

However, the contextual approach allows us not only to identify a limited but very significant number of senatorial tombs in the Roman suburbs, but also to reconstruct the design preferences, their epigraphic habit, and their choice of imagery on walls, urns, altars and sarcophagi, which can in turn be related to themes we know from the consolatory literature. Moreover, understanding better what the senatorial class did and did not favour, the choices made by the freedmen class are thrown into much higher relief.

During my term as Hugh Last Fellow, I had the opportunity to make the most of the excellent British School at Rome library. It made accessible to me both publications of the primary evidence, mostly published in hundreds of short reports, and secondary scholarship. I also was able to see and analyse much of the ancient evidence in person, either in museums or in the countryside, and received great support from the BSR in obtaining permits for access to sites and monuments otherwise closed to the public. This has helped me to advance my project substantially in general, and to finish two key chapters of the book.

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*Saints and salvation: the Wilshere Collection of gold-glass, sarcophagi and inscriptions from the catacombs of Rome*

I am preparing for publication a catalogue of the collection of early Christian and Jewish gold-glass, inscriptions and sarcophagi formed by Charles Wilshere (1814–1906), and purchased by the Ashmolean Museum from Pusey House, Oxford, in 2007. The catalogue, to be published in the spring of 2014, is preceded by essays introducing the collector, the sources for his collection, honouring the dead in fourth-century Rome, the iconography of gold-glass, and the production of gold-glass, sarcophagi and inscriptions. Appendices give the results of scientific analysis of materials in the collection.

In my three months as Hugh Last Fellow from January to March 2013, I expected to do some background reading and to check references in the British School at Rome's library, to familiarize myself with the catacombs and early Christian churches of Rome, to look at some eighteenth-century drawings of gold-glass from predecessors of the Wilshere Collection in the Vatican Library, and to see similar collections in Rome, Florence, Bologna and Milan.

All these aims were achieved. I thought it likely that Rome would offer new insights, but was quite unprepared for the surprise that awaited me. From library research in the BSR and discussion of the Vatican Library's archives, I came across letters from Wilshere to the founding father of early Christian art and archaeology, Giovanni Battista de Rossi, and to his rival, the Neapolitan Jesuit archaeologist, Raffaele Garrucci. The 69 letters to de Rossi begin in 1865 and only end in 1894, when de Rossi died. They are held in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana within an archive of 26,000 letters to the great man. A further eleven letters to Raffaele Garrucci are kept in

the Biblioteca San Luigi, Posilippo; they cover the years 1868–72. These two archives offer a rich perspective on the formation of Wilshere's collection, his network of contacts in Italy and England, and his reasons for making the collection. We read of negotiations for purchase, of valuations of the collection, of Wilshere's hopes to educate an unlearned English public in the brand new subject of early Christian art and archaeology, of the excitement of new discoveries in the catacombs, of Wilshere's efforts to relieve the difficulties of clerics in the years following the collapse of the Papal States, and of deals made and unmade with museum directors in Italy and England. More generally, the letters offer valuable insights into the fate of significant private collections made in Rome and southern Italy during the enlightenment period of the later eighteenth century. These family collections offered significant academic resources to early nineteenth-century scholars, but collapsed in the wake of the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in Naples in 1860. The letters also reveal how the new subject of early Christian art and archaeology was at first restricted to Catholic scholars. A small group of English converts who were trained in Rome and entered the priesthood translated some of de Rossi's work and wrote their own interpretations of the art of the catacombs. Wilshere, who retained his Anglican faith, was in touch with these scholars and saw his own role as providing significant objects for the public to see in museums. The gold-glass remained on loan to the South Kensington Museum for 29 years, and the whole collection was left to Pusey House for the education of its students. Today the Ashmolean Museum fulfils this role.

I greatly enjoyed my stay at the BSR, and thank all the staff for their unfailing kindness and helpfulness. This has been an exceptionally useful period of research, which will, I hope, bear fruit not only for the catalogue but also for collaborative projects to come.

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#### *A new chapter in the history of the Elgin Drawings: the missing Italian collection*

Often ignored in contemporary literature on the history of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travels to the Levant, the Elgin Drawings are significant documents for a contextual assessment of the contribution of Lord Elgin's diplomatic expedition to the advancement of archaeological studies and ultimately to the production of original sources as ideal models for Greek Revival architecture.

The architectural section of the Elgin Drawings held at the British Museum, which formed the topic of my Ph.D. research and of an ensuing monograph, consists of a collection of survey and reconstructive drawings of ancient monuments in Attica and the Peloponnese, mostly drawn by the Italian architect Sebastiano Ittar (1768–1847), during his appointment among the team of artists attached to Lord Elgin's ambassadorial mission to Constantinople between 1799 and 1803. Already at the time