

H.E.M. COOL. *The small finds and vessel glass from Insula VI.1 Pompeii: excavations 1995–2006* (Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 17). 2016. xii+304 pages, numerous colour and b&w illustrations. Oxford: Archaeopress; 978-1-78491-452-3 paperback £50.



Insula VI.1 in Pompeii, located in the north-west of the city, was excavated between 1995 and 2006 by the Anglo-American Project in Pompeii (AAPP). The aim was to explore the

occupation history of the city block from the eruption levels of AD 79 to the earliest deposits dating to the third/second centuries BC. This insula comprised functionally different areas, including two large houses (the Casa delle Vestali and the Casa del Chirurgo), several bars, an inn, a shrine and a workshop, all of which were investigated through approximately 200 trenches. Cool's book is a much-needed study of the small finds and the vessel glass from these excavations, and is supplemented by online material available via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS; <https://doi.org/10.5284/1039937>). It adds to the coin data from the AAPP published by Hobbs (2013) and several articles detailing the urban development of the insula (e.g. Jones & Robinson 2004). A highly anticipated volume dealing with the excavations at the Casa del Chirurgo is currently in press and can be expected later in the year (Anderson & Robinson in press).

Cool's report is broadly divided into four parts: an introduction to the project; a catalogue in nine chapters; a discussion of patterns in the data and changes over time; and an online component providing the raw data in a downloadable format, which can be used to reconstruct Cool's database using the explanatory notes and relationship diagram. The latter is an excellent addition for those who want to interrogate the data for themselves.

The first chapter introduces the project and outlines the methods employed by the AAPP, with an insightful discussion of the disjunction between excavation procedures and artefact/ecofact analyses. One of the most notable problems Cool encountered was establishing a chronology, in part brought about by an "absence of any coherent stratigraphic narrative"

(p. 6), compounded by an absence of a fully analysed pottery assemblage; dating was, therefore, largely reliant on the coins published by Hobbs (2013). Consequently, the amount of work that has gone into this volume is significant; in addition to analysing the objects, Cool also needed to phase some of the excavation areas herself, and she helpfully provides notes in the online material on the phasing and stratigraphy.

Chapters 2–10 present the artefacts using broad functional categories, following standard practice for finds from Romano-British sites. Cool argues that this structure allows for clearer identification of changing patterns in the material culture, such as the religious practices attested at the shrine. Some of the shifts in material culture evident across the insula provide illuminating glimpses of a changing market for commodities. For example, the development of glass-blowing technology is evident in a change from cast to blown glass vessels in the first half of the first century AD. This is to be expected, but Cool also demonstrates that storage vessels such as glass jars and bottles were relatively new commodities in Pompeii at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, with implications for changes in cultural behaviour. Additionally, clear shifts in the colour of glass vessels over time are also evident, with brightly coloured examples disappearing during the Flavian period.

The catalogue consists of a general summary at the start of each object category, which often includes a useful discussion of manufacturing techniques or other such relevant information. This is followed by individual entries for the finds, which are accompanied by excellent, clear illustrations, and then a concluding overview. Colour images are included where appropriate and are particularly beneficial for the glass objects. One shortcoming of the volume is the numerous formatting errors and inconsistencies; there are also a few numerical errors in data tables (e.g. some incorrect totals in Table 3.3, p. 63). Although at times distracting, these issues do not detract from the value of the publication.

Over 5000 objects are presented in this report, but, unfortunately, the iron objects (of which there are approximately 3000 additional items) are excluded because X-radiography facilities were not available. Cool comments that this is a "major omission" (p. 201) when considering craft equipment, which is highlighted, for example, by the fact that the section detailing evidence for metalworking is only

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.

References

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NICK RAY

Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford, UK
(Email: nicholas.ray@classics.ox.ac.uk)

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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