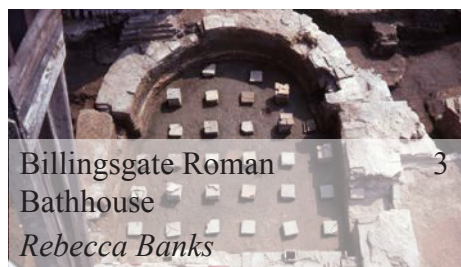


The RAG

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The Elusive Celts *Guy de la Bédoyère*



Above: Excavations of the Spitfire near Calais.

In 1999 I took part in an episode of *Time Team* which set out to excavate a Spitfire that crashed during the Battle of France in a village not far from Calais. It fascinated me – we had eyewitnesses that included a pilot from No. 92 Squadron who had been there on that fateful day, 23 May 1940, and a Frenchman who had watched the dogfight as a schoolboy. We also had a vast amount of documentation. What it told me is that however dominant a part of the experience for us was excavating the crashed machine, only a tiny part of the whole story subsisted in that crushed wreckage. It was the eyewitness accounts and the paperwork that contained most of the story – the wreckage embellished it, but that was all, though that should not be taken to mean excavating the machine was anything less than a stunning experience. This was an opportunity to see an actual moment in history frozen in time.

Nevertheless, that experience changed my perception of excavation. It's all too easy to assume that the archaeological remains hold within them the whole story if one can only extract it. Archaeological sites hold only a tiny bit of the 'whole story' – but since we do not usually have anything else, like documentation or eyewitness accounts, we can all too easily forget how inadequate the archaeological evidence often is and indulge in the conceit that archaeology can reveal all. It can't. So I am

interested in what we can do to get round that.

One of my interests is how we can understand the British-Celtic perspective on the Roman experience. We see the Roman world almost entirely through Roman eyes. We have Roman historians, Roman artefacts, Roman sites, and our own Roman perspective inherited through our language and civilization which owe so much to the Roman world that we unavoidably see the world at least partly as the Romans did. How then can we understand the Britons or see the world as they did? They left no written accounts, and very few definitively ‘British’ artefacts – even so-called Romano-Celtic artefacts are generally Roman items with a bit of local colour.

That’s where Australia comes in. I made my first visit in December 2011 and followed it up by reading histories of Australia. I was immediately taken with the analogy of two cultures hitting head-on, one of whom a European like myself can identify with immediately and the other which I have no ready means of accessing or understanding. In the eighteenth century the mutual bewilderment is clear enough from the surviving accounts. We still only get that from one side but we are now in a far better position at least to understand how little we Europeans understand about the perspective of the indigenous peoples of Australia.

The Romans arrived in Britain and imposed everything from language to government, and religion to art. They systematically exploited the landscape for profit and took whatever they wanted. In time, intermarriage and cultural conflation created a hybrid version of the Roman and Celtic but it is always overwhelmingly in a Roman idiom. The archaeological record is monumental compared to the before and after, the Roman period creating an unprecedented level of consumption of manufactured goods and one that would not be matched until the 1700s. But the goods are Roman and predominantly found in unequivocally Roman sites. Native sites are characterised by a relative shortage of such goods rather than the possession of alternatives.

In Roman Britain we can access Celtic gods but only once they have been converted into a Roman format. Coventina’s name is written down in Roman letters and displayed for us as a Roman water nymph. However, that was the Roman interpretation of something they had to convert into a format they could understand; how the Britons perceived Coventina we have no idea. And the same goes for numerous other local gods. Our perception of Roman Britain is dominated by the forts, the towns and the villas – but what about the vast majority of the population? We literally cannot ‘see’ them because they do not exist in the archaeological or historical record other than through a Roman conduit. Without any other evidence they are often treated as if they had never existed or existed only in a Romanised idiom.

It has left me wondering how we can possibly ever understand the Britons’ experience of Roman domination and how much somewhere like Australia can help us. It’s an idea I started to explore when I prepared a talk for RAG on my second visit to Australia in



Top: Supermarine branded pedals from the Spitfire excavation.

Above: 2nd-3rd century AD stone relief of the goddess Coventina with inscription (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle-upon-Tyne). Coventina was a Romano-British goddess of wells and springs. She features in multiple inscriptions in the vicinity of a wellspring near *Brocolitia* on Hadrian’s Wall (Carrawburgh, Northumberland), and also features at Bath, Roman *Aquae Sulis*.

March-April 2012 by thinking about the indigenous Australian experience of British domination. I don't know where I'll take the idea yet (I've called it 'The Elusive Celts') – it is work in progress but I was grateful for the positive reception the talk received. It was moreover a great pleasure to meet so many interesting and interested people on the other side of the world from where I have spent my life. I was taken aback by how well-travelled everyone seemed to be and how vibrant the interest in classical culture.

Post-scriptum from Guy de la Bédoyère

It's worth my while mentioning that since I gave the talk my good friend Mick Aston of *Time Team* has died.

Mick was a great one for sound advice. He always said how sad he had been by the number of people who came up to him to express their regrets that they had not chosen, or been able, to work in the field or area that really interested them. Mick said,

'you're a long time employed [or dead] so you should do what you're interested in'.

He was of course entirely right.



Michael Anthony 'Mick' Aston
1 Jul 1946 - 24 June 2013

Image: jorvikgrouplearning

Billingsgate Roman Bathhouse

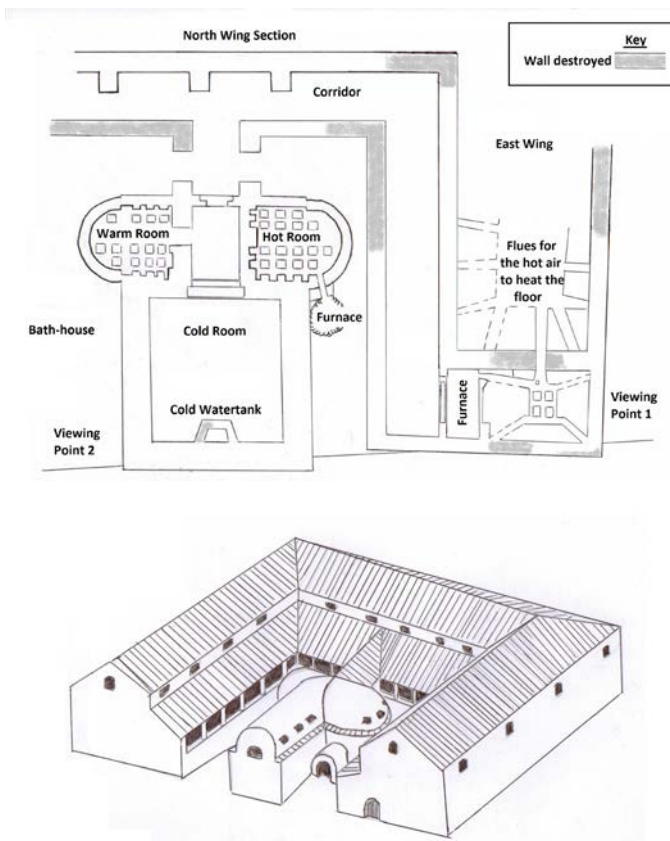
Rebecca Banks

As a part of the Museum of London Archaeology Open Day in July, I was able to visit one of the many Roman sites hidden underneath the city streets – the Billingsgate Roman Bathhouse, or more accurately, house and bath. The site lies in the basement of a modern office building on Lower Thames Street (the 'hypocaust' marked on the map on page 15) and comprises of a winged building complex with a bath-building. The complex was built in two phases, the first comprising of a small rectangular heated building alongside a road that led up from the river. The building was enlarged to the south and west, and a wing was constructed on the north side of the building extending west. This western wing attached the initial building to the southern side of another (of which we know little as it lies outside the footprint of the modern building block). In the courtyard of this developed winged building the bathhouse was constructed. Contemporaneous with the extensions of the western wing was the addition of two apsidal heated rooms and a corridor or vestibule extending south off the wing. These attached to an earlier rectangular unheated room now adapted to be used as the *frigidarium*. The heated rooms of the bathhouse shared a hypocaust system, fed from a furnace to the south-east of the *caldarium*, or hot-room – the eastern apsidal heated room, the other being the *tepidarium*. The bathhouse was likely enclosed in a yard by another wing of the building, but excavation has not yet been able to extend to the west to prove this theory.

The complex is likely a *balnea*, a bath privately owned and attached to a house or *praetorium* (inn). Dating evidence suggests it was built during the 2nd century, developed in the 3rd, and continued to function as a bath until well into the 4th. A group of scattered bronze coins was found in a stone-lined pit, possibly a urinal, layered underneath the rubble of the collapsed ceiling. The latest of the 241 coins was minted after AD 395. The Roman administration in Britain collapsed in c. AD 400, suggesting the building was in use until very late in Roman Britain, if not continuing to some extent into the 5th century. The act of hoarding the coins unenclosed in a urinal suggests the occupants were under some sort of threat. Similarly, 18 bronze coins dropped and forgotten in the *frigidarium*, dating to after AD 388, point to a hurried exit of the inhabitants from the building. The building was likely abandoned soon after. Environmental remains suggest the site became overgrown with native scrub and became the home for such inhabitants as mice, toads, rats and weasels. The



Above: View from the platform in the basement of Lower Thames St, London. Image: thelondonphile.com.



Above: Plan of the bathhouse excavations and a reconstruction of the bathhouse and building complex. Images: billingsgatebathhouse.wordpress.com.

loss of an Anglo-Saxon brooch found amongst the remains of the fallen roof, now housed at the Museum of London, suggests the site was in advanced decay and out of use by this period.

The site was first discovered during the construction of the Coal Exchange on Lower Thames Street in London in 1848. The excitement from the discovery and interest of the public meant that the site, and access to the site, was preserved for the public in the basement of the new building. It featured in popular magazines of the time: *The Illustrated London News* and *The Lady's Newspaper*, as well as more topical publications: *The Archaeological Journal* and *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association*. The site was further excavated in 1859 when a neighbouring block was developed with warehouses, but the remains on that block were not kept open for inspection.

Ironically, the reason this site was well preserved (despite the high density of construction in London over time that has interrupted or destroyed other sites) is due to one of the greatest acts of destruction London has witnessed: the Great London Fire. During clearing of the destruction after the fire it was decided to level the hill on which London stood, and therefore a large amount of fill was heaped on the area towards

the Thames. This meant that when construction of basements occurred in Victorian times, the level of the Roman remains was deep enough beneath the street level they remained undisturbed until the construction of The Coal Exchange.

In tune with the heightened interest history and archaeology were arousing in the 19th century the *Ancient Monuments Act* was passed in 1882, and the Roman House and Bath were one of the first sites in London listed. This meant that when the Coal Exchange was replaced by an office block in the 1970s, the site remained preserved in the basement, if somewhat interrupted by support beams for the new building. In 1987 it was recognised that the exposure of the site to the ebb and flow of the Thames water level and the air meant it was deteriorating due to the crystallisation of salts in its fabric. Conservation of the site was funded by the Corporation of London, and the Museum of London archaeological team was brought onto the site. This allowed a review of the existing excavation record and the removal of inaccurate and detrimental Victorian and 1970s reconstruction attempts. Further conservation has been undertaken since 2011 (see the billingsgatebathhouse.wordpress.com blog) in coordination with the University College London's Institute of Archaeology Applied Heritage Management students who were kind enough to conduct the tour of the site that I attended.

Should you want to know more about the remains of Londinium under London next time you are travelling, please visit the Museum of London where the story of Roman London is a constant feature in their permanent exhibitions. It is also useful to keep an eye on their events page for when they open sites to the public (<http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/Education/>), or there is also their 'Current News' where they keep in touch with the many excavation projects (<http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/NewsProjects/>).

Sources:

Marsden, P. 1968. 'Roman House and Bath at Billingsgate', *London Archaeologist* (Winter): 3-5.

Rowsome, P. 1996. 'The Billingsgate Roman House and Bath – conservation and assessment', *London Archaeologist*, Vol. 7-16: 415-423.

Huge thanks must go to Tim Williams of University College London for conducting the tour of the Billingsgate site and being kind enough to forward me the relevant articles.



Above: the hypocaust system of the *caldarium*. Image: billingsgatebathhouse.wordpress.com.

Below: Illustration from the Illustrated London News February 5, 1848.



ROMAN VILLA DISCOVERED IN LOWER THAMES-STREET.

are laid upon a concrete composed of quicklime, sand, and pumice. The centre is comparatively modern: it is of red glazed pottery, with a granular white pattern on its lower bands project on each side, which are perforated for a string or any other mode of suspension: it is pro-

Museo Centrale Montemartini

A Roman Antiquities Museum with a difference

Norah Cooper



Left: Republican portrait statue featuring ancestral masks (MC2392). Right: Funerary relief of three brothers.

One of the pleasures of travel is the planning of interesting and often relatively unknown places to visit. In fact, the more obscure the site, the fewer the visitors, the more pleasurable the discovery. Planning for me involves personal recommendations as well as noting down interesting sites from television documentaries and extensive book and internet searches. Museo Centrale Montemartini is one of these great finds which I discovered via conversation with Sandra Ottley, watching *Treasures of Ancient Rome* and reading guides like *An Oxford Archaeological Guide to Rome* by Amanda Claridge (2010).

The Museum, at 106 *Via Ostiense* in Rome is an annexe of the Capitoline Museum, and is housed in the former Giovanni Montemartini Power Plant, the first public power station to produce electricity for Rome at the beginning of the 1900s. In 1997, sculptures from excavations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were transferred here temporarily for storage during renovation of the Roman Capitoline Museums. However, in 2005 it became a permanent display of Capitoline Museum treasures.

The collection comprises statues, tombs, busts, and mosaics from various Roman periods. You enter the museum on the ground floor, an intimate space where there are frescos, remains of Roman furniture, tufa statues from the 3rd-2nd centuries BC and later Republican funerary



Above: Detail of Theseus in the pediment from the Temple of Apollo Sosiano (MC3529).

Below: View towards the pediment display from a mezzanine.





Above: Statuary in the ‘Turbine Room’.

reliefs and statues. As you go upstairs, the gallery suddenly opens up to the spectacular *Sala Machine* or ‘turbine room’ with, at the far end, the pediment and frieze blocks from the Temple of Apollo Medicus Sosianus (which was once situated near the Theatre of Marcellus). There are also parts of a colossal statue from Largo Argentina, a massive basanite (a dark green fine-grained alkaline igneous rock) statue of Agrippina from the Caelian Hill and many other busts and statues of famous and mythical Romans.

In the centre of the adjoining boiler room is a 3rd century mosaic floor from the Esquiline showing scenes of wild animals, hunting and trapping. Around the walls of the boiler room are statues of a father and son in senatorial dress from AD 400 originally from the Temple of Minerva and other statuary probably from houses and gardens (*horti*) of the late antique city.

To get to Montemartini, take a bus to the bus/train/metro terminus at Piramide, so called because of the 37m high *Piramide di Caio Cestio* built about 18 BC–12 BC as a tomb for Gaius Cestius. From Piramide walk along Via Ostiense for 10-15 minutes to arrive at Montemartini (see map).

As always in Rome there are several sites of interest wherever you go, and close to Piramide is Monte Testaccio, a massive Roman mound made of discarded *testae*, fragments of broken amphorae. It is now covered in vegetation and it is hard to believe that the 35m high mound (20,000m² area) is artificial. Buses for Via Appia Antica also leave from this terminus (and close-by, but certainly not Roman, is the Protestant Cemetery, particularly famous for the graves of the poets Keats and Shelley).

On leaving Montemartini, walk a further ten minutes along Via



Above: *Piramide di Caio Cestio*.
Below: An overgrown Monte Testaccio.





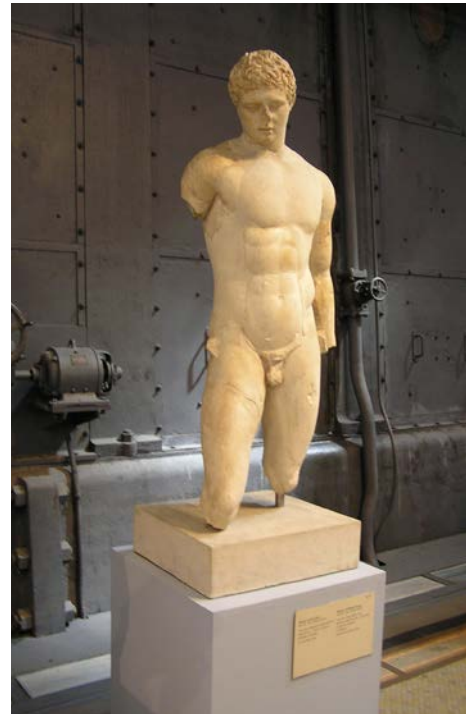
Above: 3rd century mosaic floor from the Gardens of Licinius on the Esquiline, showing scenes of wild animals, hunting and trapping (AntCom03636).

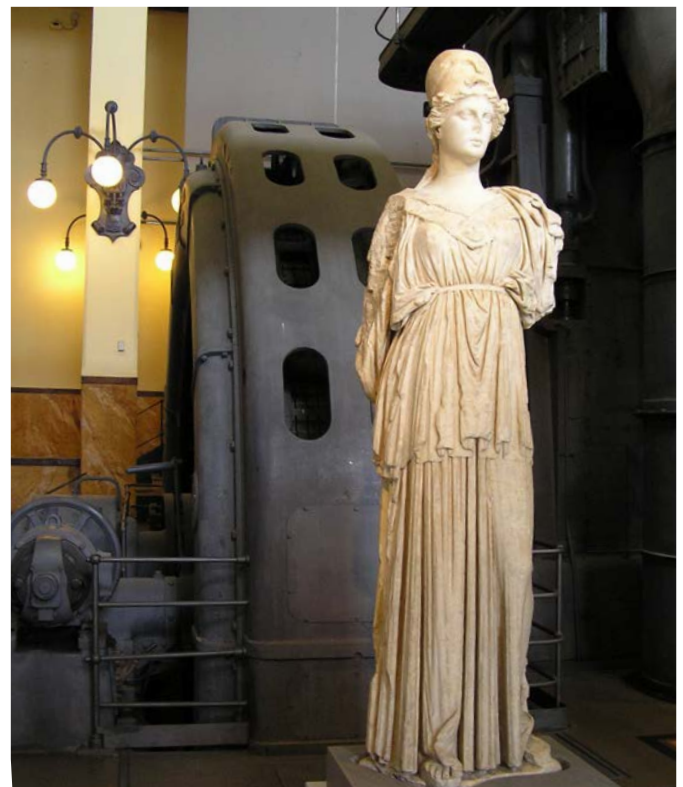
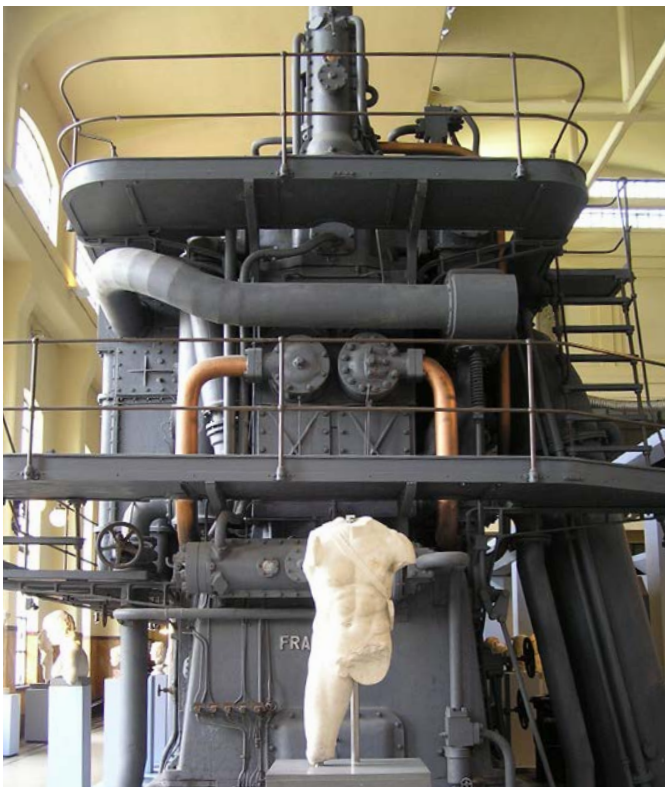
Left: Basanite statue of Agrippina the Younger as an Orante from the Caelian Hill (MC1882).

Right: A *discophorus* or 'disk-bearer'. Roman copy of a late-classical Greek original attributed to Naukydes (MC1865).

Bottom left: Satyr fighting with giants from the House of Porta San Lorenzo. Copy from Hellenistic original probably originally featured in a garden (*horti*) of late antiquity (MC0952).

Bottom right: Father and son magistrates, perhaps Quintus Aurelius Simmacus and his son Memmius, late 4th-early 5th century AD (MC0895, 0896).





Left: Fragmented statue of Achilles in front of a diesel engine. Right: Statue of Athena in the ‘turbine room’.

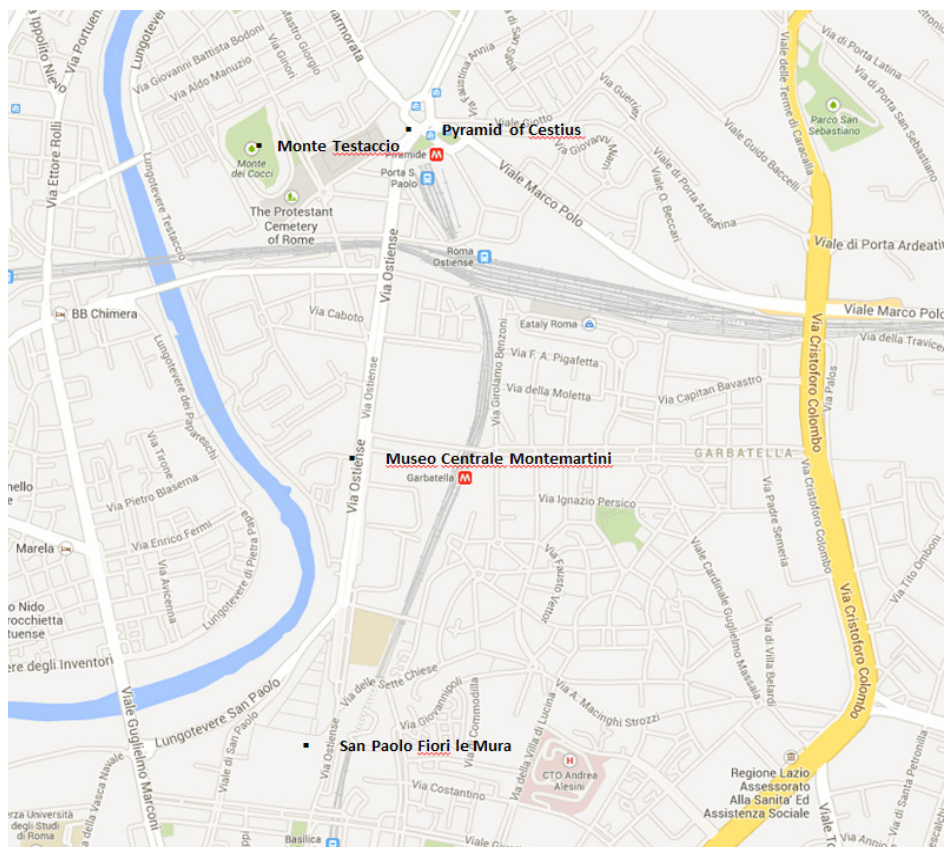
Ostia Antica to the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, (Saint Paul outside the Walls) which is close to the Metro station Garbatella. This magnificent basilica and monastery has a rich history having been founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine I over the supposed burial place of Paul of Tarsus - Saint Paul, where it was said that, after Paul’s execution, his followers erected a memorial called a *cella memoriae*.

Roman antiquities museums in Italy are usually housed in magnificent Renaissance Palazzi, and often have thousands of beautiful artefacts which can become overwhelming. The Montemartini is different. The few select, classical artefacts here are displayed juxtaposed against the brutalist, industrial massive turbines. As with all good museums, there are wonderful original artefacts and information that leads you onto further enquiry. However, at Montemartini there is also surprise at the unexpected and there is space and quiet to contemplate.

The pleasure of anticipating travel to wonderful places is surpassed by finding (and finding open!) the planned place and discovering that it is more wonderful than expected. Montemartini is a case of “Veni, vidi, Eureka!”

Thanks, as ever, to my husband and fellow explorer, Roger.

All images are by Norah Cooper.



Google Map showing the location of the museum and nearby sites.

ICHAJ 2013 Conference

Don Boyer



Above: Humboldt University, Berlin. Image: Don Boyer.

The 12th International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (ICHAJ) took place in Berlin in May 2013. It was hosted in the beautiful old buildings of Humboldt University in what used to be East Berlin, an attractive part of the city where delegates were able to experience the local café scene and visit the wonderful museums on nearby Museum Island in fine spring weather when not attending the conference sessions. Some 191 papers were presented over five days under the general theme of *Transparent Borders*, with the program including sessions that ranged from the Prehistoric period through to the Ottoman period.

UWA was well represented, with papers being delivered by Dr David Kennedy, Dr. Robert Bewley, Rebecca Banks, and PhD candidate Don Boyer. David spoke about how the accounts of 19th century travellers and the use of aerial photographs can be used to salvage archaeological information on a landscape that has seen much change and the destruction of archaeological heritage in the Hinterland of Philadelphia (modern Amman). Bob Bewley, co-director of the APAAME project, gave a talk on heritage management and the contribution of aerial archaeology in Jordan and elsewhere, demonstrating the potential for aerial archaeology to assist in the future management of heritage. Rebecca spoke to a fascinated audience about the methods and tools used to manage the APAAME digital database of photographs, maps and plans – now numbering around 60,000 – and the increasing use of this resource by history and archaeology researchers around the world. Don gave a talk on the analysis of plans and drawings in the unpublished archives of W. J. Bankes and Charles Barry – two early travellers to Gerasa (modern Jarash) – and what these resources can tell us about the condition of the ruins in the first quarter of the 19th century. In some cases these records are the only evidence left of buildings both inside and outside the city walls.

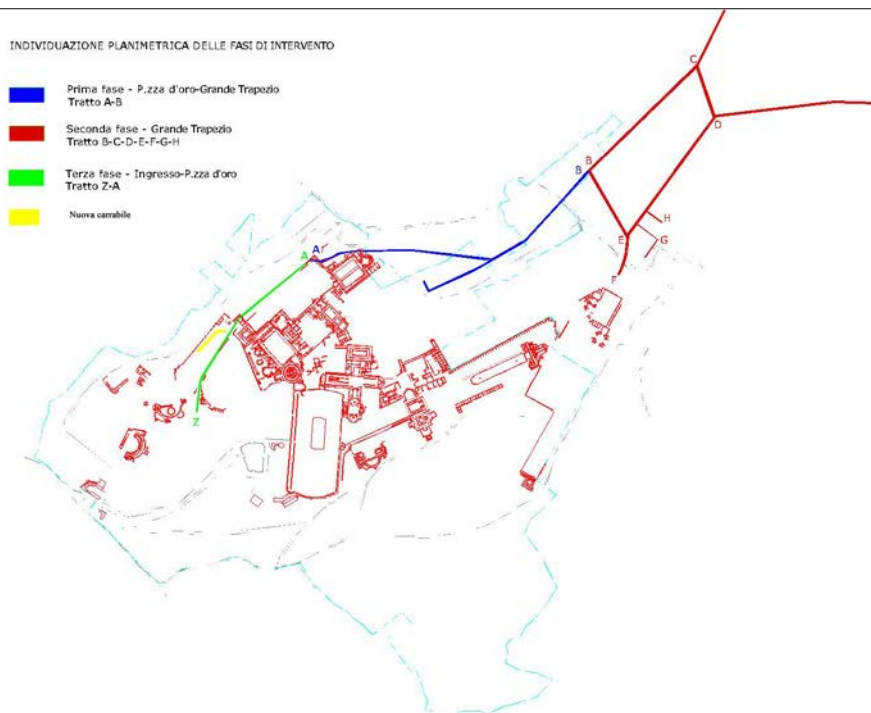
ARAM conference

The ARAM society for Syro-Mesopotamian studies conducted its 35th International Conference on the theme of *The Decapolis: History and Archaeology* at the Oriental Institute at Oxford University over 3 days at the end of July 2013. The conference attracted 22 speakers from around the world - including a significant contingent from Israel - covering a broad range of subjects on the Decapolis. David Kennedy gave a paper on the impact of the 19th century work by Brünnow and von Domaszewski in the Jordanian area of the Decapolis, and a number of authors acknowledged the importance of material from the APAAME archive in their research.

ASTENE Conference

The 10th Biennial ASTENE conference was held at Aston University in Birmingham in mid-July 2013. ASTENE (Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East) is a relatively small but vigorous UK-based group. 59 papers were presented over 3½ days, with 8 of the 18 sessions dedicated to papers on the Near East. David Kennedy presented a paper on journeys and travellers to Petra (Jordan) between 1812 and 1914, and Don Boyer gave a talk on the relative contributions of W. J. Bankes and Charles Barry to the early plans of Gerasa (modern Jarash) in Jordan.

Recent Developments in the Roman World



Service Tunnels Beneath Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli

The same team of 'archaeo-speleologists' from the Sotteranei di Roma association that helped bring to light the service tunnels at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome (see Sandra Ottley's article in *RAG* 5.2) have now brought to light similar tunnels at Hadrian's Villa. Hadrian's country-retreat 25 km east of Rome has been likened to a small city, encompassing over 30 individual buildings spread over 120 hectares, but believed to spread anywhere up to 250 hectares (see Francesca Radcliffe's articles in *RAG* 4.4 and 5.1). That little city continued underground. The tunnels were discovered when a series of wells uniformly 50 feet apart along paths were investigated. They were found to descend to a single road 2.4m wide running for more than half a mile to a circular spur about 700m long. Further investigation has found a new tunnel entrance and has led to the conclusion that alternate underground routes must exist. The new tunnel is double the width at 5m and would have been able to have 2-way traffic, but very little else is known as it is still packed with earth. The tunnel has been dubbed the *Strata Carrabile* or 'Great Underground Road' in Italian. The UNESCO World Heritage Site hopes to be able to excavate and stabilise some of the tunnels and make them open to the public in the future.



Sources:

Tom Kington, 2013, 'Hadrian's Villa Tunnels Explored as Cavers Drop Down into Hidden City', *Guardian.co.uk*, 20 August <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/20/hadrians-villa-tunnels-cavers-tivoli>.

Victoria Woollaston, 2013, 'Underground city and slave tunnels are discovered beneath Emperor Hadrian's Villa in Rome', *Daily Mail.co.uk*, 21 August: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2398711/Slave-tunnels-underground-city-discovered-beneath-Emperor-Hadrians-Villa-Rome.html>.

Top: Plan of the explored tunnels and Hadrian's Villa.

Above: Light from a shaft in the underground tunnels.

Above right: a caver emerges from a tunnel.

Images: © Marco Placidi/
Sotteraneidiroma.it.

A New Frontier of the Roman Empire Found in Romania

We have all heard of Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall but have you heard of Trajan's Rampart? Analysis of declassified spy satellite photography over modern day Romania by a University of Glasgow and University of Exeter team has identified a frontier – previously attributed to the Byzantine or Medieval period, as Roman, dating from the 2nd century AD. The structure's name 'Trajan's Rampart' no doubt reflects the possibility it was built by Trajan and related to his military feats in the province of Dacia, immortalised on Trajan's Column in Rome. The evidence from aerial imagery is of a chronologically complex frontier system blocking a strategically important route. The 60 km long frontier was constructed of three separate phases: a 'Small Earthen Wall', 'Large Earthen Wall' and a 'Stone Wall'. It is thought to have once stood 8.5 m wide, 3.5 m high and include 32 forts and 31 fortlets. Dr Iona Oltean of the University of Exeter hopes that the discovery will provide a stimulus for further examination of other neglected frontiers using aerial imagery.



Above: a crop mark of a fortlet from Trajan's Rampart.

Source: University of Exeter & University of Glasgow, 2013, 'Declassified spy photographs reveal lost Roman Frontier', 2 September: http://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/research/title_315847_en.html; http://www.gla.ac.uk/news/headline_288725_en.html.

Commodus' Practice Amphitheatre Found?

A Montclair State University archaeological project investigating a curved structure found in 1996 by a local group of amateur archaeologists at the so-called Villa of the Antonines has revealed a mini-amphitheatre. The Villa is located in the district of Genzano roughly 30 km south-east of Rome. The name was attributed by literary references and marble busts of the Antonine emperors found there. Historical sources that refer to a private amphitheatre include Cassius Dio (early 3rd c. AD), who describes Commodus, the last of the Antonine Emperors, as executing men in private gladiatorial sessions, and the *Historia Augusta* (later 4th c. AD), which claims he killed wild beasts at an amphitheatre at Lanuvium, the nearby Roman town – but where there is no amphitheatre. In investigation ongoing since 2010 through excavation and geophysical survey, the curved structure initially discovered was found to be part of a whole elliptical structure with an outer diameter of 54 m. Finds of inscribed brick stamps in the fabric of the structure support an Antonine date – an *in situ* example dating to the building of Faustina the Younger estates between 147-176. Associated finds also include colourful imported marble and glass tesserae for mosaics. An underground waterway around the structure implies the structure could have also hosted maritime battles.



Above: Aerial view of the curved structure amongst the ruins of the Villa. Image: Luciano Sciorba/Il Messaggero.

Below: excavations of the curved structure. Image: Montclair State University.

Source: Montclair State University, 2013, 'An introduction to the "Villa of the Antonines" archaeological field project in Italy': <http://www.montclair.edu/chss/center-heritage-archaeological-studies/students/the-villaoftheantonines2013>.





Left: Excavation on two of the burials. Right: the 'Iota-Chi' ring. Images: University of Leicester.

Carpark in Leicester Unearths Another Cemetery: not Richard but Roman

No doubt you will have heard of the discovery and disinterment of King Richard III from a car park in Leicester in 2012. The excavation, run by the University of Leicester archaeological unit, discovered the grave of the former King in a car park that overlies the former location of Greyfriars Church – the city block of St. Martins, Hotel St, Friar Lane and New St. A Roman cemetery was found c. 250 m away in yet another car park, this one at the junction of Oxford and Newarke Streets. The location would once have been c. 130 m to the south of the walled Roman city along a main road now underlying Oxford St. The cemetery is estimated to have remains dating to AD 300. Artefacts accompanying the burials include personal items such as hairpins and rings, as well as the remains of clothing – belt buckles and hobnailed shoes. Thirteen sets of remains were found of mixed burial traditions. One buried in the Christian tradition faced east and was found with a jet ring possibly inscribed with the early Christian 'Iota-Chi' monogram (the initials in Greek for Jesus Christ). Another body appears to have been buried according to a presumably pagan tradition: aligned north-south in a semi-foetal position, but with its head removed and placed near the feet alongside two pottery jars.

Source: Phys.org, 2013, 'King Richard III archaeological unit makes new discovery under Leicester car park', 6 May: <http://phys.org/news/2013-05-king-richard-iii-archaeological-discovery.html>.

Monumental Rome Rethought

At the Latin city of Gabii, in modern day Lazio to the east of Rome, a University of Michigan team has unearthed a monumental structure dating from 350-250 BC that changes our perception of archaic architecture for the region and Rome. The structure comprises a large retaining wall and two terraces connected by a staircase and is decorated with geometric flooring. The structure is built from large blocks of stone, pre-dating by c.100 years the invention and use of mortar in Roman building. The significance of the site is that it contradicts the modest picture of Roman Republican life perceived through the rhetoric of Cicero and other writers. The site, possibly a public building or residence, is an example of the development towards the great monumental building programs which were to shape the landscape of Rome and its empire.

Sources:

University of Michigan, 2013, 'Newly unearthed ruins challenge views of early Romans: <http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/21645-newly-unearthed-ruins-challenge-views-of-early-romans>.

Phys.org, 2013, 'Newly unearthed ruins challenge views of early Romans, 21 August: <http://phys.org/news/2013-08-newly-unearthed-views-early-romans.html>.



Above: The monumental stairs. Image: University of Michigan.

China's Ancient Perspective of Rome given new translation

A third century AD text from Ancient China has recently received an updated translation into English by John E. Hill of the University of Washington. The 'Weilüe' gives an account of the interactions between Romans and the Chinese in the section on 'Daqin' or Roman territory (see also Emilia Oprandi's *Did the Roman's Reach China?* RAG 4.2). It includes information regarding geography, Roman society and trade, including extensive directions on how to get there. The author of the ancient text, Yu Huan, is not considered an official historian but is held in high regard by Chinese scholars. I am sure the Romans would not have held him in the same regard for his descriptions of their land as ruled by "numerous minor kings" and that "when disasters result from unusual phenomena, they unceremoniously replace him". The first translation of the text into English was by Friedrich Hirth in 1885.

Source: Colin Schultz, 2013, 'How third-century China saw Rome, a land ruled by "minor kings"', 3 September: <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/smartnews/2013/09/how-third-century-china-saw-rome-a-land-ruled-by-minor-kings/>

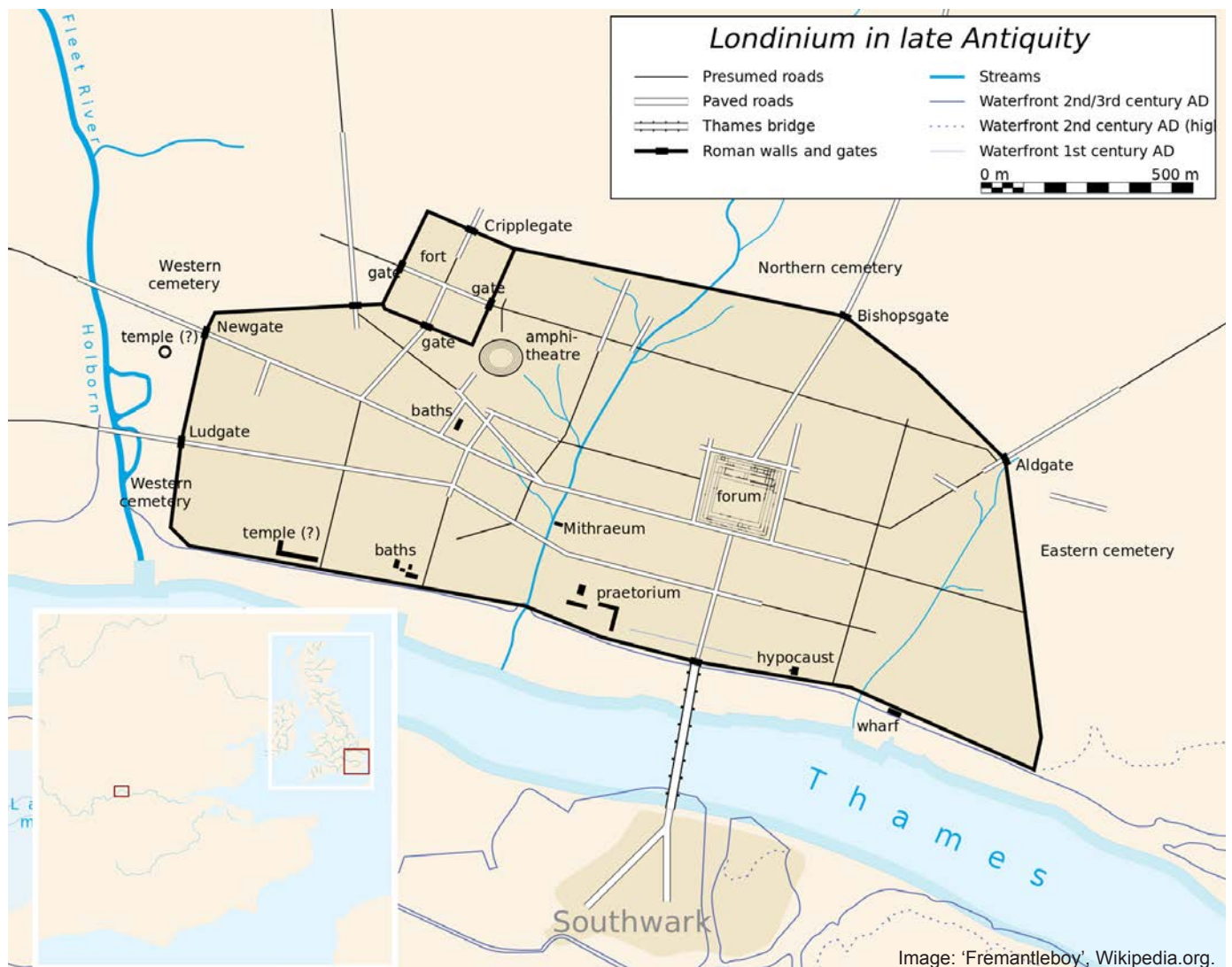


Left: the log and brushwood foundations of the Roman Road. Right: Excavation of the Bedlam burials. Below right: Roman horseshoes from the Liverpool site. Images: © Museum of London Archaeology and Crossrail.

Londinium in the Underground

The new 'Crossrail' route currently being built in London for the Underground rail network has provided archaeologists with the opportunity of looking beneath London. London's busy Liverpool Street roughly follows that of the ancient Roman road that linked Londinium to the cities of *Lindum Colonia* (Lincoln) and *Eboracum* (York) (Bishopsgate on map) – and this is exactly what they have found at the site of the Liverpool Street station ticket hall. The road, perhaps leading to a crossing over the river Walbrook, was first built up on logs and brushwood, before it was layered with gravel and clay. Perhaps more surprisingly were the Roman era horseshoes found imbedded in the road – once tied to the hoofs of the animals by leather straps. Archaeologists hope that more of the well-made road will be revealed when they remove the remains of some 3000 skeletons from the 'Bedlam' burial ground, dating to the 16th century, found nearby where the current Liverpool Street rail station stands. It is hoped buildings that aligned to the Roman road will also be found. A similar situation occurred at London Bridge underground Station in Southwark where a Roman road was found beneath the modern road when





construction of the new booking hall for London Bridge was being undertaken.

The position of London directly above its ancient counterpart has meant glimpses of the Roman city can only be found when major construction takes place. Surprisingly, over the years, we have accumulated a fairly good understanding of the layout of Roman London from this piecemeal approach. The *decumanus maximus* was discovered under a major construction site for a new building near Bank. The Roman Amphitheatre was discovered under the Guildhall Yard when the cellar for a new library was being dug out.

The Museum of London Archaeological Service undertakes many of these excavations and it is here the records of all excavations in London are kept and artefacts stored. Perhaps more relevant to us is the Museum of London's dedicated communication and community programs. Crossrail's lead archaeologist Jay Carver says "It has become part of creating value out of the project over and above the square meterage of the property that they have to let or sell. With Crossrail, we are delivering a new railway that will benefit communities, but also unearthing London's history in the process." So not only are we history buffs kept happy as information is communicated to us, but people that are eagerly awaiting the new infrastructure of London are kept happy as they are informed about what is happening and why it is important.

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Roman Archaeology at UWA

100 Years of Classics and Ancient History at UWA



On Tuesday October 8 Emeritus Professor John Melville-Jones delivered a lecture on 'The First Hundred Years of Classics and Ancient History at The University of Western Australia'. This was his second contribution to the University's centenary, the first being a book on the Hackett Memorial Buildings.

The lecture was well attended by at least 80 people, and was followed by a reception with light refreshments at The University Club, which was paid for from the M. N. Austin Lecture Fund (which is still open for contributions).

In his lecture John claimed that he had 'occupied the Chair of Classics and Ancient History' since 1964. This was true in only one sense – he had souvenired the original professor's desk chair when the Faculty of Arts moved into its new building in that year. The chair was displayed at the lecture, and afterwards several members of the audience 'occupied the Chair of Classics and Ancient History' briefly (see photo above).

The lecture described the careers of the first head of the department, George Wood, and his successor Mervyn Austin. Between

these professors, there was an unusual incident: a lecturer at Sydney University was appointed to fill the vacancy, but did not turn up when he was expected, and his clothes were found on Bondi Beach. It was assumed that he had committed suicide, but this turned out not to be true, and he was found later in Queensland doing manual labour and saying that he was 'sick of academic life'. Using the resources now available on the internet, John tracked this person down, and had lunch with him in Cambridge last May, a pleasant meeting for both of them.

The sub-title of the lecture was 'From Monarchy to Democracy to Bureaucracy'. It described the way in which old-fashioned permanent heads of departments could once manage their affairs with minimal supervision, to the effect of the change to short-term heads of departments that took place in the later 1970s, and the current situation in which spreadsheets are the basis of most decisions, and the non-academic staff of the university has expanded while the number of teaching staff has declined.

An audio and Power Point recording of the lecture is available at <http://prod.lcs.uwa.edu.au:8080/ess/portal/section/915bf4f3-5918-47eb-9151-01e434b1d525>

The Roman Archaeology Group Remembers...

It is with sadness we note the passing of Roman Archaeology Group member Desmond 'Des' Gurry in May of this year. Our sincere condolences extend to friends and family.

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Chairperson

Professor David Kennedy
 M204 Classics and Ancient History
 University of Western Australia
 CRAWLEY WA 6009
 e-mail: david.kennedy@uwa.edu.au
 Tel: 08 6488 2150
 Fax: 08 6488 1182

Deputy Chairperson

Don Boyer
 donboyer@iinet.net.au

Secretary

Norah Cooper
 coopsathome@optusnet.com.au

Treasurer

Maire Gomes
 gomescm@bigpond.com

The RAG Newsletter

Editor

Rebecca Banks
 M204 Classics and Ancient History
 University of Western Australia
 CRAWLEY WA 6009
 rebecca.banks@uwa.edu.au