TRAC2000

Institute of Archaeology
University College London
6th–7th April 2000

Programme and abstracts
# Thursday 6th April 2000

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# The Roman Army in Context (Room G6)

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<td>Identities in the Late Roman Army: Material and Textual Perspectives</td>
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<td>16.05</td>
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<td>Keith Matthews</td>
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<td>Constantina Katsari</td>
<td>The role of the army in the monetization of the Roman Empire</td>
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# General Session (Room 612)

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<td>Animal iconographies: metaphor, meaning and identity <em>(or why Chinese dragons don't have wings)</em></td>
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<td>16.05</td>
<td>Gillian Hawkes</td>
<td>An archaeology of food: a case study from Roman Britain</td>
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<td>Shawn Graham</td>
<td>Of lumberjacks, log-drivers and brickstamps: understanding the Tiber river as infrastructure</td>
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*Party after the debate!*
**Friday 7th April 2000**

*The Identities of Romano-British Artefacts* (Room G6)

Chair/discussant: Richard Hingley

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<td>Gillian Carr</td>
<td>The Romanization of the Body: changing identities in the Later Iron Age and Early Roman period in the territories of the Catuvellauni and Trinovantes</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td>Roger White</td>
<td>Wroxeter and the (Ir)relevance of Rome</td>
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<td>11:15</td>
<td>Kelly Spradley</td>
<td>Small Finds: Problems and Possibilities</td>
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<td>11:40</td>
<td>Hilary Cool</td>
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<td>12:05</td>
<td>Peter Guest</td>
<td>Material Culture (complex and dynamic), desperately seeks Negotiation with Roman-Briton (with identity crisis)</td>
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<td>12:45</td>
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*Constructing Childhood in the Roman World* (Room G6)

Chair/discussant: Carol van Driel-Murray

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<td>14:10</td>
<td>Rebecca Gowland</td>
<td>Playing Dead: implications of mortuary evidence for the social construction of childhood in Roman Britain</td>
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<td>14:35</td>
<td>Janette McWilliam</td>
<td>Seeing is believing? Constructing Images of Children in the Roman World</td>
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<td>15:00</td>
<td>Janet Huskinson</td>
<td>Constructing childhood on Roman children's sarcophagi</td>
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<td>15:45</td>
<td>Eleanor Scott</td>
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<td>16:10</td>
<td>John Pearce</td>
<td>Infants, cemeteries and communities in the provincial Roman world</td>
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<td><em>Discussion</em></td>
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The abstracts in this booklet are presented in order of the programme.

1 Representing the Romans

The aim of this session is to consider the public faces of both 'Romans' and Roman archaeologists, and therefore to look beyond TRAC at how ideas are communicated to different audiences. A growing body of work exists which examines the origins and development of Roman studies, particularly in Britain, and this remains a vital concern. However, it is hoped that this session will have a specifically contemporary focus, and explore the ways in which the Roman past is represented in museums, education and the media, and indeed at how Roman archaeology as a discipline is perceived in these and other, academic spheres. Papers are therefore invited which consider both the current state of affairs and ways of moving forward. How can we communicate the many current debates in Roman studies to a wider audience? How can Roman archaeologists make their work accessible to those dealing with similar themes in other periods and areas? What impact can or should TRAC make on museum displays and school textbooks?

1.1 Representing Londinium: the influence of colonial and post-colonial discourses

Francis Grew

Abstract not available.

1.2 Representing the Romans in the Museum of Scotland

Fraser Hunter and David Clarke

The challenge of opening a new national museum for Scotland in 1998 made us tackle a wide range of issues concerning how archaeology is presented to the public. Among this was the question of the Romans. Our displays are structured by theme rather than chronology, attempting to build an understanding in visitors of ways to reconstruct the past rather than giving them a culture-historical narrative. In such a treatment the Romans stand out as alien in Scottish prehistory and early history, a point we try to develop in the displays. They also provoke rather ambivalent responses from the Scottish public and the educational sector. This paper will discuss both the conceptual issues behind the displays and some of the practical issues in making Roman material interesting and meaningful.
1.3 *And cue the legions!* Presenting the Roman world through television

Simon James

Rome and its archaeology remain immensely popular with broad sectors of the public, and are highly televisual. Yet the Rome which appears on network, cable and satellite TV documentaries is still more often inspired by Ben-Hur than Francis Haverfield: the concept of Romanization has hardly made an impact on the way the Roman past is portrayed, let alone cultural bricolage or creolization theory. The gap between academic and popular discourses on the empire yawns ever wider. If we agree that we have a responsibility to engage with others outside our own ranks about our understandings of the past, then television remains for the moment one of the most powerful tools potentially at our disposal. How can we persuade television to give an airing to new conceptions of the Roman world?

1.4 Put a little less Romans into your life...

Tim Schadla-Hall

The image of what Roman Britain was may well be clear to Roman archaeologists, but I shall argue that the failure to create a challenging, or even ambiguous image of Roman Britain means that the public in general have little idea of how to understand or indeed learn from Roman Britain. The use, for example of thatched roundhouses vs. reconstructed Roman gateways — or indeed even the existence of the Ermine Street Guard — has done little to explain or clarify the stereotypical images of Roman Britain in the minds of non-archaeologists. Using examples, I shall suggest how this gap in perception could be bridged, and could in turn result in a wider understanding of the ‘past as the present’.

2 The Roman Army in Context

The archaeology of the Roman army has long held a prominent place in both traditional accounts and popular perceptions of the Roman past. It is also an area that has, until recently, remained relatively under-theorised. However, new approaches to the army are being developed, just as important new data is also being generated in excavations, for instance at sites on Hadrian’s Wall. It therefore seems timely, following on from a session at TRAC99, to explore in depth some of the interpretative potential of material relating to Roman armies, in particular stressing the contextualisation of this material within the rest of Roman studies. This integration of often-isolated military studies within broader frameworks of ideas is essential to achieving a better
understanding of social relations, power dynamics, and a wide range of other issues in the Roman world.

This session thus invites papers which explore new angles on Roman military archaeology. Possible themes include landscapes of domination, control, and resistance; identity and its role in interactions (military and civilian identities, 'Roman' and other ethnic identities, gender identities, class identities); and perspectives on the social contexts of warfare and violence. The social significance of the Roman army, and the wide spectrum of data which pertains to its study, offers important possibilities for these and other approaches.

2.1 Medicine, Culture and Military Identification
Patricia A. Baker

Studies of medical care in the Roman army tend to concentrate on the soldiers as a homogeneous unit of people, rather than groups who came from different cultural backgrounds. I have recently argued, by looking at inscriptions and medical instruments found in auxiliary units, that Roman style health care was only accepted in certain units, mainly those from Gallia and Hispania. This argument suggests the possibility that soldiers from other areas were either retaining their own medical practices, rejecting Roman medicine, or possibly combining both. Thus, the soldiers were in some way maintaining their own cultural and bodily identities and beliefs about health care. To expand on this issue, it is the intention of this paper to look carefully at the depositional practices of medical tools in both legionary and auxiliary fortifications to see how soldiers in specific units viewed Roman style medical practices. In some fortifications instruments appear to have been deposited in a ritualistic manner, whilst in others more random deposition appears. From this we can examine how different soldiers in legionary and auxiliary units understood illness, bodily pollution and perceived the tools that were used for curing them. Furthermore, by juxtaposing the different auxiliary units (in general we know more about where they originated from than the legionary units) more specific cultural variations can be demonstrated in their attitudes towards their bodily identity. As medical care is culturally defined, an anthropological perspective on the Roman military is helpful in understanding its organisation and medical traditions.

2.2 Armies, Administrators and Exiles: Imperialism and Authority at the Edge of Empire
Garrick Fincham

Conquest is a messy business, and its aftermath can be difficult. Rome's conquest of Britain was no exception, but how was Imperial authority con-
structured after victory, and in the face of native resistance? How can we conceptually understand the experience of the first generation of Roman Administrators and Soldiers in Britain, and how did their actions and experiences influence the development of the early province?

The nature of military power, and its impact upon issues of co-operation and resistance, is at the heart of this paper. It will focus on conceptualising the nature of Roman Authority from the perspective of the Army and Imperial Officials backed by military power, in a context of cultural and political isolation. The way in which the use of such power was circumscribed by being on the periphery of the Roman world (geographically and politically) will be examined. The use of concepts of exile and marginality to conceptualise the ‘power’ side of colonial negotiation will be explored.

2.3 Identities in the Late Roman Army: Material and Textual Perspectives

Andrew Gardner

Do our material and textual sources of evidence for the construction and expression of identities in the later Roman army relate to the same kinds of social discourse? If not, what implications does this have for our understanding of these identities, and indeed for our uses of ‘evidence’ in a historical archaeology? This paper seeks to unravel some of the diverse strands of identity actively created by soldiers in the armies of the 4th and 5th centuries AD, while situating these issues within a crucial wider debate about the relationship between archaeology and history.

Different perspectives on identities in the army (ethnic, class, gender and occupational) are offered in literary works such as Ammianus' history, in documents such as the Abinnaeus Archive, and in various aspects of material culture (coinage, pottery, architecture, faunal remains etc.). These produce a complex picture of 'who soldiers were' in late antiquity which defies simple categorizations. In particular, one can contrast the images of some social and ethnic groupings as presented in classical literature with other forms of discourse, as represented in particular by archaeological data from Britain, but also by some documents. The implication is that historical archaeologies must be sensitive to context, and to variations between different kinds of texts (including material metaphors) and different kinds of materially-embedded practices (including writing). Working with these is more useful than arguing about who is ‘handservant’ to whom.
2.4 Religion and a soldier’s worship in Roman Carlisle
Blair Gormley

As the Roman army moved further north in Britain, the soldiers began establishing permanent forts and mixing with the local populations. In doing so, the soldiers grafted their religious beliefs with those of the natives. The Romans brought a large variety of Mediterranean, Eastern and Near Eastern gods with them, which they fused with the Celtic deities. This meant Roman soldiers worshipped not only Silvanus and Jupiter Optimus Maximus but also Belatucadrus Mars. In my paper I will be discussing the soldiers who were stationed near the ancient town of Luguvalium, modern Carlisle, and their religious life. Luguvalium was an important center of Romanization for the empire because not only did it eventually become the civitas capital of the Carvetii but also was the site of Stanwix, the Roman fort. The fort housed 1000 cavalry and acted as the supply depot and headquarters for the western part of Hadrian’s Wall. No one has yet studied in depth the particular assimilated deities and religious structures of a major town center such as Luguvalium. Such a study is important since the Romans occupied this area of Carlisle from the early AD 70s to the fall of Roman Britain.

2.5 Siege Works, Psychology and Symbolism
Gwyn Davies

Although the raising of siege works may have been a standard element of the repertoire of skills and techniques essential for the prosecution of warfare in the classical world, it would be a mistake to view the resulting structures in purely functionalist terms. Apart from the cogent military rationale that no doubt informed their deployment, siege works could also exert a more subtle influence both on the besieger as well as the besieged. This paper will seek to explore these ‘connotative’ aspects of siege work design and construction by emphasising their symbolic and psychological dimensions. Issues such as the assertion of power through monumentalism, the creation of insecurity through isolation and the erosion of identity by the appropriation of the familiar, accretionally-fashioned landscape, will be discussed in order to demonstrate the important contribution that the symbolically-constructed attack could make to overall operational success.

2.6 When is a ludus not a ludus? Looking at Chester’s military amphitheatre
Keith J Matthews

Following extensive excavations in the 1960s and full publication in 1976, one might be forgiven for thinking that we know all there is to know about the
amphitheatre in Chester. But are any of the published 'facts' correct? Do we need to excavate the unexcavated 60% of the monument to find out? Despite controversial proposals in the 1980s, it is clear that the academic case for further large-scale excavation on the southern part of the amphitheatre is not overwhelming. Indeed, many of the research questions relating to the Roman period that can be considered of 'national' or 'international' significance are capable of being addressed without fieldwork, through archive reassessment or other desk-based research. At this level, much of the fieldwork that might help answer various questions would best be targeted, small-scale work.

Conversely, the major questions for the sub-Roman, Saxon and medieval periods are probably best addressed through large-scale excavation, although the possibility remains that some of them might be answered through archive reassessment. Nevertheless, deposits of sub-Roman and Middle Saxon date have proved extremely difficult to identify at Chester and where identified elsewhere, their interpretation remains controversial. There is therefore a strong case for leaving such deposits in situ to preserve them for the future, when techniques will have been developed for dealing with them. However, there is no doubt that further excavation would produce new research questions that have not been considered here and their impact on our understanding of the amphitheatre cannot be assessed with current knowledge.

A recent rapid reappraisal of the evidence has led to the formulation of an extensive Research Agenda for Chester's amphitheatre that may have an impact on our understanding of amphitheatres in military contexts across the Empire. Many of the research questions that can be posed do not require large-scale intervention; instead, a multidisciplinary is called for, involving contributions not just from archaeologists, but also from Classicists, ancient historians and re-enactment groups. Work has already begun on a reassessment of the 1960s archives and its integration with earlier small-scale work and recent evaluations. The preliminary results are encouraging: without even putting a spade into the ground, we can increase our understanding of the stratigraphic sequence and highlight anomalies in the existing model of development.

2.7 The rôle of the army in the monetization of the Roman Empire

Constantina Katsari

The use of ancient coinage is normally connected with the payment of the troops and the expeditions of the army. The Roman army was characterized as the main force that facilitated the monetization of the empire. Since the legions as well as the auxiliaries were stationed mostly near the borders, we should anticipate an increased number of coins coming from these areas. Although the abundance of coin finds and coin hoards from the northern
frontier might suggest that the soldiers probably were responsible for the extensive use of money, the lack of adequate numismatic evidence from the Eastern frontier suggests the opposite. Therefore, we should take into consideration not only the role of the army but also the intensity of commercial activities as well as the degree of urbanisation of the northern provinces in order to adequately explain the monetization of the Roman empire.

3 General Session

3.1 Animal Iconographies: Metaphor, Meaning and Identity (or Why Chinese Dragons Don't Have Wings)

Miranda Aldhouse Green

This paper presents a hypothesis concerning a particular group of images belonging principally to Roman Gaul, but with their genesis in the Iron Age past, namely the iconography of the hybrid human/stag figure, sometimes identified as ‘Cernunnos’. It is proposed here that such images represent liminoid states of being for which the metaphor of the stag is considered appropriate within a given socio-religious context. In support of this argument, there is a body of archaeological evidence to suggest that deer were perceived as marginal creatures, perhaps because of their ambiguous wild/domestic status.

The paper seeks to establish that Gallo-Roman iconography, such as that of the antlered anthropomorphic figures, may represent not gods but people, individuals who may have occupied trans-boundary positions within their communities. Analogies with the religious traditions of certain present-day societies, particularly hunter-gatherer groups in circumpolar regions, point to the presence of hybrid human/animal expression as associated with ritual — perhaps even shamanistic — practice, the duality reflective of belonging to both earthworld and the spirit world. Indeed, close scrutiny of certain of the Gallo-Roman antlered figures reveals that they appear to represent humans wearing masks or headdresses rather than depictive of genuinely monstrous beings. A model that interprets ‘hybrid’ creatures as people wearing animal costume might be applicable beyond the stag/human dyad to embrace images involving other animals, which may likewise depict metaphoric transitionality.

The stag/human iconography of Iron Age and Gallo-Roman Europe has to be recognised as part of a very specific grammar or currency of meaning, predicated upon context. Such a schema is analogous to the discrepant manner in which the generic image of the dragon is represented in different cultural perspectives, the physicality of the creature being dependent upon its meaning within the society to which it belongs: Welsh dragons have wings, Chinese dragons do not.
3.2 Retail location in Roman Britain
Ardle Mac Mahon

This paper is an exploration into a theory of geographical retail location in the towns of Roman Britain. Although some passing remarks have been made concerning the positioning of tabernae there has yet been no attempt to explain the possible factors that may have influenced the decision to locate on any particular site. In this paper contemporary geographical studies have been used to support the development of suitable models to explain the development of tabernae in Roman Britain. This is not an attempt to be wantonly anachronistic but to demonstrate that theories of retail geography planning offer an account of the broad factors affecting retail growth and change and also provide information on the processes by which shops came into existence. Such discussions have been absent from urban studies in Roman Britain. The main hypothesis used in these studies is that retailing is an evolutionary process and similar developments can be observed in the tabernae of Roman Britain. Despite the inherent difficulties in such a method the simple fact still remains, which is common to both the ancient and modern retailer, is that decisions had to be made and these include shop location and other decisions both great and small.

3.3 Diversity of regional resistance to central places
Ralph Haussler

The creation of central places and Rome's deliberate re-foundation of indigenous settlements as colonia and municipia throughout the Roman Empire profoundly effects pre-existing socio-economic patterns. The imposition of new cult centres and the centralisation of political decision-making necessitate processes of change, whose disruptive nature rarely seems visible to us. Underneath the apparent homogeneity of Roman urbanism, there are hidden agendas of resistance and accommodation: there is a multitude of regional approaches to adapt existing social networks and to re-define existing ideologies into the wider structures of imperial hierarchies and ideologies.

3.4 An Archaeology of Food: A Case study from Roman Britain
Gillian Hawkes

Animal bones have in the past been studied in isolation of other artefacts which would have been intimately associated with them, such as ceramic vessels and plants. This study aims to get beyond isolated finds studies and aims towards a holistic study of groups of artefacts which would have made sense in past societies. This is of particular relevance if we want to study
food rather than the different components of a meal separately. Thus this paper will present a methodology in which the artefacts associated with a meal are studied in a socially meaningful way.

In this study it is important that the theoretical framework not only informs the interpretation but also the recording and analysis stage. Therefore the way a site is recorded for re-analysis is directly based on the model and the criteria for analysis which have been established. The informing theory behind this work also aims to get beyond a single grand theory being used and is based upon different strands of post-colonial theory, such as discrepant perspective, ethnicity and hybridisation.

A second strand to this paper will be highlighting the points set out above with a case study from Roman Britain. In this questions such as how was food prepared and consumed and what role did food play in maintaining or adapting to ‘Roman’ material culture; or how ‘Roman’ are so-called typically ‘Roman’ artefacts will be posed. This study aims to get beyond simplistic assumptions about species proportions and fabric analysis but will consider these artefacts in a holistic and theoretically informed framework. It will also address amongst other issues how different the Roman period actually was from the preceding period and if this can be traced through a study of food.

3.5 Of Lumberjacks, Logdrivers, and Brickstamps: Understanding the Tiber River as Infrastructure

Shawn Graham

It is commonly asserted that the Tiber was the means by which the City of Rome was supplied with the majority of that most basic of Roman building materials: brick. However, in considering the relatively small size of the Tiber, the amount of brick consumed in Rome, Ostia and the other population centres in the Valley, and the amount of other produce that may have been travelling along its course, the river as highway ought to have had its fair share of traffic jams. How was this traffic regulated? Moreover, given that works of ancient economic history commonly cite cost ratios to affirm the superiority of riverine shipping to that of land, what does it take in the first place to make a river suitable for commerce? How do we understand the river as a human artefact?

In the early 19th century, the Ottawa river in Eastern Canada was opened for the first time to large scale trade, which by and large consisted of building materials (primarily timber). A study of this well documented era — which it should be noted is not a steam-powered industrial one — sheds interesting light on both the mechanics of trade itself, and the process of ‘taming’ a river. In the context of the Tiber, this ethnographic parallel suggests a far more complex role for the river than as simply a conduit funnelling materials to Rome.

11
4 The Identities of Romano-British Artefacts

How and to what extent did people in Roman Britain express their identity through the material culture available to them? Is research on these matters conditioned by the fineness of the recording employed?

This session seeks to examine the theoretical basis of object-based research and highlight the potential benefits and pitfalls of studying artefacts in Romano-British archaeology. Examples should be drawn from context level analysis as much as site-level analysis. It is assumed that different sections of society had access to different material cultures, but it is still not clear whether these were used to distinguish and reinforce the status of social, economic or ethnic groups. Ethnicity in particular is again being an issue under debate, although at the present time there remains a gap between theory and practice. The scope of this session is intended to be wide to account for the range and variety of the theories and methodologies currently in use, yet the fundamental question must be to what extent can archaeology explore the identity and status of the Romano-British population through artefact assemblages.

4.1 Light and Dark in Roman Britain

Hella Eckardt

The notion that identity is constructed and negotiated through the use and experience of objects and that social identity encompasses a complex range of self-perceptions and allegiances, is now widely accepted in theoretical archaeology. Identity is, however, still often seen as somewhat static and fixed rather than as dynamic and subject to change.

In contrast, I would argue that identities are continuously created and reworked by people, often through the active use of material culture. Time and change are therefore factors which ought to be taken into account when examining the relationship between objects and social identity.

This paper will examine the changing social role of lighting equipment in Roman Britain. Although the function — and to some extent the technology — of lighting equipment stayed the same during the Roman period, there is significant change in the social identity of the people using it. Explaining the changes in lamp usage purely in terms of a Roman-Native divide is clearly too simplistic and detailed contextual analysis can reveal much more complex patterns.
4.2 The Romanization of the Body: changing identities in the Later Iron Age and Early Roman period in the territories of the Catuvellauni and the Trinovantes

Gillian Carr

This paper seeks to examine and follow the change in identity of two neighbouring but rival Iron Age tribal groups, the anti-Roman Trinovantes of Essex and the pro-Roman Catuvellauni of Hertfordshire, as they underwent 'Romanization' and entered the early Roman period. I suggest that the change in tribal and personal identity was reflected in changing attitudes to the human body and, thus, personal appearance. I also examine whether the archaeological record backs up the traditionally accepted political stance of these people.

Written Roman sources, coinage, native art and certain artefacts in the archaeological record such as hairpins, razors, brooches and toilet instruments indicate that during the Iron Age, people groomed and adorned themselves in a different way to the Romans and also had different concepts of hygiene and beauty. The classical literature suggests that, in the Iron Age, men decorated their bodies with woad or tattoos, wore moustaches and lime-washed their hair, brushing in back to resemble a horse's mane. Roman men, on the other hand, were clean shaven, wore their hair short, and used nail-cleaners, ear scoops and tweezers to keep themselves well groomed. Many of these characteristics of 'Romanization' were adopted by the indigenous population during the later Iron Age and early Roman period. This paper thus examines personal, tribal and ethnic identity by cataloguing the bodily practices of grooming, hair manipulation, body painting/tattooing and jewellery wearing of people in two neighbouring tribal territories. Through the examination of how these practices changed through time I have been able to explore the corresponding change in bodily attitudes.

While brooches increase in number during the conquest period, hairpins began to be used soon after the conquest, and toilet instruments became more popular in the late first century and early second century. I argue that, through time, people were committing more time, care and attention to ever smaller details of the daily regimen, especially in the region of the face, hair and hands, to maintain their appearance. I argue that what has previously been termed 'Romanization' can be better understood as a process whereby groups of people from different areas made different cultural choices from the same repertoire of material culture to structure their ethnic identities, whether tribal, local or individual. Sometimes this choice of artefacts was deliberately in opposition to their neighbours and rivals. In cases where the choice of identity was native well into the Roman period, I have asked whether this was due to what I term 'covert but active' resistance, a form of silent rebellion against the Romans. Alternatively, it may have been due
to a retention of identity for its own sake because tribal identity was still an important concept to the indigenous population after conquest.

I conclude by arguing that each group of people would have understood these artefacts in different ways, imbued them with different meanings according to who they were and what identities they wanted to express, and incorporated them into pre-existing native social practices. As these practices would have had their roots in the later Iron Age, I conclude that there was no ‘Romanization of the body’ as such.

4.3 Wroxeter and the (Ir)relevance of Rome
Roger White

The Wroxeter Hinterland Project set out to characterise Romanization within Wroxeter’s hinterland primarily, but by no means exclusively, through the record of material culture recovered in fieldwalking and excavation. In doing so, the project has had to characterise the pre-Roman culture of the Cornovii to assess the impact of the Roman period on the tribe. It has also attempted to follow these changes through into the medieval period to see if they lasted. The result has been a benchmark survey that allows us to view the Romanization of the Cornovii for what it was: a transient and largely irrelevant event in the long term. The phenomenon of the area’s aceramic culture, for example, is merely highlighted by the short-lived periods of intense pottery use restricted to the later first to mid third century, and the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Matching the recovered pattern of use and discard of material culture to the archaeological record of settlement at all levels produces a stark contrast. The dense settlement in the lowlands, known primarily from aerial survey, is barely hinted at in the record of material culture, whereas the thriving urban population at Wroxeter shows a common level of material culture with the other major towns of Roman Britain. How, then, can we characterise the Cornovii? In what ways do they differ from the other regions of Britain and how meaningful are these variations and patterns?

4.4 Small Finds: Problems and Possibilities
Kelly Spradley

Although there has been growing recognition of the great possibilities small finds provide for the analysis of identity and other related issues, there remain some major obstacles to be overcome. If finds are to be used to their maximum potential, there must be acceptance that the need for meaningful studies is paramount. Comparative analyses among sites, regions and provinces are necessary to identify general patterns in the record, which may be used as springboards for more detailed studies. The practical issues faced
when attempting such an examination are daunting, especially when multiple aspects of identity such as status and gender are taken into account.

This paper will utilise recent research on the assemblages of a group of villas surrounding Verulamium to illustrate the potential, and indeed problems, associated with finds and identity. Foremost among these is the need for a classification system, which is broadly applicable for most sites, whilst simultaneously being flexible enough to account for modern developments in theory and regional variation. Associated with this is the need for an examination of the aspects of identity more readily accessed through finds, rather than merely an analysis of Romanization.

4.5 Bare arms and veiled heads
Hilary Cool

Using artefacts to explore a past society requires many categories of evidence to come together. The basic building blocks of dated typologies must be in place. These will have required a sufficient body of artefacts to have been found in well-dated contexts. For anything other than intra-site comparisons there has to be a considerable body of published assemblages available to work with. The quality of the publication of these must be high, both for the site narrative and for the finds themselves. These are all very exacting requirements even before problems such as differential survival of particular materials are considered.

This paper will explore such pleasures and pitfalls when using artefacts to examine questions of identity and belief. It will do this through an examination of the appearance of Romano-British women as demonstrated by the ornaments they chose to wear. It will concentrate on hair pins and bracelets as these are common site finds, show interesting spatial and chronological patterns, and directly reflect appearance. It will be shown that these can tell us many interesting stories, not least about the spread of Christianity at the end of the 4th century.

4.6 Material Culture (complex and dynamic), desperately seeks Negotiation with Roman-Briton (with identity crisis)
Peter Guest

The study of material culture and group identity requires the application of subtle, three-dimensional methodologies. This paper suggests that many of the current approaches to identity are methodologically naive and that a greater depth and meaning to interpretation can be achieved only through an improved appreciation of the third archaeological dimension, stratigraphy.
While the spatial analysis of artefact distributions is a good preface to understanding past societies, this approach is too superficial to deal satisfactorily with complex issues such as group identity. What is required is a greater awareness of the key role deposition can play as an echo of the social structures that determined how artefacts were used and lost by the Romano-British population. Understanding the complex processes of deposition represents our best opportunity for identifying how the available material culture was used to define past identities. In reality this should not be too difficult as all small finds are recorded in meticulous detail on site, yet few archaeologists take the opportunity to exploit this wealth of information.

The coin assemblage from the rural settlement at Kempston, Bedfordshire, is chosen as a case-study to illustrate how a greater appreciation of stratigraphy can refine the interpretation of use and loss during the Roman period. The conclusion is that artefacts cannot be studied in isolation from the archaeological sequence.

5 Constructing Childhood in the Roman World

The latter half of this century has seen a radical overhaul in our understanding of the concept of childhood. Initiated by developments in history, it is now largely accepted that the concept of childhood has not remained static over time, but has shifted in relation to different historical and cultural contexts. Only recently, however, have archaeologists become aware that childhood is a culturally specific construct. Over the last decade feminist and gender inspired approaches in archaeology have provided an impetus for the investigation of childhood in the past. It has been argued that the neglect of children within archaeological discourse is the result of the same androcentric biases that had previously served to marginalise women. Until recently archaeological interest has gone little further than noting the probability of high mortality rates among children and their under-representation at cemetery sites, or drawing attention to the more sensationalist practices of sacrifice and infanticide. Children are portrayed as dependent and passive, not thought to play any role in the formulation of their own identities. Current research has now however emphasised the importance of children both socially and economically in the structuring and functioning of other societies in the past. Historians of the Roman world have profitably used documentary and epigraphic evidence to explore the changing construction of the child but archaeological evidence has been little exploited in this regard. This session therefore aims to explore the ways in which we might identify children in the archaeological record of the Roman period and to draw together strands of evidence relating to infants and children, both documentary and material, so that the social identities of the child and its roles within the cultural setting of the Roman world may be investigated.
5.1 Playing Dead: implications of mortuary evidence for the social construction of childhood in Roman Britain

Rebecca Gowland

The examination of past funerary ritual has provided archaeology with a rich source of evidence for the reconstruction of past social identities. Skeletal analyses, together with an examination of cultural variables from the burial contexts (including factors such as body position, spatial data, grave goods etc), have yielded important insights into the symbolic representations of past social identity and organization. The general under-representation of children within cemeteries, however, has meant that children have largely been neglected from such analyses. This paper hopes to go some way towards redressing the balance, through an examination of the burial treatment of children within the Late Roman cemetery of Lankhills and a comparison with other fourth century cemetery sites. This study suggests that when one examines childhood within the context of the life course as a whole, age transitions beyond the adult: child dichotomy that characterises the majority of studies may be identified. Furthermore, it can be shown that age identity is an important aspect of the social persona, interacting in a fluid and dynamic way with other facets of social identity such as gender and status.

5.2 Seeing is believing? Constructing Images of Children in the Roman World

Janette McWilliam

Studies in the social history of the ancient world over the last twenty or so years have suggested strongly that we need to reassess how we approach the concept of childhood in past eras. ‘Childhood’ as an institution cannot be pinned down and categorized easily, simply because it is a culturally specific construct that differs in varying historical, social and cultural settings. This paper will examine the iconographical constructions of children in the Roman world in the Early Empire, focussing particularly on images that were accompanied by text. If one terms ‘childhood’ as the period before a person began to fulfil ‘adult’ duties, that is, before one began to be part of the economic or political workforce, or when one began the process of biological reproduction, then childhood becomes a period negotiated individually between parent(s) and child, owner(s) and child or guardian(s) and child. This study will focus on how visual representations of children were created for public/private display by different social groups, and will examine how these groups wished children to be viewed in different social and cultural settings.
5.3 Constructing childhood on Roman children's sarcophagi

Janet Huskinson

This paper will look at images of children and childhood on carved marble sarcophagi made for children in and around the city of Rome from late first to early fourth century AD. Made largely for elite social groups and working for the most part within the androcentric iconographical traditions formulated for adults, these sarcophagi do provide useful insights into the extent and ways in which childhood was seen as a particular developmental stage in life. For instance, some scenes show childhood as a period of socialisation towards the values of the adult male world, whereas others project it as a time of innocence/inexperience. The paper will concentrate on images which present such differentiated views of children and their social identity, and will assess their value as sources for the construction of Roman childhood.

5.4 Unpicking a Myth: the infanticide of female and disabled babies in classical antiquity

Eleanor Scott

The recent publicity accorded to the Princeton philosopher Peter Singer has made much of his advocacy of the infanticide of disabled babies. Well, hey, the ancient Greeks did it, he says. The Spartans and Athenians did indeed practice infanticide, but to argue that this was done in order to cull 'unwanted' female and disabled infants is to misunderstand the Spartans' concerns with the social construction of the body and the Athenians' concerns with preservation of household and clan groups. Infanticide, and the subsequent deposition of the infant body, were acts of cultural negotiation, and involved the killing of male, female, 'normal' and disabled neonates. Further, the evidence suggests that newborns with visible defects were accepted, raised and cared for. Archaeologists have identified special drinking cups, made from fired clay, which were designed to allow infants with cleft palates to take milk. Studies of nicknames have revealed many people were accepted as having deformities which would have been apparent at birth, such as club feet and facial deformities.

It is also a myth that infanticide is the story of the killing of the female. The ancient Athenians killed male babies as well as female. The ancient Carthaginians made great play out of sacrificing wealthy male babies and children, and recent DNA testing of mass infant skeletal deposits from Roman contexts suggests that male infants may be represented more than female infants in these probable contexts of infanticide. The decision to kill a female or a male baby on the grounds of its sex is intimately bound up with culture-specific constructions of gender, kinship and economic structures, such as dowries and patterns of inheritance. We should presumably
approach the issue of the infanticide of disabled infants with a similar regard for the complexities of the archaeological and historical evidence, and not confuse prejudicial interpretation with some kind of mythical historical tradition.

5.5 Infants, cemeteries and communities in the provincial Roman world

John Pearce

It is a commonplace that Roman cemeteries do not contain the expected proportion of infant burials. This absence and the more common occurrence of infant burials in settlement contexts has been considered evidence that infants were considered as neither full social beings nor full members of communities. In fourth century AD cemeteries in Roman Britain however an increase in infant numbers has been observed, in particular in cemeteries which have been argued to have other evidence of Christian burial practices. It has been proposed that in Christian communities neonates and young infants awaiting baptism or recently baptised were considered fully human and deserving formal burial. This proposition implies significant changes in conceptions of infancy in later antiquity, but this paper aims to consider more fully some theoretical and methodological issues raised by the argument. Through a more systematic examination, using a larger sample of evidence from published and unpublished cemeteries, doubt is cast on the validity of these observations and alternative scenarios are outlined.