The only context to which these two fabrics can be directly related is the lower fill of a circular ditched enclosure near the edge of the site. Both fabrics (in the same characteristic forms) were also widely scattered across the area of the later kilns and ditches, where they appear to be residual or unstratified. Although the publication does not address this, there is no actual evidence that HWA or ‘early HWB’ was made at the site (see below), and the original function of the ditched enclosure, used later as a potters’ working area, is unknown.

‘Phase 2’: HWB, the first kiln product, is grog-tempered, but handmade, in a range of simple forms such as bead-rim jars and hooked-rim bowls (some on tripod feet), as well as some red-slipped vessels imitating imports. HWB was the dominant coarse ware used in pre-Boudican London, although not all the decorative motifs found there occur at Highgate, so there were evidently other places making it. (The authors suggest that this may have been necessitated by cyclical woodland management for fuel, the potters moving in sequence from site to site over a period of years.) The Highgate kilns of this phase are simple affairs dug into ditches, with minimal structural solidity, but each with an arrangement of ditches and pits for levigating the clay. Production resumed after Boudica, and vessels in a hybrid HWB/C fabric can be found.
‘Phase 3’ is HWC, the fully wheel-made sandy grey ware, made in vast quantities in fully structural kilns from the late 1st century. It is interesting that at the same time as the fabrics start to change, the arrangements for clay preparation in special pits decline and then disappear. This, in conjunction with Patrick Quinn’s petrological analysis, shows how the potters adapted to their commercial market. The revelation is that HWC is essentially ‘untempered’ – the sandy clay is the local natural here on the hilltop, above the London Clay. So the Highgate potters started here in the mid 1st century with rudimentary kilns, reverting to hand manufacture for the simple shapes wanted by their new London market, but with a complex means of preparing the clay and the addition of the grog temper still current in Hertfordshire (and elsewhere). The hybrid HWB/C is not really a change in chosen material, but can be seen as an experiment to see what happens if less grog is added. At the same time, kiln design improves, resulting in an eventual change in process which sees the cutting out of redundant steps (addition of temper, elaborate clay preparation) and hugely increased production of rapidly wheel-made pots fired in great quantity.

But to revert to the vesicular HWA: this is persistently described as vegetable-tempered, the mass of voids being caused by grass or straw temper burnt out during firing. Patrick Quinn’s analysis (p294) considers this and rejects it. Yes, there is some evidence of plant matter, possibly added deliberately, but it is rare in the samples and the voids are not the right shape. He says they look like holes left by mineral or rock inclusions, and were presumably something soluble like calcite. To me these vesicular bead-rim jars look exactly like those found in small quantities accompanying grog-tempered vessels on Hertfordshire late Iron Age sites, and which I have always assumed (and it is just an assumption) had contained shell. The soil at Highgate Wood, which can take the slip off samian and reduce VRW surfaces to powder, must be a factor. So the Phase 1 vessels all relate to contemporary Hertfordshire to the north, although what their presence in Highgate Wood implies is another matter. Finally, in analysis (p295) the grog-tempered ‘early HWB’ was similar in some ways to the kiln product samples, but not the same. A better term for it would be ‘unsourced grog’, as that is essentially what it is.

✔️ Book review – Late Roman Coarse Wares 5

The original review by J. Theodore Peña, University of California, Berkeley appeared in Bryn Mawr Classical Review; many thanks to Franziska Dövener for bringing this to our attention, and an edited version is presented below.

This publication presents the proceedings of the fifth triennial Late Roman Coarsewares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean conference, held in Alexandria, Egypt in April, 2014. These conferences—referred to by the organizers as LRCW—are intended to provide students of pottery in the late Roman world (understood as extending from the fourth to the seventh century CE) the opportunity to come together on a regular basis to present their research results and to discuss materials and methods.
The work under review is a two-volume set (as are those for LRCW 2-4) produced as part of the Études alexandrines series of the Centre d’Études Alexandrines, which hosted the conference. It includes a brief introduction by the editor followed by 54 contributions in English (21), French (15), Italian (15), Spanish (2), and German (1), grouped by geographical region. The quality of editing and production is excellent throughout, with the judicious use of colour images—for the most part for photomicrographs of ceramic thin sections. To be lamented are the lack of an abstract and keywords for the contributions and the absence of a concluding essay offering a synthesis of some kind, as was done for LRCW 2-4. Works cited in multiple contributions are grouped in a general bibliography that appears at the back of both volumes. Other works cited are listed at the end of the contribution. This is somewhat inconvenient, as the user does not know in which location to search for a reference and reproductions of individual contributions in most cases will not list all of the works cited in them.

The contributions report on programs of analysis involving pottery recovered at locales ranging from the coast of Galicia in the west to the west bank of the Euphrates in the east, and from Chersonesus in the north to Aswan in the south—thus from literally the length and breadth of the greater Mediterranean world. The number of contributions by the country or countries in which the site or sites at which the materials considered were recovered are as follows: Portugal (1), Spain (4), France (1), Italy (16), Tunisia (1), Libya (1), Croatia (1), Bulgaria (1), Romania (1), Ukraine (1), Greece (4), Turkey (1), Syria (2), Turkey and Egypt (1), and Egypt (13). Additionally, one contribution considers materials from a number of sites along the Lower Danube and Black Sea littoral, and one, materials from several sites along both the Mediterranean and Black Sea littorals. The contributions vary in length from as few as eight to as many as 46 pages, with some of the shorter ones representing brief, preliminary reports and some of the longer offering detailed presentations of substantial sets of materials. The various instalments of LRCW—which from LRCW 1 through LRCW 5 were deliberately located in venues that progressed across the Mediterranean from west to east—have tended to showcase studies that focus on the region in which the conference was held, and the large set of contributions concerning materials from Egypt is particularly worthy of note.

Probably the most widely appreciated value of pottery from the late Roman period is the opportunity that it presents to document the persistence/non-persistence of the systems for the distribution of craft goods and foodstuffs characteristic of the Roman world in specific locales and regions at more or less specific points in time. It is thus not surprising that the lion’s share of the contributions—43—are concerned with the classification, quantification, dating, epigraphy, and/or compositional characterization of sets of materials from single consumption sites or sets of consumption sites within a particular region. Five contributions treat pottery production workshops and materials recovered at these, while one contribution discusses
pottery from a shipwreck site that was being transported as cargo. Four contributions focus in a substantial way on ceramic technology, only one aims to make an original methodological contribution to pottery studies, and just three present close analyses of pottery assemblages aimed at the elucidation of issues such as vessel function and life history. With regard to methodology, most quantitative studies employ sherd count and/or minimum number of vessels measures, with but one instance of the use of the estimated vessel equivalents measure. Twelve studies present the results of the petrographic analysis of materials. In three cases this was undertaken in combination with X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis with a view to determining the crypto-/micro-crystalline components of the fabric and in five cases in combination with X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis for the determination of fabric chemistry. In one contribution xeroradiography is employed to evaluate forming technique, and in one study Raman analysis is utilized to determine slipping technique. It is interesting to note the analytical methods and approaches that are not represented in the volumes under review, as this provides some idea of the current state of the field of late-Roman pottery studies. To this point, none of the contributions involves the 3D scanning of vessels, aims to measure vessel capacity or identify residues of vessel content, considers vessel use alterations, or provides a link to an on-line dataset or research tool.

Limitations of space preclude the consideration here of individual contributions, and readers can consult the table of contents to gain an idea of the specific nature of these. In the reviewer’s estimation, the most important and/or interesting are the following: Fernández and Morais’ presentation of an amphora production workshop at San Martiño de Breu, on the coast of Galicia, in northwestern Spain that was active from the late second to the fourth century CE; Amorós Ruiz and collaborators’ presentation of materials from a seventh-century CE extramural midden at Tolmo de Minateda, in Albacete; Mukai and collaborators’ presentation of materials from three warehouse contexts at Arles dating from the mid-seventh to the early eighth century CE; Martucci and collaborators’ technical study of color-coat wares dating from the third to the sixth century CE from the villa at Pollena Trocchia, on the north slope of Mount Vesuvius; Santoriello and Siano’s presentation of fourth- to early sixth-century CE materials from UT 0466, a surface site along the route of the Via Appia in the Province of Benevento; Opaiț’s survey of amphorae dating from the first to the seventh century CE from sites on the Lower Danube and Black Sea littoral; Sazanov’s morphological study of Late Roman 4 amphorae dating from the second to the seventh century CE from several sites on the Mediterranean and Black Sea littorals; Haidar Vela’s presentation of a seventh-century CE pottery assemblage from Halabiyah-Zenobia, on the west bank of the Euphrates, in Syria; Vokaer’s presentation of fifth- to seventh-century CE amphorae from Apamea; Ballet’s survey of the production and consumption of pottery in Egypt during the Roman and Byzantine periods; and Winger’s presentation of a seventh-century CE deposit of pottery from a storeroom in a house at Syene.

LRCW 1-4 radically expanded the horizons of the study of late Roman pottery by providing a central venue for the discussion of research aims and methods and the presentation of research results. Collectively, the studies published in LRCW 5 do an admirable job of carrying this work forward, making a sizable and significant contribution to the body of empirical evidence available regarding the manufacture and distribution of pottery in the late Roman world.
A plethora of new books involving Roman pottery.... beginning at a workshop and kilns at East Winch, Norfolk
Mike Lally, Kate Nicholson, Andrew Peachey, Leonora O’Brien, Andrew Newton. 2018. ‘A Romano-British Industrial Site at East Winch, Norfolk’, East Anglian Archaeology 167

Excavations in north-west Norfolk, revealed a Romano-British pottery production site — part of the Nar Valley industry — as well as more limited evidence of iron smelting and possible habitation.

The principal features were a trackway, potentially linking the site to the nearby iron smelting site at Ashwicken, and part of a ditched enclosure containing an aisled building, a stone-founded workshop, four Nar Valley kilns and a drying oven.

The pottery assemblage adds considerably to our understanding of the Nar Valley industry. Of principal importance is the occurrence of tightly dated imports which assist in developing a chronology for the mid to late Roman Nar Valley industry. Archaeomagnetic dating of one of the kilns indicated a last firing at some point between AD 200 and 250. There is also potential ritualistic deposition associated with the kilns, and the use of an amphorae beneath a traditional ‘outhouse privy’ adjacent to the workshop.

A decline in pottery production in the later Roman period seems to have coincided with a renewed emphasis on iron smelting nearby and the disposal of quantities of tap slag on site.
The Roman Object Revolution. Objectscapes and Intra-Cultural Connectivity in Northwest Europe
Martin Pitts (Amsterdam Archaeological Studies 27, Amsterdam University Press, 2019)

Archaeologists working in northwest Europe have long remarked on the sheer quantity and standardisation of objects unearthed from the Roman period, especially compared with earlier eras. What was the historical significance of this boom in standardised objects? With a wide and ever-changing spectrum of innovative objects and styles to choose from, to what extent did the choices made by people in the past really matter?

To answer these questions, this book sheds new light on the make-up of late Iron Age and early Roman ‘objectscapes’, through an examination of the circulation and selections of thousands of standardised pots, brooches, and other objects, with emphasis on funerary repertoires, c. 100 BC – AD 100. Breaking with the national frameworks that inform artefact research in much ‘provincial’ Roman archaeology, the book tests the idea that marked increases in the movement of people and objects fostered pan-regional culture(s) and transformed societies. Using a rich database of cemeteries and settlements spanning a swathe of northwest Europe, including southern Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior, the study extensively applies multivariate statistics (such as Correspondence Analysis) to examine the roles of objects in an ever-changing and richly complex cultural milieu.

Pitts’ study of more than 80,000 contextualized artefacts from over 100 sites across the Roman North-West, takes discussion of the transformation of material culture en masse to a new level. Pitts skilfully develops an interpretation that does justice to the micro-level of site specific activity, to the macro-level of globalization theory, never losing site of his empirical analysis. This book is without doubt a game-changer.
- Greg Woolf, Director of the Institute of Classical Studies, The School of Advanced Study, London

This is an important and innovative work that addresses key issues in the understanding of the development of Roman provincial cultures, deploying contemporary theoretical perspectives yet also engaging in detail with the archaeological material. It makes a very significant contribution both to the particular historical period and to methodology.
- Martin Millett, Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology & Head of the School of Arts and Humanities, University of Cambridge
Death, Burial and Identity: 3000 Years of Death in the Vale of Mowbray
Greg Speed & Malin Holst (2019)

Free Download available at: https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/mowbray_he_2019/

This volume is the first of three monographs that present the results of archaeological excavations between Leeming and Barton in North Yorkshire, as part of Highway England’s upgrade of 19km of the A1 to motorway status. This first volume examines the extensive burial record from the road scheme.

The A1 in North Yorkshire broadly follows the line of Dere Street Roman road. It is therefore unsurprising that most of the burials were found at the Roman town of Cataractonium and its nearby satellite roadside settlement at Bainesse, both of which are located close to modern-day Catterick, as well as at a newly identified Roman roadside site at Scurragh House.

At Cataractonium, a number of infant burials and cremations were found inside the settlement area and Late Roman inhumations in back-plot locations at the rear of properties. In addition, a small group of late 2nd-century cremation burials, including a bustum-type, were located in association with the nearby Antonine fort. At Scurragh House, inhumation and cremation burials were excavated in back-plot locations and were associated with small square or trapezoidal arrangements, each of four small stakeholes that surrounded these graves.

However, the largest number of Roman burials - 232 inhumation graves and 17 cremation burials - were from part of a cemetery excavated at Bainesse, which was in use from around the late 1st century until at least the mid-5th century.

The concept of identity formed a major research theme for the project. The Roman burials exhibited a variety of grave furnishing and grave goods, and an extensive radiocarbon dating programme provided scientific dates for 151 of the burials spanning all periods. This evidence, alongside a comprehensive study of the surviving human remains, has been drawn together to provide a systematic analysis of the developments in burial rites through time. Combined with scientific analyses in the form of stable isotope analysis and Bayesian modelling of radiocarbon dates from Bainesse Cemetery, demographics, diet and changes in cemetery use have been explored to build a picture of the people who lived and died at these sites. The burials presented in this volume present one of the largest and best dated assemblages from northern England, and complement other recent work examining variation in funerary tradition across Roman Britain, and as such are of national, if not international significance.
Embracing the Provinces: Society and Material Culture of the Roman Frontier Regions
Edited by Tatiana Ivleva, Jasper de Bruin and Mark Driessen

Embracing the Provinces is a collection of essays focused on people and their daily lives living in the Roman provinces, c. 27 BC-AD 476. The main aim is to showcase the vibrancy of Roman provincial studies and suggest new directions, or new emphasis, for future investigation of Roman provincial world. It capitalizes on a wealth of data made available in recent decades to provide a holistic view on life in the Roman provinces by analysing various aspects of daily routine in the frontier regions, such as eating, dressing, and interacting. The contributors, who are acknowledged experts in their fields, make use of innovative interpretations and modern approaches to address current issues in the study of the provinces and frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Twenty-one essays are cohesively structured around five themes, encompassing studies on the female and juvenile presence on Roman military sites, Roman provincial cooking, and Roman cavalry and horse equipment. For the first time in the Roman provincial scholarship the volume has a special section on the subject of Roman leather, providing a much-needed overview of the current stance of work. A few papers deal also with experimental archaeology. The essays reflect a wide geographical and chronological range, while retaining thematic consistency, and will be of great interest to those working in Roman archaeology and provincial studies.

From the distant shores of Pompeii, and a closer link than before to Roman Britain

Much like the thematic link between the Roman lamps earlier in this newsletter, another recent high profile archaeological news story provoked both a marvellous demonstration of context bringing objects to life and to the research of one of our SGRP members.

Yet more evidence of daily life emerges at Pompeii, in the form of the discovery of the latest Thermopolium (snack bar), which recently came to light in the excavations of Regio V. The Thermopolium emerged in the open space which acts as a crossroads. The commercial structure has been partially excavated, since it lies along one of the excavation fronts subject to the stabilisation and consolidation intervention of the Great Pompeii Project, which is focusing on the over 3km perimeter of the unexcavated area of the site.

On one side, the decorations on the counter depict the beautiful figure of a Nereid on horseback in a marine environment, and on the other is most probably the illustration of the business conducted in the shop, almost as if it were a shop sign. The discovery of amphorae, which were located in front of the counter, reflected the painted image exactly.
Thermopolia were places where, as the name of Greek origin would suggest, drinks and hot foods were served, and these goods were stored in large dolia (jars) which were embedded in the masonry serving counter. Such establishments were located all over the Roman world, when it was common to go out to eat the *prandium* (meal).

At Pompeii alone, there are around eighty of them, but SGRP members who have been to recent conferences and read previous contributions by Jane Evans and Alison Heke, will be very aware of the connection of this practice with Roman Britain, so... ... ...
What’s Cooking in Roman Worcester

Jane Evans

Previous excavations at the Hive in Worcester recorded fragments from a number of unusual prefabricated Roman ovens; one with the base still in position showing how they were set up, and another providing enough evidence to reconstruct their shape. From examples found elsewhere, for example at the Chester amphitheatre, they seem to have been used to provide street food to passing crowds, but we are not sure how the various different types of ovens were used. As reported in a previous newsletter, a model of the Worcester oven was displayed at the Hive, but now they have gone a vital step further (and may I add that watching this project develop from the results of a commercial excavation, through research, out-reach and now re-creation, has been a brilliant demonstration of how to use the resources we have when given thought, direction and funding. We may not have the preservation of Pompeii, but we can certainly bring the classical world to life for education and the public).

This project, funded by the Roman Research Trust, aims to increase our understanding of how Roman prefabricated ovens were made and used, as well as celebrating the contribution of King’s School classics teacher, Anthony Cubberley, to the study of Roman ovens.

Professional potter Graham Taylor reconstructed the oven and baking plates, as well as helping us to run a Roman food and pottery workshop for schools.

Roman food expert, Sally Grainger, then cooked in the reconstruction oven during an experimental session at King's School fete on the 7th May.

The photo below shows the oven set up and in use. In order to retain heat, the oven was covered in soil and turf then covered in clay. As the original oven found at The Hive had a floor of broken pottery covered in clay, we set Graham’s reconstruction on a layer of bricks.

So, what did we find? The tall narrow door made it possible to insert a round metal grill, which could be rested on the internal shelf with charcoal below. The oven was initially heated using wood, but this was later replaced by charcoal to provide more heat. Chicken, coated using a
Roman recipe (fish sauce, lovage and ground coriander) cooked well on the metal grill with the oven door and ‘chimney’ above blocked. The oven door and chimney could be opened and covered as needed, to allow smoke to escape when heating up or to retain heat when in use. Cooked dishes could be kept simmering on top of the chimney, but it was too far from the fire to actually cook anything from scratch.

Sally also cooked sourdough buns on a baking plate set over charcoal, which worked really well. Baking bread straight on the oven floor was then tried too, by moving charcoal to the sides and back of the oven. More experimentation is needed though to get the temperature right for this – the bread rose very impressively and got a lovely crust, but was still doughy inside when the crust started charring. Kebabs cooked on metal skewers and bread rolls may well have been on the menu in Roman Worcester. As well as being great fun, we’ve learnt a lot about how these unusual ovens were made and used – our thinking caps are now on. The reconstructed oven will soon be on display in The Hive, so keep your eyes out... and in a breakthrough to mainstream media the link between Pompeii and Worcester also appeared in the Guardian (thank you Jane!): https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/mar/31/we-have-roman-fast-food-in-worcester-too