

The nine chapters contained in this book include material culture studies, discussions of urban and military settlement, and accounts of the reception of the northern Walls in post-medieval times. The first three papers are essentially concerned with the relationship between archaeological and historical evidence in understanding aspects of urbanism in Roman Britain. Wilson's chapter concisely surveys current evidence for town defences and seeks to relate several earlier examples to awards of the status of *municipium*. Discussion of the role of client kings and the military in urban origins will add to the current debate on the political scene in early Roman Britain. Tomlin and Fulford contribute shorter, more narrowly focused pieces on possible evidence for London being a *colonia*, and on civilian involvement in the construction of Hadrian's Wall, respectively. The latter in particular adds quite a new dimension to the understanding of military and civil organisation in the second century, simply by proposing that epigraphic evidence of the involvement of *civitates* in the building-work belongs to this period rather than the fourth century.

Two chapters then deal with military sites and assemblages. Manning presents a typological study of the major groups of weapons at Newstead, analysed in relation to the changing garrisons of the fort, while Sommer's paper is an extensive update of his 1984 volume on *The Military Vici in Roman Britain* (BAR Brit. Ser. 129). The latter discusses a range of important new evidence and contains some interesting pointers towards a pattern of regional variation in *vicus* layout. Returning to some of the problems of reconciling our different sources for the Roman world, Dannell tackles the functions of samian cups in the next chapter. This contribution compares volumetric data, graffiti and literary sources to address some key questions of terminology and use within a range of cultural contexts. Papers by Keppie and Young then shift the focus to more recent times. Keppie examines a fascinating, and anonymous, late seventeenth-century letter relating a journey along the Antonine Wall, exploring its context and authorship. Young looks to Hadrian's Wall, and gives a brief but interesting survey of the history of research on, and management of, the monument. Finally, the volume closes with a further material study, taking us far from Roman Britain, as Mackensen focuses on African Red Slipware from Upper Egypt.

Overall, the context of the volume's compilation accounts for the wide spread of subjects represented and this serves as a testimony to Sheppard Frere's influence on a considerable range of different areas of study. His role as a synthesist, and the debates which have followed on from his work on the broad picture of Roman Britain, are unfortunately not so well represented. What comes across most of all though, thanks particularly to the personal notes with which each paper begins, is the great affection with which he is regarded across the scholarly community.

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*Limes XIX: Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Pécs, Hungary, September 2003*. Edited by Z. Visy. University of Pécs, Pécs, 2005. Pp. 1004, illus. Price: £80.00. ISBN 978 963 642 053 6.

The *Limes* Congresses are heavyweights on the circuit of international conferences in the fields of archaeology and ancient history. Usually lasting for the best part of two weeks, including excursions before and after the main event, they attract large numbers of scholars from many countries (over 300 from more than 33 countries at the 2006 Congress held at León in Spain). There is a loyal following with many delegates attending throughout their careers and beyond into retirement, but each Congress sees accessions of new delegates from the host country and further afield. Sadly, there have been only a few new delegates from Britain since the early 1990s. Perhaps this is partly a result of the criticism which has been directed at the Congresses by some British scholars. If so, it is most unfortunate, for the criticism has called not for abolition but for reform, and, as Simon James made clear in his partly sympathetic review of the Amman Congress in 2000 (*Britannia* 34 (2005), 499–502), the scope of the Congress has altered as the subject continues to develop.

The proceedings of the Pécs Congress consist of 99 papers arranged in nine sessions: Epigraphy, History; How Did Frontiers Actually Work?; Roman Frontiers – Barbarians; Civilians on Frontiers; The Material Culture of the Supply, Preparation and Consumption of Food and Drink; Soldiers and Religion; Military Architecture; Material Culture; and finally Archaeological Research, a miscellaneous category.

The geographical spread shows the usual and inevitable European bias, although there are papers dealing with the Crimea and Black Sea coast, Judaea/Palaestina and the Arabian frontier. There are two papers on Egypt, but nothing about the rest of North Africa. New emphases are evident in Europe, with several papers about Spain and contributions on how areas in Northern Europe far beyond the frontiers were affected by contact with the Roman world. The time-span of the papers ranges from the early first century B.C. (Luik on a new plan of Camp V at Renieblas) to the fifth century A.D. (López Quiroga on barbarians in Spain).

The approaches adopted to frontier studies in this volume are as wide-ranging as the subject matter. We begin with an extended essay by Alföldy on the term 'Romanisation', which reviews the debate on its use and calls for its retention *faute de mieux*. Other contributions which might be classified as theoretical are very much engaged with material culture. Of particular interest is the session organised by Carroll on the supply, preparation and consumption of food and drink. The papers by Meyer-Freuler, Schucany and Walter explore very marked differences in the supply of pottery: for example, variations in the amounts of Germanic pottery used in forts on the Taunus and Wetterau *limes*, clear distinctions between the preferences of soldiers and *vicani* for certain types of pottery, and changes in pottery use during the earlier occupation of Vindonissa. Questions of identity as evidenced by material culture were also explored in other sessions, notably by Allison (mapping artefacts and activities at Haltern I) and by Mayer-Reppert (brooches at Hüfingen which suggest the presence of soldiers from Pannonia).

Turning to the actual remains of frontier works, Schallmayer's contribution on the Upper German and Raetian *limes* seems particularly significant. Short lengths of the palisade excavated at Marköbel in 2002 and 2003 yielded dendrochronological dates of A.D. 119/20, which of course ties in exactly with the date of Hadrian's visit to the German frontier. Less immediately apparent is the indication which this implies that at Marköbel the palisade was only in existence for as long as the original timbers took to rot away, perhaps fifty years at the most. Dates yielded elsewhere by palisade-timbers were forty years or so later, showing that the original timbers had been replaced. The ditch and bank inserted behind the line of the palisade in the late second or early third century now seems to have replaced it rather than reinforced it. This is the first major change which has been proposed in our understanding of the development of the frontier works on the German *limes* for many years and is perhaps a harbinger of a renewed programme of investigation which will have far-reaching consequences. Schallmayer's contribution is placed in the section on military architecture, but would have sat better with the session organised by Breeze and Jilek on how frontiers actually worked. Their introductory paper sets out the problems with admirable clarity, and, unlike other session organisers, they provide an overview of the contributions, including those delivered at the Congress but published elsewhere. A theme that unites several papers in the session, particularly those of Hodgson and Karavas, is the correspondence between the perceived threats and the disposition of the frontier works, not readily apparent without detailed analysis of the spacing and topographical positions of the various installations. Rankov contributes an incisive rebuttal of the widely-held view that rivers do not make good frontiers. Maxfield skilfully deploys written evidence from the desert *limes* in Egypt to portray the routine of soldiers controlling the routes from the Nile valley to the Red Sea coast. Their duties were troublesome and sometimes dangerous; we hear of an attack by 60 barbarians on a *praesidium* in the early Hadrianic period in which at least one soldier was killed and civilians were carried off.

It has only been possible to refer to some of the highlights of this enormous collection of papers and to illustrate some of the new intellectual approaches to frontier studies which it embodies. Some technical developments are also worth noting. Geophysical prospection is not new, but only in recent years has it been used to best effect on Roman military sites, as is demonstrated by Davies' account of recent work in Wales. Potential improvements in the protection of the physical remains of the Roman *limes* are noted by Visy in his introduction to the volume, where he describes progress towards their inscription as a World Heritage Site. His introduction also shows how preparations for the Congress in Hungary stimulated research, programmes of conservation and numerous publications, most notably *The Roman Army in Pannonia: An Archaeological Guide of the Ripa Pannonia* (Teleki László Foundation, 2003). This *Guide* forms a companion to the Congress volume and was also edited by Visy, to whom those studying Roman frontiers owe a great debt for producing these publications.