

These two well-produced volumes present a wonderful and much-needed overview of the material from Glueck's excavations at Khirbet et-Tannur. Thanks to the work of Judith McKenzie and her collaborators, the results of this important excavation are, for the first time, available in a compact and comprehensive format. It is impossible to underline just how important this publication will be to scholars who take an interest in the Near East during the late Hellenistic and Roman periods. Anyone who wants to know anything about Khirbet et-Tannur must now start by consulting these volumes.

RUBINA RAJA

Classical Art and Archaeology, Institute for Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Denmark  
(Email: [rubina.raja@cas.au.dk](mailto:rubina.raja@cas.au.dk))

DOMINIC INGEMARK. *Glass, alcohol and power in Roman Iron Age Scotland*. 300 pages, 153 b&w illustrations, 17 colour photographs. 2014. Edinburgh: National Museums Scotland; 978-1-905267-81-1 paperback £35.

Small fragments of Roman vessel glass, unobtrusive and often overlooked, take centre stage in Dominic



Ingemark's comprehensive study of drinking and power in Roman Iron Age Scotland and northern England. Specifically, this material forms the core evidence

for a model of society that is focused on the maintenance of elite power through conspicuous displays of alcohol consumption.

The study examines all recorded finds of Roman vessel glass from securely non-Roman contexts. Iron Age Scotland did not have a tradition of inhumation burial with associated grave goods, as seen on the Continent; much of the material for this study therefore comes from settlement sites and is fragmentary in nature. The Introduction outlines the variety of techniques for determining the vessel types that these small fragments represent. The fruition and success of this approach is demonstrated in the next section—and the core—of the book, which contains a detailed catalogue of all the finds, organised by vessel type. This section is well structured and well illustrated (including useful distribution maps), and it helpfully supplies drawings and photographs of examples of

complete vessels found elsewhere in, or beyond, the Roman Empire. This catalogue is an invaluable resource for those interested in Roman vessel glass or with an interest in Roman finds from non-Roman contexts beyond the frontier.

The study continues the long-established tradition in Scotland of studying Roman finds from indigenous contexts, or 'Roman drift' to use the term coined by James Curle in his pioneering study of the subject (Curle 1932a; see also Curle 1913, 1932b; Robertson 1970; Hunter 2001). This paradigm has shaped the way that studies of Roman and native interaction have been framed in the study of Roman Iron Age Scotland. Ingemark's novel contribution to this has again highlighted the often fine examples of Roman objects that were circulating beyond the Roman frontier. Indeed, the vessel types are impressive and diverse and, while limited in quantity, the distribution of the material is geographically broad.

It is particularly good to read a volume that provides such a thorough review of the basic material, and the typological format of the catalogue is especially useful. Yet the following section goes further, avoiding the common trap of artefact studies where the focus is on the object rather than what the object represents, evaluating the social implications of these glass finds and, specifically, what they would have contained. Discussion of the study's implications is divided into three main sections: wealth, generosity and knowledge. The first of these deals with how these glass vessels arrived at non-Roman sites, reviewing the arguments surrounding exchange beyond the frontier and helpfully challenging the idea that much of this material was looted from Roman forts. Instead, Ingemark views Roman material as part of a prestige goods network, whereby social power was achieved through the redistribution of this 'wealth'. In this model, the indigenous societies of Scotland and northern England were active agents and discerning consumers in an exchange that was demand driven. While the case for this model is well made and very convincing, the Roman empire's role in the supply of this material, and how it might relate to Roman prejudices and preconceptions of 'barbarian' non-Roman society beyond the frontier, should not be forgotten.

Elites and generosity are themes with which Ingemark continues in the next section by highlighting that most of the Roman glass found in Scotland is associated with drinking vessels and is probably connected to the role of alcohol in group feasting. Such acts are argued to be one of the main mechanisms

through which loyalty to the elite was maintained. To support this argument, Ingemark draws on social theory, archaeological evidence, contemporary textual sources and, most importantly, early medieval textual sources that place a strong emphasis on communal alcohol consumption and acts of generosity by the lords to their war bands. The latter were then used, via the threat of violence, to maintain the lords' social control.

The penultimate section of the book explores the topic of drinking sets and how knowledge of Roman drinking customs could be exploited by elites to maintain their power. Ingemark concludes that although the finds may indicate that drinking sets were in circulation and that this may have been used to maintain social position, it is more likely that they were adapted to existing consumption models while retaining strong symbolic significance as foreign exotica.

The book concludes by bringing together the three themes of wealth, generosity and knowledge, as articulated in the discussion sections, relating them back to the glass vessels, but also positioning them at the core of the wider study of Roman Iron Age society in Scotland. This is all skilfully done and serves to highlight the role that detailed studies of specific artefact types should aspire to and can achieve.

## References

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JAMES BRUHN  
Historic Scotland, Edinburgh, UK  
(Email: [james.bruhn@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:james.bruhn@scotland.gsi.gov.uk))

DAVIDE ZORI & JESSE BYOCK (ed.). *Viking archaeology in Iceland. Mosfell Archaeological Project* (Cursus Mundi 20). xxvi+254 pages, 124 colour and b&w illustrations, 28 tables. 2014. Turnhout: Brepols; 978-2-503-54400-7 paperback €120.

This volume has the immediate goal of publishing the results of the Mosfell Archaeological Project



(MAP) and the ultimate goal of reinvigorating a text-informed archaeology of Viking Age Iceland. It succeeds in both of these objectives, if at times by provocation. The MAP set out to

interpret how a Viking Age chieftaincy worked at the scales of both settlement (the church farm of Hrísrú) and landscape (the Mosfell Valley, near Reykjavík in western Iceland), using all available textual evidence in addition to archaeological survey and excavation. This would seem uncontroversial enough, but the key documentary sources are later medieval quasi-historical narrative accounts written several centuries after the events described. These include *Landnámabók* (*The Book of Settlements*), the historicity of which has been the subject of much debate, and (more literary still) 'family sagas' such as the wonderfully evocative *Egil's Saga*.

Many schools of medieval archaeology, history and literature would eschew this eclectic combination of sources, citing the political and literary (rather than historical) bases of many of the relevant texts. The difficulty of identification in historical archaeology (e.g. who *was* buried at Sutton Hoo?) is particularly fraught, raising questions of both methodology and significance (at least until the world was curiously enthralled by the discovery of the remains of Richard III in Leicester!). It is an issue with deep roots in Icelandic historiography. Enthusiastic antiquarian efforts to equate material remains with saga texts led to a lengthy scholarly reaction that peaked in Icelandic archaeology during the 1990s and 2000s.

The position of the MAP is that this reaction went too far, discarding baby with bathwater, robbing archaeologists of valuable tools and stripping landscapes of potentially real historical characters, including the chieftains of Mosfell and the famous warrior-poet Egil Skallagrímsson, who may have died at Hrísrú. From the perspective of an international

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