

one page in length and represented by just two items: a mould fragment and a buckle frame former. Around 325 lead bullets, for use in sling shots, were also recovered during the excavations; these too are excluded from the report, although they are currently being studied separately, and a list of the contexts in which they were found is available in the online material (Appendix 2).

One of the strengths of this report is the combined analysis of vessel glass and small finds, which allows for a more nuanced reading of the material culture. Furthermore, some important and intriguing topics are considered within this volume, such as the debate surrounding whether rubbish was brought back into the city to use for fill levels. This is a point of discussion that surfaces repeatedly and Cool offers some valuable contributions to the debate.

Within the volume there is frequent consideration of previously published work on classes of material from elsewhere in Pompeii, as well as from other regions of the Empire. This approach usefully places the VI.1 artefacts into the broader context of the Roman world, although, as Cool herself notes, it is unfortunate that comparable finds catalogues from large stratigraphic excavations at Pompeii are not currently available. Nevertheless, this book will serve as an excellent foundation for future publications and research. Cool's report is not solely a catalogue of finds that will be of interest to those who study Pompeii, but also holds great value for archaeologists interested in the material culture of the early Roman Empire more widely, with excellent commentaries about the production, use and deposition of material culture at Pompeii.

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ALEXANDER SMITH, MARTYN ALLEN, TOM BRINDLE & MIKE FULFORD. *The rural settlement of Roman Britain* (Britannia Monograph 29). 2016. xxv+469 pages, 400 colour illustrations. London: The Roman Society; 978-0-907764-43-4 paperback £40.



This highly impressive volume arises from a substantial and innovative project supported by the Leverhulme Trust and other funding bodies since 2006.

It is published at a significant time in the study of Roman Britain when academic approaches are dramatically changing. The past year has seen the publication of major studies that have addressed the character of the population of the province of *Britannia*, exploring issues of mobility and transformation. 'The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain Project' and its outputs will doubtless serve as an exemplar for future initiatives that seek to address rural settlement in the Western Roman Empire, and will provide a vital research tool for future work in England and Wales.

The volume adds an important new dimension to our understanding of the people who lived in the non-urban parts of the province. Despite perhaps 90 per cent of the population of Roman Britain living in rural contexts, most studies have, until recently, focused on the occupants of the towns and military sites; villas are the only category of rural sites that have figured significantly in most earlier accounts. This situation has been radically transformed by changing archaeological approaches and by a dramatic alteration in the way that archaeological fieldwork is funded. Prior to the 1960s, most excavation was undertaken as university-based or community-sponsored research, and tended to focus on sites that appeared more 'Roman': forts, towns and villas. Since the 1970s, excavation has increasingly been funded by developers. The result is that many sites that would have been ignored previously are now excavated in advance of development, and, consequently, knowledge of the rural landscape, and therefore Roman Britain as a whole, has been transformed.

This current volume is the first of three monographs in the series 'New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain'. The aim of the project from

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which these volumes emerge was to find ways of synthesising and communicating the value of the vast quantities of materials being collected from commercial archaeological excavations in England and Wales that have addressed Roman and Later Iron Age sites. This volume considers the settlement evidence, primarily focusing on the morphology of rural sites and the architecture of their buildings. The second and third volumes, both forthcoming, will centre respectively on the rural economy of Roman Britain and on the population of the countryside and, in particular, the evidence for their ritual behaviour.

The scale and ambition of the project are indicated by the 2500 published and unpublished excavations that have been analysed. These range from modest evaluations and watching briefs to large-scale excavations across England and Wales. The material is organised into eight geographic regions that offer “a characterisation of the mosaic of communities that inhabited the province and the ways they changed over time” (p. xxiii). The authors support earlier studies that have aimed to place the farmstead rather than the villa at the centre of analysis (e.g. Hingley 1989; Taylor 2007). Villas are increasingly seen to have been relatively uncommon and abnormal, although they continue to feature prominently in television coverage and popular perceptions of Roman Britain. The project documented 1866 farmsteads (small rural settlements without villa buildings) and only 326 settlements that could be classified as villas. The volume provides excellent documentation and analysis of the wide regional and chronological variations in the character of the farmsteads that typify each area of the province.

The text is accompanied by numerous colour site plans, distribution maps and diagrams that clearly demonstrate the value of the results that have emerged from commercial archaeological investigation over the past 30 years. This includes extensive data on buildings and the character of the settlements of which they form part. Also addressed is the history of research into the countryside in Roman Britain, a detailed consideration of the morphological approach adopted during the project and a summary that situates the results in relation to the wider history of the province. The ‘Rural Settlement’ project was developed, in part, to deal with the division that has emerged within British archaeology between researchers based in universities

and the archaeologists based in commercial units who generate and publish most of the data from development-led fieldwork. The complexity of the material explored in this volume will provide an excellent foundation for student dissertations that could tease out and explore in greater detail some of the interesting issues identified in the monograph.

The project initially addressed the evidence from England, but was subsequently extended to cover Wales. Scotland is therefore excluded and there is no comparable work available on the equivalent period north of the (modern) border. It would be wrong to criticise this highly ambitious project for its failure to provide full national coverage, although it would be fascinating to consider how the materials derived from commercial archaeology in Scotland might supplement and transform the analysis presented here. The division of research into the Iron Age and Roman periods either side of the English-Scottish border provides one example of the fundamental ways in which national research traditions serve to condition what we can achieve through academic analysis. Another duality running through the project is the urban-rural opposition that has dominated discussions of the Roman Empire more generally; the relationship between town and country is briefly addressed at the end of the volume. In sum, this is a substantial, innovative and thorough account, and the remaining two volumes are eagerly awaited.

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JOSEF ENGEMANN. *Abū Mīnā VI. Die Keramikfunde von 1965 bis 1998* (Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 111). 2016. 145 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz; 978-3-447-10477-7 hardback €154.