

Rome's neighbours was not solely responsible for this decisive change as L. implies. The depletion of forces through frequent civil wars over the next 50 years surely was a key factor for the army's total reorganisation in the later third century and the loss of some of its capabilities. L.'s book will prove useful for those in search of a current survey of Rome's most daring military advances into Germany.

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Brooches in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain. By D.F. Mackreth. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2011. 2 vols: I, text and appendices, pp. xiv + 282; II, figs 2, pls 150 + 2 supp. CD-ROM. Price: £70.00. ISBN 978 1 84217 411 1.

In his prologue, Mackreth marks the start of this *magnum opus* back in 1963. What began as an essay on brooches for a course taught by Graham Webster became a determination to gather enough data to produce a clear overview of the variety of Late Iron Age Romano-British brooch forms, methods of manufacture, chronology and stylistic associations. At the start he only had access to the series from Late Iron Age and early Roman Camulodunum (Hawkes and Hull 1947), which is limited both geographically and in date range, and Collingwood's 'useless alphabetical system' (v), 'rightly castigated' (3). He notes various stages along the route to completion. By 1965 he knew he had to have at least 2,000 brooches to achieve a working dataset; next he realised that he would need 5,000 brooches; then he settled on 10,000, as after that new types would rarely appear; he finally ended up with 15,000!

The text is simply ordered. Ch. 1 explains any bias in the sample, materials and manufacture, and his methods of dating and classification. Chs 2–10 deal with the types, in general grouped by major forms and families (bow brooches in particular are often best viewed as a number of inter-related family trees), and ch. 11 dips into some of the social and economic aspects of brooch use. There are three appendices dealing with dating, of which two are clearly personal bugbears: the dating of the King Harry Lane cemetery at Verulamium, and that of the brooch assemblage from the south-west gate at South Cadbury, the 'massacre deposits'. The data for all this are given in various formats on the accompanying CD.

This is not a book for a faint-hearted beginner with no foreknowledge of the family groupings, and M. admits that his system may prove intractable for some (3). That given, it is surprising that his publisher did not guide him into making it easier to access, as the principal yardstick by which to judge any classification system is its user-friendliness. Feugère's 1985 study of the brooches from southern Gaul led researchers into his typology by a summary visual index, and the success of the late Richard Hattatt's four brooch volumes (1982, 1985, 1987, 1989) was ensured by the inclusion in the last of a full visual index, which proved to be so useful that Oxbow reissued it as a separate volume (2000). Such a visual aid would have helped here. Also down to the publisher is the cluttered page layout and unfortunate choice of typefaces. Rapid navigation through the text is necessarily by plate numbers, but they are given in italic and are too faint to stand out on the page, while the words in bold that do stand out are the much-repeated 'dating' and 'distribution'.

Few brooch specialists agree wholly on nomenclature, which is rife with misnomers, and M. has sometimes stuck with existing usage and sometimes devised his own. He has dealt with family subdivisions in an entirely practical way, naming obvious types or groups, numbering or naming obvious sub-types or sub-groups. He gives short shrift to eccentric individual pieces. For example, on p. 68 he has 'Complete Bastards', 'Odd', 'The Rest', and on p. 78 '*olla podrida*'. (I'm not too sure what some users will make of these.) His no-nonsense approach to a paucity of dating evidence is similar: 'it would be a brave man who would care to pick over the details', 'not enough evidence to shake a stick at' (78). Readers may be left unenlightened, but will be pleased to know that they are not alone in the murk and that their companion has a sense of humour.

Ch. 11 is headed 'Usage, Tribes, Fashions and the Demise of the Bow Brooch'. Often only summaries of topics are given, rather than full explorations of the evidence, and the lack of references shows that he has not engaged with recent work on gender and identity. The same is true for religion, where his discussion of horse-and-rider brooches does not refer to the seminal work of Ferris (1986) and Johns (1995). Researchers into regionality, which is M.'s great strong point, should browse the typological chapters as it is by no means all gathered together here. In contrast, the demise of the bow brooch is neatly charted and

the section on militaria opens up new perspectives, attributing specific types/sub-types of Aucissa, Bagendon and Hod Hill brooches to particular legions, and exploring the distribution of Knee and Crossbow brooches in some detail. This patchiness is understandable — there is so much data that M. has necessarily pursued his own interests rather than attempted to keep up with every strand of every topic — but it is a shame that researchers coming fresh to some of these subjects will not be led into the wider literature.

Despite these problems, the book is a great achievement. Rarely does an individual temperament shine through a work such as this, but M.'s quirky approach to problems and *lacunae* in the data reflect his tenacity, clarity, flexibility, occasional exasperation, and rising above all his sense of humour. Has he achieved his aims? Of course; what a student essay — Graham Webster would be immensely proud of him.

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Die römischen Kasernen im Legionslager Vindobona: die Ausgrabungen am Judenplatz in Wien in den Jahren 1995–1998. By M. Mosser *et al.* Monografien der Stadtarchäologie Wien, Bd. 5. Museen der Stadt Wien, Wien, 2010. 2 vols: pp. 1016 and 528, illus (some colour)+8 colour folding plans. Price: €138.00. ISBN 978 3 85161 023 9.

Defining the interior structure and chronology of a legionary fortress is a daunting task and gets more complicated the denser the successor settlements on top of the Roman layers. It has taken in the case of Caerleon, Inchtuthil and Nijmegen nearly 80 years to get as far as we have, but the large fortresses underlying the modern towns of Mainz, Strasbourg, Vienna and Brigetio have seen for the most part only small-scale interventions, disclosing disjointed walls and floor-levels that are hard to interpret and difficult to use as a basis of a larger chronological system.

Within this context the 1,544-page publication on the excavations of the Judenplatz in Vienna represents a milestone. Located within the fortress close to the *via principalis sinistra*, it provides insights into three barrack blocks of a normal cohort, as well as a tiny section of the *praetorium*. For an inner city excavation the area is substantial and, possibly due to its location under a square, remarkably well preserved.

The excavation is meticulously presented, with every feature documented as far as possible in plan and section and often colour photograph, while the finds reports are accompanied by lengthy discussions of all aspects of the material and with full catalogues and numerous illustrations. Special features, such as hearths and ovens, are separately listed, as are the construction details of all walls. The context descriptions are extremely detailed. In sum, every care has been taken not just to present as much information as possible, but also to allow future excavators the chance of cross-referencing any possible detail or paralleling their material with the relevant period here, or even in future years of revising the results in light of further research. In a time of dwindling publication budgets and an increased tendency to relegate more and more information onto disks, supporting websites or even just the site archive, this approach is to be warmly welcomed, and despite its hefty weight in excess of 5 kg and the intimidating price tag of €134, it will be a very welcome addition for anybody interested in legionary fortresses and Late Antiquity, particularly on the middle Danube.

The results of all this labour of love are considerable: the Judenplatz excavations offer a continuous sequence of features from the first timber buildings to the early medieval/sub-Roman period of Vienna, associated with numerous finds in closed contexts providing a good chronological framework. The area is large enough to prove that the patterns encountered within one building are repeated in others, thus allowing for the first time the creation of a reliable overall periodisation of the fortress from the late first century to the fifth/sixth century.

Of particular interest is the successful identification of one, probably two timber periods in Vindobona fortress during the second century. The construction of the barracks in stone or at least on stone dwarf-walls at least 0.7 m high appears to start at the very end of the second century and dates probably to Septimius Severus, with a further stone period datable to *c.* A.D. 280/300–350/360, during which time considerable wealth was spent on channel hypocausts and wall-painting.

The most impressive evidence comes, however, from the last stone phase (Period 5: A.D. 360/375–390/410). The structures, which still follow the outlines of the earlier barracks are no longer used as formal military barracks but appear to have been converted into a series of workshops among which a series of