

# The RAG

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**WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH THE 'APPEARANCE' OF ROME IN BRITAIN?**

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## HADRIAN'S WALL THREATENED BY TOO MANY VISITORS



Hadrian's Wall near Vindolanda: Photo. Ed.

Hadrian's Wall could be placed on the World Heritage 'in danger' list.

In April the Times reported that 400,000 people have already marched along the Hadrian's Wall Long Distance Path Trail since it was fully opened eighteen months ago, compared with the 20,000 visitors that had been expected when plans for the path were drawn up in the early 1990s. This volume of use is causing severe erosion to the wall itself and to the surrounding soil, which in turn can expose archaeological deposits and structures to further wear and tear. In some areas, part of the stonework is already collapsing.

Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, Peter Fowler, an advisor to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Committee, was quoted as saying that he had opposed the trail's creation. 'We were told that the structure and earthworks would be protected, and that there would

be effective management of the route. That hasn't happened', he said. 'There is one person responsible for the whole 73 miles. It's unacceptable. This is not the way for Britain to meet the obligations. This needs more close management of the trail on the ground so that people can be moved a few yards one way or the other and to encourage people not to walk along the wall itself.'

Things are likely to deteriorate, according to Mike Pitts, FSA, editor of *British Archaeology*, who said that some people wanted to make the site an international attraction, 'using words that bring fear to some archaeologists - product development, marketing, branding - they recommended investment of £56.25 million, predicting visitors would increase by a third.' Jim Crow, FSA, senior lecturer in Roman Archaeology at Newcastle University, said that the trail had not been accompanied by resources to ensure the wall was protected.

Adding a location to the 'in danger' list



Another section of Hadrian's Wall near Vindolanda: Photo. Ed.

is something the World Heritage Site Committee takes extremely seriously (at present there are twenty-nine sites out of 600 on the list). 'Were something not done to stop the erosion, Hadrian's Wall could be added to the list', Peter Fowler said. 'I'm surprised that this should happen in an advanced country which apparently takes the world's heritage seriously.'

*Extracted from SALON -IFA (113: 13 April 2005) - the Society of Antiquaries of London Online Newsletter, in association with the Institute of Field Archaeologists.*

### History Rewritten by a Tombstone

Also from *The Times* comes a report by Fellow (of the Society of Antiquities) Norman Hammond, the newspaper's Archaeology Correspondent, based on an article that originally appeared in *Current Archaeology* (No 196: 168-176), regarding an inscription on a Roman soldier's tombstone found at Alchester, north of Oxford. (A full copy of the article can be downloaded from [www.archaeology.co.uk](http://www.archaeology.co.uk)).

The inscription describes the deceased soldier as a member of the Second Legion, commanded by the future Emperor Vespasian. Eberhard Sauer, of Edinburgh University, has interpreted the inscription as evidence that Vespasian's campaign headquarters might have been located in the Midlands, rather than in the south of England as has long been assumed.

The memorial was found in fragments, buried in the foundations of the town wall. Roman Alchester overlies the site of a fortress-camp, which has been securely dated by dendrochronology to the Roman invasion period: a gatepost of AD 44 has been found at the entrance to an annexe built when the camp was extended to accommodate more troops.

The gravestone was of Lucius Valerius Geminus, a member of the Pollia tribe in northern Italy. The epitaph describes him as a veteran of the Second Augustan Legion, and he died at about the age of fifty. Since veteran status was only granted after at least twenty-five years' service, and the legion was moved to Exeter in AD 60, he must have retired between then and the invasion. Dr Sauer argues in *Current Archaeology*: 'He must have joined the army before the invasion of Britain, probably in his late teens or early twenties and almost certainly under the Emperor Tiberius (AD 14-37), when the legion was stationed at Strasbourg'.

When he left the army he stayed in Britain, where the epitaph notes that his heir had the tombstone 'set up in accordance with his will'; but the text 'does not just tell the biography of an individual', Dr Sauer says, 'it also provides an essential clue to the whereabouts of Vespasian's headquarters for the conquest'.

The Latin author Suetonius tells us that Vespasian took the Isle of Wight and more than twenty fortified oppida which are thought to include the great Iron Age hillfort of Maiden Castle in Dorset. He became Emperor in AD 69 on the basis of his military reputation, and reigned for a decade.

The site of his headquarters has always been assumed to be in the south because of the details in Suetonius, but the Isle of Wight is the only place that he specifically mentions. 'The Dorset hillforts could have easily been captured by a legion stationed in the Midlands', Dr Sauer argues. Also 'there is no serious competitor for Vespasian's base', and no other site 'has yielded a shred of evidence for the presence of the Second Augustan Legion'. Since all known legionary veterans who chose to stay in Britain settled either at their main base or at one of the special 'colonies' set up for them at Colchester, Lincoln and elsewhere, and there is no evidence that Alchester was a colonia, it must therefore have been Vespasian's base, Dr Sauer says.

*Extracted from SALON 111 (7 March 2005) - the Society of Antiquaries of London Online Newsletter.*

### Did Rabbits come with the Romans?

The question of whether the Romans or the Normans introduced rabbits to Britain seems to have been answered, according to Jayne Brown, of the Norfolk Archaeological Unit, which has found the remains of a rabbit in a sealed context at Lynford, near Thetford, dated to the first or second century AD from the pottery fragments found beside it. The bones appear to have been butchered, and are associated with domestic pots which could have been used for cooking. Evidence that rabbits might have been brought to Britain by the Romans rested previously on literary sources: Varro (116-27 BC) wrote that the legions serving in Spain reared rabbits in walled enclosures and regarded them as a gourmet dish.

*Extracted from SALON -IFA (113: 13 April 2005) - the Society of Antiquaries of London Online Newsletter, in association with the Institute of Field Archaeologists.*

## LETTER FROM PRINCETON—*David Kennedy*

After a productive and delightful few months at the end of 2004 at the Institute for Advanced Study here in Princeton, NJ, I was gratified by the opportunity to return here in March for a further few months. And now, thanks to a fellowship from Princeton University nearby, I shall spend December to February here as well.

I am working on a book on northern Jordan. It is a most unusual and instructive region. In fact it is what a recent important book on the Mediterranean environment calls a micro-region,\* one of the hundreds of distinct micro-regions that make up the Mediterranean world as a whole. In this case there is an additional characteristic which makes it a micro-region of more than ordinary interest. It is what those same writers define as a “virtual” island.



**Fuld Hall, the main original building of the Institute of Advanced Studies and where Einstein had his office.**

From the ruins of the Roman cities of the Decapolis which lie in this micro-region – Gadara, Gerasa, Pella, Philadelphia, Capitolias .... – it is barely a hundred kilometres to the Mediterranean. From high points on a clear day you can see the sea. But in between lies the Jordan Valley, at a “height” of minus 200 metres! High hills flank the valley on either side and the effect is to place severe limitations on communications in that direction. The other sides of the micro-region are also marked by serious physical obstacles with similar consequences: the slash of the Wadi Yarmuk in the north and that of the Wadi Mujib to the south, and then on the east the fertile lands shade off into pre-desert then bleak Basalt and Chert Deserts. Hence a “virtual” island.

It is a rich island. The cities named above were modest

in size – Jerash weighs in at c. 80 ha - but had serious cultural pretensions. Most, for example, had a major theatre, several had two theatres and Jerash had three! There were hippodromes, public bath buildings, churches and miles of colonnaded streets.

At the moment I am primarily concerned not with buildings but with people; to be exact: How many people lived in towns like Jerash and Philadelphia? How many in the micro-region as a whole? How did population size and patterns change? What caused population in this micro-region to grow and spread out into the dozens of ancient villages of the pre-desert and to reach a level which was not to be seen again until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century? Why did population and settlement decline sharply in the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards?

These are serious questions. We cannot really understand the ancient world if we cannot put numbers on it. As one expert recently observed: “*In the end, demography without numbers is waffle* .” But it is not just in this part of the Roman world that we are stuck for numbers. Despite the enormous amount of data available, there is no agreement on whether the population of the Roman Empire at its height was 45-60 million or nearer 100 million. Nor is there agreement on the population of the city of Rome itself – 1 million is commonly quoted but other influential voices argue for 500,000 and 1.2 million. These are big differences involving factors of two between highest and lowest.

It does not seem likely that documentary evidence will ever give us the answer. Rather, there is a growing consensus that archaeological evidence has the potential to do so. We can measure the size of cities, count the houses, estimate occupancy, count rural sites etc. Even where it cannot give us actual numbers it can show us “change” as the number of sites rises and their size increases. We may not be able to say that there were X people in a particular region but we can perhaps say that the numbers of people seems to have halved or trebled and that that is worth knowing in order to explain – for example – tax revenue or military manpower availability. There are lots of problems here, too, of course, but this may be the best way forward and it is what I am currently doing on one distinctive part, the “virtual” island of northwest Jordan.

\* Horden, P. and Purcell, N. (2000) *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History* , Oxford (Blackwell)

# FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE, SUSSEX

## SUMMARY OF THE 1995-1999 EXCAVATIONS BY SUSSEX ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

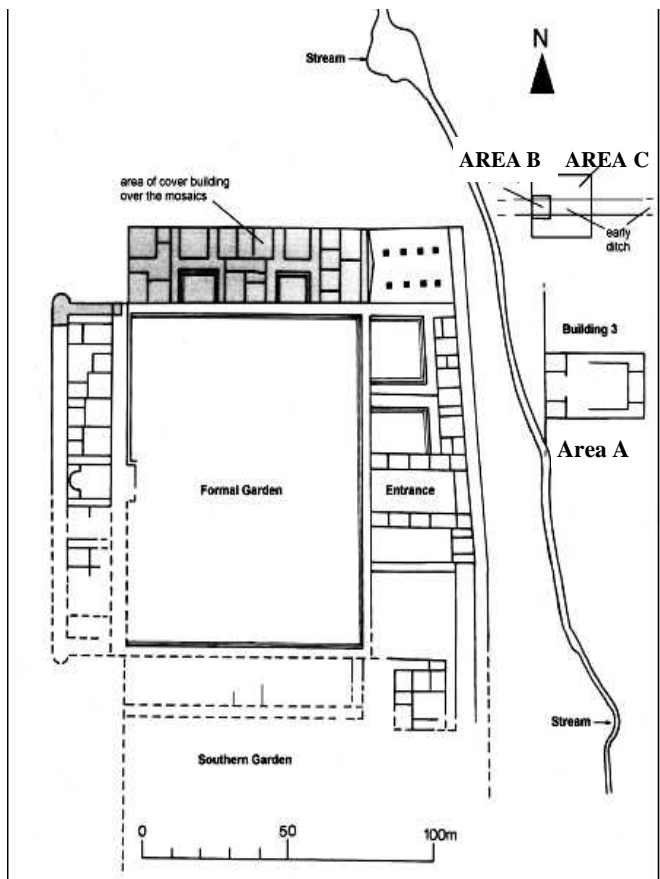
### JOHN MANLEY



**John Manley, Chief Executive Officer, Sussex Archeological Society**

Excavations immediately to the east of Fishbourne Roman Palace (Area A on the plan opposite) revealed the complete ground plan of a courtyard building lying very close to the front of the later Palace. The building, known as Building 3, was classical in design and aligned east to west. Dating evidence is not particularly precise, but it is suggested that the building was constructed in the second half of the 1st century AD. The function of the building is problematic, although various strands of evidence suggest that the building probably had a public or an administrative function, and may have been constructed by the military. The building seems to have survived in front of the Palace (which was constructed around AD75) perhaps until the end of the 2nd century AD. A complex series of deposits, finds and structures was uncovered to the immediate north of the building.

A small trench (known as Area B) was excavated a little way to the north of Building 3. A ditch ran east to west across the trench. A mixture of imported fine wares and indigenous coarse wares from the bottom of the ditch suggest the ditch was dug prior to AD43, perhaps as early as the first decades of the 1st century AD. The relationship between Building 3 and the ditch in Area B is not yet known.



**Ground-plan Fishbourne Roman Palace**

A full range of edited specialist reports is provided in the publication for this excavation 'Facing the Palace', including a reconstruction of the original appearance of Building 3. This publication can be purchased from [www.sussexpastshop.co.uk](http://www.sussexpastshop.co.uk). In addition, maps illustrating the spatial distribution of various categories of small finds have revealed a considerable amount about specific human behaviours and site-formation processes. The report concludes with an appraisal of the Fishbourne in the early Roman period, and has relevance for the study of the conquest in AD43. Additional information and data relevant to these excavations will be found on the ADS website <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?sussexac>



Detail from the magnificent mosaics at Fishbourne.

### Summary of the 2002 excavations by the Sussex Archeological Society

The aim of our excavation in 2002 was to locate more of the pre-conquest ditch and retrieve from it a much bigger sample of finds to allow a precise and more confident dating. This aim was successfully achieved. The collection of sealed and well-dated imported and local pottery, accompanied by food refuse and a copper-alloy scabbard fitting, suggest significant activity at the site a generation prior to the Roman Conquest of AD43. As such this discovery opens a new chapter in the remarkable story of Fishbourne.

A secondary aim of the excavation was to try and locate the presumed northern end or northern side of the putative walled compound surrounding Building 3. This was not located, and if it exists, must be discovered in the yet unexamined area to the south between Area A and Area C. It was, of course, our intention to excavate to the south and 'join up' Areas A and C. However, wiser but not older heads at English Heritage prevailed on us to abandon our intentions, stand back and take a longer look at the research potential of the whole area. We are indeed now standing back and producing a Fishbourne Research and Conservation Framework, kindly sponsored by English Heritage.



A model reconstruction of Fishbourne Roman Castle

## The RAG Launch—Sunday 13 March



Address by Karen Henderson and Felix Hudson



Address by David Kennedy

## Jordan's Jarash Archaeological Park: Where have the flowers gone? - *Anne Poepjes*



**Anne Poepjes: An MA student at UWA Classics and Ancient History and presently based in Jordan.**

Although the main attraction for all stakeholders in archaeological parks is the 'built environment', the surrounding natural vegetation, which in large parks can be comprised of extensive areas of gardens, grassland or even forest, is important to the ambiance or overall visual aesthetics, especially when the park is marketed as a tourist destination. However, this vegetation can cause a threat due to fires to the built environment if not properly managed.

Historically, there were few fires in Jordan's Jarash Archaeological Park (JAP) (pictured below). Local farmers grazed sheep and goats on the grass areas, hence plant growth was controlled naturally. However, over succeeding years since the site has been fenced and few animals are allowed inside, fire has become a serious issue for the park management. In 2003 the unexcavated areas of the park were bulldozed to remove excess plant growth and during the spring months of 2004 the park was sprayed with non-selective herbicide.

Research conducted by the Jordan Ministry of Agriculture has determined that archaeological parks are havens for many rare and endangered plant species, which have been removed from the wider environment by cultivation and over-grazing. Prolonged and systematic use of herbicides significantly reduces the biodiversity of an environment, an issue of concern for much of the country of Jordan. (Syooof 1988: 16)

There is conflicting opinion regarding the long-term effects of herbicides, including Paraquat, (the active ingredient used in JAP) on the environment. Claims for safety of use fluctuate between "Paraquat does not have any adverse effects on soil micro-fauna or soil microbial processes and does not seem to present an environmental hazard" (www.inchem.org 1991) and "Paraquat is highly persistent in the soil environment, with reported half lives of greater than 1000 days." (http://extxnet.orst.edu 1996). In addition to environmental questions regarding herbicides is the escalating "appearance of weed populations which are resistant to some herbicides that effectively controlled them in the past.

Umm Qais and Pella (Tabaqat Fahl) are similar sites to Jarash in northwestern Jordan. There have been no recent incidences of fire in either site. Both parks allow animals to graze in the park, with manual cutting of the grass at Umm Qais

Striking the balance between a visually attractive park setting for tourism and a well-managed site with low fire risk, archeological sites in California are using animals and prescribed burns, more, and mechanical means, less. Herbicides are sometimes used, but they are being replaced by fire and animals because of the ecological damage. Some sites use sheep selectively to crop the vegetation and prevent fuel build up. (Foster, J. 2005).

When faced with pressing concerns, management can react with hasty solutions, which are effective in the short term, but result in other problems in the long term. It is imperative that measures taken to solve a problem do not lead to adverse consequences. There is also a worldwide trend away from the use of chemicals towards more natural, ecologically based solutions. Historically, Jarash did not have a problem with fires; allowing animals to graze once again in the park, and cutting grass manually if necessary, should resolve this problem.



*This article is an abstract of a longer publication; if you are interested in reading the complete article, email the author at [annepoepjes@yahoo.com.au](mailto:annepoepjes@yahoo.com.au)*

# WINE PRODUCTION IN ROMAN BRITAIN?

## DAVID KENNEDY



**Professor David Kennedy, Classics and Ancient History, University of Western Australia, presently based at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton .**

Archaeologists have recently found the first firm evidence for commercial production of wine in Roman Britain.

Of course it was always possible. "British wine" today is not to be measured alongside the products of France and Spain, California or the Swan Valley. But there is some, grown mainly at a few vineyards in those parts of Sussex that get more sunshine than the rest of the country. If the climate had been no worse in Roman times (between AD 43 and the early 5th century) vines could have been grown commercially long ago too. In fact, it is thought that in the last two centuries of Roman rule, Britain had a more favourable climate than today.

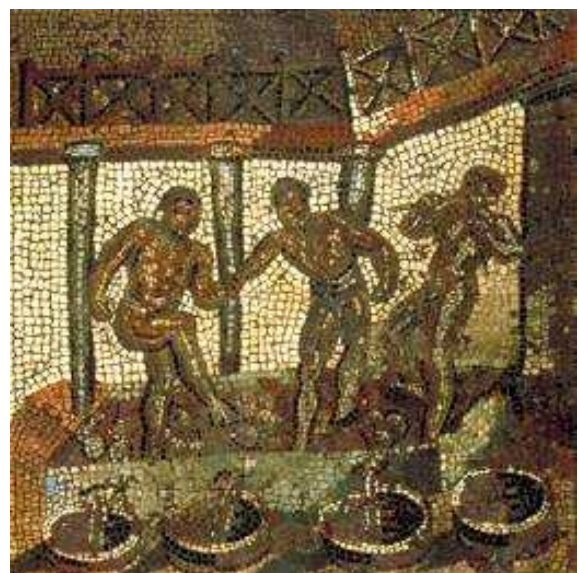
It was not just Roman immigrants - soldiers and administrators- who would have been interested in wine. Roman writers make it clear that the Celts of what is now France in particular, had an unfortunate fondness for drinking wine. Indeed, they were reputed, literally, to have been willing to sell their grandmother into slavery for a large jar of it. A further sign of their barbarism to the Greeks and Romans, was that they drank their wine undiluted. Even more to be sneered at, they then became truculent and aggressive.

Even before Britain became part of the Roman Empire in AD 43 large clay jars of wine, amphorae, were being

placed in the graves of wealthier natives as grave-goods. With the arrival of Roman rule the quantities of wine imported in jars increased dramatically, mainly now from Spain and France. More may have arrived in wooden barrels, known of from the re-use of the Pyrenean fir staves as ready made linings in wells.

It was probably in the 1st century AD, too, that the vine itself was first introduced. Archaeobotanists have identified grape pips, and vine stems have been reported.

The important new find is from London. The magazine, *British Archaeology*, reported a few years ago a complete specimen of a particular type of amphora which had previously puzzled ceramics experts. It and fragments of some 300 others have been shown to be locally manufactured, probably around St Albans north of London. The significance of the find is that such jars imply wine production on a scale that was not suited to storage in skins or barrels for fairly rapid consumption.



**Treading grapes**

Site de Saint-Romain-en-Gal.  
Musée des Antiquités nationales.  
Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

# The Roman Painted House at Dover

*Natalie Cullity*



**Natalie Cullity : a speech and drama teacher with a BA in Ancient History, Italian and Anthropology.**

I travelled to Britain in July 2003 as part of a group of Roman Archaeology enthusiasts on a three-week tour of Roman Britain led by Professor David Kennedy. A visit to the Roman Painted House at Dover was one of the many tour highlights. The House was discovered by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit in 1970 and opened to the public in 1977.

Described as ‘Britain’s buried Pompeii’, the Roman painted house was built in about AD200 and formed part of a large *mansio* or official hotel for travellers crossing the English Channel. The house stood outside the great naval fort of the Classis Britannica, built in AD270 and was demolished by the Roman army during the construction of a larger fort. It was demolished by the Roman army during the construction of a larger fort. We were able to see a section of the west wall of this Roman fort, built through the rooms as part of the “Saxon shore-fort” system, which lies buried under modern Dover.

Three of the main rooms of the house were buried, substantially intact, under the fort’s ramparts. The burial by the Army resulted in the unique survival of over 400 square feet of painted plaster. Above a lower dado of red or green an architectural scheme of many coloured panels framed by fluted columns can still be seen. Parts of 28 panels survive, each with a motif relating to Bacchus, the Roman God of wine!

The walls in four rooms survive to a height of 4-6 feet, and the hard, red concrete floors cover near completely preserved central-heating systems. Large arched flues, heating channels and vertical wall-flues kept the building comfortably warm 1,800 years ago!



**One of the Rooms in the Roman Painted House at Dover. Photo. Ed**

## The Product of a Close Shave in Roman Britain



A Roman razor handle, made of copper alloy and in the shape of a human leg and foot has been found in the River Tees at Piercebridge, near Darlington in County Durham. The handle is 5cm high and the decoration is of a sandal over a thick sock.

One of the letters found at the Roman fort at Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall was from a soldier asking for more socks.

Together with the razor this reference is proof that Roman soldiers, in cold climates at least, wore socks inside their sandals.

*The life size razor handle*



# The Romans and the Acropolis of Athens

*Kevin O'Toole*



Kevin O'Toole is a Barrister and Solicitor with an interest in the archaeology of Athens.

At the end of the third century BC Athens entered into an alliance with the Republic of Rome, and the Republic's eastern agent, the Kingdom of Pergamon (in Asia Minor), against Macedon in yet another of the wars that would ultimately (albeit 150 or so years later) decide that Rome would prevail in the East. The alliance prevailed but it took some Roman legions to prevent the Macedonians from leveling Athens.

Pergamon became a generous patron of Athens. In c.150BC King Attalos II of Pergamon built for Athens in the Agora the stoa we know today from its faithfully reconstructed version (the reconstruction was carried out in the 1950's) as the Stoa of Attalos (pictured below).



Photo: Ed

Earlier (180-160 BC) Eumenes II of Pergamon financed the construction of the Stoa (of Eumenes) on the

southern slopes of the Acropolis in Athens. When the Theatre of Herodes Atticus was built in AD mid-second century at the west end of the Stoa of Eumenes the stoa provided a protective potico between the Herodes Atticus Theatre and the Theatre of Dionysos to the east.

Herodes Atticus (AD 101-177) was a rich local (he was born at Marathon) with a deep sense of civic duty who financed the building of the theatre that bears his name. The Theatre of Herodes Atticus is still in use today.



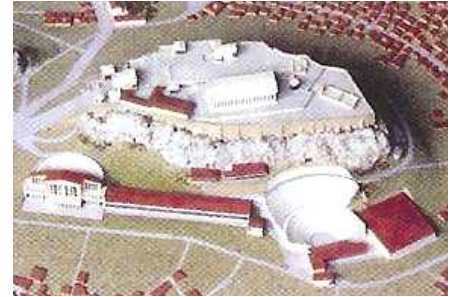
Photo: Ed

Part of the Theatre of Herodes Atticus can be inadvertently captured in photographs of the Acropolis taken from the south west.

In the 350 years between the alliance of 200 BC and the completion of the Theatre of Herodes Atticus in AD150 the relations between Athens and pre-Christian Rome went through their grimmest and their best days, and each extreme had its implications for the Acropolis.

The Athenians had not forgotten the Roman demolition of Corinth in 146 BC when in 88 BC they decided to support the king of Pontos, Mithridates, in his revolt against Rome. The siege of Athens in 86 BC by the brutal Roman general Sulla which followed saw the substantial destruction of iconographic buildings on the slopes of the Acropolis including the Odeion of Perikles, the Asklepieion, and the Theatre of Dionysos. Sulla returned in 84 BC and plundered the Acropolis for gold, silver and works of art. But we may presume to think that even Sulla paid deference to the

sanctity of the summit of the Acropolis, and thus the Propylaia, the Erechtheion and the Parthenon survived essentially intact. Much of the earlier destruction was in due course rectified by reconstruction.



Detail (showing Acropolis) from a model of AD 2nd century Athens in the Acropolis Study Centre, Athens. The Theatre of Herodes Atticus to the right of the model is joined via the Stoa of Eumenes to the Theatre of Dionysos (with the Odeion of Perikles and, behind the theatre of Dionysos, the Asklepieion).

Although beneficiaries of the largesse of Pompey and Julius Caesar the Athenians managed in 22/21 BC a somewhat gratuitous insult to no less a personage than Caesar Augustus (41BC-14AD), on the occasion of a visit by him to Athens, by arranging (or so it was alleged) for a statue of Athena on the Acropolis to turn west (towards Rome) and spit blood. Augustus' retribution included a ban on the sale of Athenian citizenship, at the time a significant source of revenue for Athens.

The construction of the striking theatre of Herodes Atticus perhaps reflected the confidence of the Athenians in the future of the city, no doubt fuelled by the benefactions to Athens of the emperor Hadrian (AD117-138) who left the Athenians in no doubt that Athens was unmatched in the Roman mind as a centre of cultural force.

Indeed, the Roman poet Horace had been able to say long before Hadrian's reign: "*Greece, captive, captured its coarse captor and transmitted the arts to rustic Latium.*" (Epistulae: 2.1.156-7)

## EXOTIC FOODS IN ROMAN YORK

### EMMIE LISTER



Emmie Lister is a doctoral candidate in Roman Archaeology at UWA. She is studying the archaeological evidence for food in Roman Britain, focussing on urban assemblages of animal bones, ceramics and preserved plant remains.

Roman York (Eboracum) was founded c. AD 71 with the construction of a fortress by the ninth legion at the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Foss. This site was used as a base from which the Roman conquest of the northern tribe of the Brigantes could proceed. In time, a civilian settlement grew on the opposite side of the Ouse, its existence in part supported by the permanent military garrison of the fortress.

From humble beginnings as a hanger-on of the Roman army, civilian Eboracum grew to become a city of some distinction. The emperor Septimius Severus made York the temporary capital of the Roman empire when he used it as a base for his northern campaigns between AD 208 and 211, when his stay in York was terminated by his death.



Cooking equipment from the Roman town of Silchester (Museum of Reading).

The Emperor Constantius Chlorus met his end there in AD 306, and was succeeded by his son, Constantine ('the Great'). York also became the capital city of Britannia Inferior when Britain was divided into two provinces some time around AD 216, and was promoted to the status of a *colonia* by AD 237.

York's strategic position in the north, large military garrison, thriving civilian town and episodes of quite remarkable historical distinction would certainly have attracted a diverse and cosmopolitan population. Glimpses of this cosmopolitan nature can be seen in the remains of the foods that were available to the people of Eboracum.



A Dressel 20 (olive oil) Amphora (Museum of Scotland).

While the everyday diet of most people in Roman Britain appears to have consisted primarily of wheat (as bread or gruel) and meat (mostly beef, with some mutton or pork) in varying proportions; some people who lived in towns and who had the money seem to have had access to quite a wide variety of foodstuffs sourced from around the empire. This variety can be seen in the ceramics, animal and plant remains that have been recovered from archaeological sites in York.



**Imported drinking beaker. Made in Trier (Augusta Treverorum) in the late 2nd– early 3rd century AD. The legend reads VIVATIS: “Long life to you.” (Yorkshire Museum )**

Some of these exotic foods include:

— Olive oil carried in the Dressel 20 amphora from Baetica in southern Spain. This olive oil was transported all over the empire, mostly to Rome, where an artificial mountain of Roman Dressel 20 sherds can still be seen today (Monte Testaccio). Not quite as many sherds are found in Roman York, but they are the most prevalent type of amphora found in the town, indicating that at least some of the inhabitants were consuming this archetypal Mediterranean food.

—French wine brought to York in Gallic Pélisset 47 amphorae. The sherds from these amphorae are the second most commonly found type on civilian sites in York. Although their numbers are far outweighed by Dressel 20, differences in the ways the two amphora types fracture may result in many more Dressel 20 sherds from similar numbers of vessels.

—As well as olive oil, the seeds of olive fruits have been found in civilian contexts in Roman York. The olive is a Mediterranean tree which will not fruit in Britain, hence the olive seeds found on sites in York represent olives that were imported from overseas. The means of transport was most likely in amphorae, a complete amphora was dredged from the Thames in 1983 containing more than 6,000 olive seeds. Analysis of the amphora’s fabric suggested an origin in south-western

deposits in York, and seem to represent a food item that formed an important part of the Roman cultural repertoire.

— Another type of food that is found only in the Roman period at York is the edible crab, *Cancer pagurus*. As York is some 60 km inland, the remains of crabshell, commonly found on civilian sites, must have been collected on the coast and transported to the city for consumption. The sudden appearance of crabshell in Roman contexts, and its abrupt disappearance at the end of the period is interpreted as a culinary fad.

— Some of the most tantalising finds from Roman York have been the remains of the garden dormouse, *Eliomys quercinus*. These small rodents are not native to Britain, their natural limit being northern France. Their presence hundreds of kilometres north of this limit suggests human agency. Curiously, the Romans were quite fond of consuming small mammals. They even had a special type of container for the keeping and fattening of dormice, called a *glirarium*. While it is by no means certain that the dormouse bones found in York were the unfortunate remains of a Roman meal, it is a tempting possibility. If it is the case that these dormice were imported to York, it represents a very Roman way of eating being transported to the very ends of the empire, and raises all sorts of questions about the identity of the people who lived there.



**Reconstructed Romano-British kitchen (Yorkshire Museum).**

# Roman Archaeology at UWA

## Scholarships in Roman Archaeology

As in 2004, in 2005 there will be two opportunities for up to five students to be awarded a travel scholarship this year.

## Touring the Roman World

David Kennedy is considering returning to Britain for a three week tour in July of either 2006 or 2007. Please contact him if you are interested:

dkennedy@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

## Aerial Archaeology in Jordan

This project of active aerial archaeology—the only one in Middle East—has been running since 1997 with further seasons planned for 2005 onwards.

Several thousand colour slide transparencies have been taken and Professor Kennedy is looking for a mechanism to make the material better known and more accessible. The obvious solution is to scan all the slides and put thumb sized versions on a catalogue online. The thumb should be linked to a larger version but one that is informative without allowing direct use. The image would also have a Copyright warning. After several years, the project now has revised funding arrangement which it is hoped will develop to make the project largely self-sustaining.

At the moment part of the costs are borne by the Royal Jordanian Air Force which provides helicopter flights at one third (US\$500) of the

commercial rate of (US\$1500) per hour; part comes from a regular private donation of £2000 (c.AUD\$5000); part from grants from up to five institutions; and part from income from the occasional provision of photos to archaeology projects of their site/region. It is the latter which it is hoped to develop by advertising the archive and making it easier for potential users to find and purchase what they want.

The expertise and time to set up an online catalogue is beyond the available resources. If anyone has ideas or knowledge of setting up such a catalogue online Professor Kennedy would be glad to hear from them.

## UWA Courses In Roman History and Archaeology

Courses in Classics and Ancient History at UWA are open to all members of the public. You can enrol for an entire course of lectures and even the tutorials if you wish without any requirement to be examined. In other words, you can attend courses simply for the pleasure of it. For readers of this newsletter the units that might be of most interest are:

Semester 2, 2005

AH 102 Julians and Julio-Claudians

AH 204 Roman Archaeology

AH 292 Roman Art and Architecture

Semester 1, 2006

AH 103 Glory and Grandeur: the Achievements, Significance and Legacy of the Greek and Roman World.

AH 232 Roman Britain.

A full listing can be seen on our website: <http://www.classics.uwa.edu.au/>  
Enrolments are booked through University Extension: <http://www.extension.uwa.edu.au/access/in>

## Membership of the RAG

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).

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

### The RAG Inc

#### 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](mailto:dkennedy@cyllene.uwa.edu.au)

#### Deputy Chairman

#### Don Boyer

**Midas Resources Limited**

Mob: 0414 3811982 Fax: (08) 9226 3362

E-mail: [donboyer@inet.net.au](mailto:donboyer@inet.net.au)

#### Secretary

#### Michael Manley

**M209 Reid Library UWA**

Tel: (08) 64882330

E-mail: [mmanley@library.uwa.edu.au](mailto:mmanley@library.uwa.edu.au)

#### Treasurer

#### Maire Gomes

**M205 Classics and Ancient History UWA**

E-mail: [gomescm@bigpond.com](mailto:gomescm@bigpond.com)

### The RAG Newsletter

Correspondence to the Editor:

#### Kevin J. O'Toole

#### O'Toole & Oprandi

**Level 7, St George's Court**

**16 St George's Terrace**

**PERTH WA 6000**

Tel: (08) 92214748 Fax: (08) 92213595

E-mail: [kjotoole@otooleoprandi.com.au](mailto:kjotoole@otooleoprandi.com.au)