

The final two chapters, ‘Problématiques’ (405–25) and ‘Conclusions’ (425–46), are certainly the most interesting parts of the book. C. believes that both the miniature and real military equipment at Mouzon was deposited by individual auxiliary soldiers of the Roman army in numerous single votive acts. The fragments of undeniably Roman armour recorded by C. seem to support this idea, but it is unclear if they are from the same phase and context as the miniatures. C. interprets these scraps as *pars pro toto* offerings, possibly left by veteran soldiers. C. sees the deposition of weapons in the temple as analogous to the use of real weapons found in Augustan and early first-century A.D. burials, such as those at Wederath. This interpretation differs substantially from that of the reviewer and others: that the collection was a substitute for a communal offering of war booty of the sort that characterised votive deposition in Iron Age sanctuaries, a theory supported by the similarity in manufacture among miniatures, their concentration in a single area, and by the fact that many were intentionally bent prior to deposition. In either case, and as C. rightly observes, these objects clearly belong to a transitional phase in the very earliest period of Roman provincial religion and are an important addition to our understanding of the development of provincial society.

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Aspects de l'artisanat en milieu urbain: Gaule et Occident romain. Actes du colloque international d'Autun, 20–22 septembre 2007. Edited by P. Chardon-Picault. Revue Archéologique de l'Est, Supplément 28. Revue Archéologique de l'Est, Dijon, 2010. Pp. 434, illus. Price: €30.00. ISBN 978 2 915544 14 5.

The study of the Roman artisan in the towns of Gaul and the Western Empire has been well served by a number of recent conferences and their subsequent publication. The output includes one volume reviewed (along with two related monographs) in this journal several years ago (*Britannia* 36 (2005), 505–6), as well as a regular series emanating from Luxembourg under the editorial direction of Michel Polfer. Others are noted on p. 10 (n. 1) of the book under review here, the result of a gathering held in Autun in 2007. Its organiser, Pascale Chardon-Picault, had promptly collected together the resulting proceedings before her tragically early death in October 2008 at the age of 47. Her colleagues have seen this substantial volume through press, thoughtfully including a bibliography of her impressive contributions on this and other topics (12–13).

Appropriately for a book dealing with Gaul, it is divided into three parts, but with some overlap between them. The first deals with topographical aspects, covering both the physical forms of various structures — including kilns, ovens, etc. — and their (changing) locations within urban and religious centres. There is much of substance here, and well-excavated evidence for structures such as potters' workshops (e.g. at Lyon) that will be of interest to students of Roman Britain. One paper providing a detailed analysis of the evidence from Pompeii provides a useful exemplar. It takes a pragmatic approach, stressing the needs of the population, the supply of raw materials and technical issues. The second part is concerned with the lives, status and technological skills of artisans. Among topics treated are how *stele* were used, apprenticeships and training, evidence on artefacts for literacy, the status of painters, stucco and mosaic techniques, and a remarkable and informative collection of iron tools from Vertault (*Vertillum*) in Burgundy.

The equally varied Part III is entitled ‘The Transformation of Materials’, and contains papers covering technological processes and craftwork in stone, copper alloy, iron, and precious metals, as well as glass and organic materials, including bone, textiles, leather, and basket-making. As in the volume generally, the range of topics is as diverse as the sites covered, which include parts of or the whole of Gaul (Autun being prominent) or the Western Empire, while some classic non-Gallic sites also feature. Among the last-mentioned category is a study, whose inclusion is fully justified by the quality of the evidence, of the metalworkers of Magdalensberg in Noricum, a key element of that site's economic basis. Aspects discussed include local traditions in sculpture and in the manufacture of glass jewellery, and their wider artistic influence and market range. A clear symbiosis is proposed between sites of meat consumption (including ritual feasting) and the supply of raw materials for the production of bone and antler artefacts, something that Nina Crummy has suggested was undertaken in Britain by itinerant craftsmen (in M. Polfer (ed.), *L'Artisanat romain: évolutions, continuités, et ruptures (Italie et provinces occidentales)* (2001), 97–

109), while at Tongeren, Belgium, the manufacture of bone artefacts was linked by A. Vanderhoeven and A. Eryvynck to cattle raising (in R. Hingley and S. Willis (eds), *Roman Finds: Context and Theory* (2007), 156–75). In other cases, there were close links between the use of bone products and textile working. This last is one industry whose relative invisibility belies its significance and scale (see J.P. Wild's masterly survey in *Britannia* 33 (2002), 1–32). The same goes to some extent for leather, for which the army was again an important consumer — but not, of course, such an important factor in Gaul.

Several papers display an awareness of the archaeological invisibility of certain activities, including those not requiring features such as forges or kilns that have left clear traces and whose products have not survived. Evidence from waste products, such as those produced by iron-working, is not necessarily so reliable a guide to the precise locations where processes were carried out. Alain Ferdière notes how recent excavations and scientific analysis are enhancing not only the quantity of data but also the quality of our understanding, and are shifting our perceptions of the balance between the more visible crafts and those less appreciated. There is also a realisation that more research, including scientific analysis, is required in various fields, but at least the questions are being asked. The overall impression corroborates the conclusion apparent in earlier volumes, that there were one or more designated zones for particular trades or crafts, while others were scattered more widely about the town.

Conveniently for users (and for this reviewer), there are summaries in French, English and German at the beginning of each paper — though not all the translations are as accurate as those provided by Nina Crummy.

In conclusion, this is another extremely valuable collection of evidence, of the sort that may be emerging in abundance from the ground in Britain but which, with a few exceptions, does not seem to be collected together in the same way. Although there is much new data, and some British scholars have published their researches in the Luxembourg conference reports — in which some 'bigger' questions are addressed — there has been more emphasis here on social, contextual, and theoretical aspects, or on military supply-systems. Perhaps the differences reflect not merely intellectual traditions but also commercial pressures: the ongoing loss of skilled finds specialists in Britain, in spite of the boost provided by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, is a matter that needs to be addressed urgently.

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The Fall of the Western Roman Empire: an Archaeological and Historical Perspective. By N. Christie. Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2011. Pp. xi + 306, illus. Price: £65.00 (bound); £19.99 (paper). ISBN 978 1 84966 337 3 (bound); 978 0 34075 966 0 (paper).

Joining other recent volumes on the same topic, as for example P. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (2005) and B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (2005), this new synthesis introduces readers to some of the key evidence and problems in understanding events and trajectories of continuity and change across the Late Roman West. An emphasis on 'decline' is suggested by the title, but in fact a fairly balanced picture is presented, stressing regional differences in both the pace and nature of change, and bringing out evidence of persistent Roman influence as well as much evidence for disruption, destruction, and abandonment. The main aim of the book is to incorporate archaeological evidence alongside the familiar historical narrative, shedding light on such topics as the army, frontiers and defence; capitals, major cities and towns; Christianisation of both urban and rural space; and the 'end of the West'. In particular, Christie fleshes out the picture available from the major historians of the period by detailed reference to the material evidence for structures and buildings, settlement patterns, trade and transport routes, and much more. Yet he also brings in a fair amount of detail from primary texts, and some of the main chapters, contrary to the impression given in his preamble, actually contain more evidence from texts than they do archaeological material. The frustration of the archaeology, in which definitive judgements are rarely possible, is compensated for by some illuminating extracts from a wide range of written sources including inscriptions, saint's lives, law codes, and the like. The abundance of written texts for Italy in particular facilitates a very effective marrying of archaeological and historical material, in which particular sites and historical figures or events can be convincingly linked together.