



New Research on Finds from South and South-Western Britain

Abstracts

Alyson Tanner : Finds from three local sites in the Pitt Rivers Collection at Salisbury Museum

Salisbury Museum holds the Pitt Rivers Wessex collection which comprises objects acquired during the last 20 years of Pitt Rivers' life and includes finds from excavations on Rushmore, his 27,000-acre estate on Cranborne Chase. There are about 15,000 artefacts in the collection plus numerous boxes of ceramics.

In 2014, the Museum was given funding for the 'Finding Pitt Rivers' project so that the artefacts could be catalogued and put on to Salisbury Museum's website. The Museum also holds a copy of Pitt Rivers' privately published excavation reports, and this together with easier access to the objects means that we can start to rethink Pitt Rivers' interpretation of sites in the light of modern archaeological ideas.

Three of the Roman sites excavated by Pitt Rivers at Rushmore were Woodcutts, Rotherley and Iwerne. Woodcutts was a settlement, Rotherley was a farmstead and at Iwerne, there was a villa. All are located on earlier Iron Age sites and are close to the ancient ridgeway track that links south Devon to the north Norfolk coast.

The artefacts from the sites vary from everyday objects like agricultural tools and spindle whorls to some lovely brooches, including La Tene I as well as later disc and P-shaped types. There are also furniture fittings and plaster from the villa as well as ceramics and coins. This presentation will look at what the artefacts can tell us about the sites in their landscape setting, possible connections between them and the people who lived there, and the economy of the study area.

Sophie Hawke : What a Relief!: an assessment of the Romano-British relief fragment found in Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire.

Situated at the edge of the Cotswolds, the Wiltshire town of Bradford on Avon is best known for its Saxon Church and Tithe Barn. However, there was once a prehistoric hillfort at Budbury, to the north, with a Roman villa complex and possible baptistery nearby. Few Roman finds have been discovered in the centre of the town itself, particularly south of the river.

However, in 2005, during renovations at a local restaurant in the town centre, a fragment of relief was discovered. It was identified as Romano-British by Dr Martin Henig and described as showing a mater (mother goddess), possibly Cuda, (the name which accompanies a similar relief from Daglingworth, Gloucestershire), with her attendant genii (godlings), although two of the usual three genii are missing. The fragment was subsequently donated to Bradford on Avon Museum, where it was put on display but it has not previously been published.

This paper will examine the fragment in detail and compare it with other similar reliefs showing a mater and genii found locally in the Cotswold region. Where might this Bradford on Avon fragment have originated? Might the relief be evidence for a local, rural cult?

Bruce Eagles : Penannular brooches in post-Roman Wessex

In the fifth century some male Britons in eastern Wessex are identifiable through their large zoomorphic penannular brooches, which were worn singly, and apparently as a mark of rank, to fasten the cloak, in the Roman military tradition. There are six complete examples - from a Roman settlement, the sacred spring at Bath (an enamelled brooch), a Roman villa, a hill-fort and an 'Anglo-Saxon' cemetery - and two others are represented by their pins. It may or may not be significant that none of these brooches is yet recorded from either the *civitas Durotrigum* or the *civitas Durotrigum Lendeniensem*, but in the sixth-century the type G penannular brooch appears to have originated in north Somerset and may have then served to identify the local elite in that area.

Richard Henry, Ruth Pelling and Michael Grant: The Pewsey hoard of late Roman vessels: wrapping, contents and time of deposition

In October 2014 metal detectorists discovered a hoard of vessels intricately packed near Pewsey. Fewer than 30 Roman copper-alloy vessel hoards are known from Britain and the majority are antiquarian discoveries where the find spot and method of deposition cannot be further analysed. This find, therefore, offers an important insight into the deposition of such hoards. Inside the inner vessels plant remains, presumed to be packing material, were preserved by mineral desiccation due to copper corrosion products. The composition of the plant remains show that the hoard was packed during mid-late summer using vegetation (notably grasses, knapweed and bracken) derived from the local field margins or roadsides. The wider environmental setting is likely to have also included grassland and some arable fields. Pollen analysis from soil samples within the vessels shows that the local environment (at the time of packing) consisted of areas of disturbed vegetation, as might be found by ditches, roads, paths or rivers. The exceptional preservation of packing material provides an extremely rare insight into, not only the environment of the area, but also the behaviours of the people who buried the hoard and the care they took to protect the contents. Although the Pewsey objects are Roman in form, radiocarbon dating of the packing material has indicated that the hoard was buried at the very end of the Roman period or early post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon period. This suggests that the hoard could have been buried in a period of instability, conflict and change or was contemporary with the community associated with the nearby early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Blacknall Field. The initial analysis of the hoard raises a range of interesting questions about the deposition of copper-alloy Roman hoards as well as the value in prompt sampling for the recovery of botanical evidence from metal objects.

Owen Humphries : Artefacts at work: The tools from Roman London

The Museum of London contains one of the largest collections of Roman tools in Europe. Antiquarian zeal, decades of commercial excavation, and the excellent preservation of iron in the Walbrook valley, have created a collection of around 900 objects. This paper presents the results of a three-year collaborative PhD project between the Museum of London and University of Reading to identify and analyse these tools, many for the first time.

The tools represent a range of ancient activities, from delicate metalworking to hole-digging. Several types of tools may be unique in the country. By studying these objects as evidence of past practise, we can get a uniquely everyday look at the working, social, cultural, and perhaps even religious life of an ancient city.

By comparing these tools to those from elsewhere in the country, and to Continental collections, we can get a sense of London's place as a Roman, British, or European city; as both a production centre and a unique cultural setting.

Although the majority of the tools are unstratified, around 250 have good contextual information. By examining the context of deposition, we can get a better picture of how and when iron artefacts left circulation and entered the archaeological record, as rubbish, by accident, and as ritual deposits.

Miles Russell : The Face of Roman Britain

Britain was a fully functioning part of the Roman Empire for nearly four centuries and yet the apparent absence of portrait sculpture here stands in marked contrast to other western Roman provinces such as Gaul or Spain. Why is this? Perhaps Britain's population remained unaffected by Roman culture or the provincial

administration lacked the resources to publicly display their 'Roman-ness'. Recent work on damaged Roman sculpture, misidentified, misunderstood or simply forgotten, buried deep in the stores of many a British museum, has shown that there was in fact a large number of marble and bronze portraits in the province, most of which depicted emperors. By understanding these, a whole new 'portrait' of Roman Britain emerges.

Stephen Greep : More Regionality? Weapon Terminal 'spoons' from Frocester Court, Gloucestershire and Needle Cases from Lankhills, Winchester, Hampshire

The regional distribution of artefact types has received increasing attention, particularly following Hella Eckardt's *Objects and Identities* publication. This short contribution looks at two object types with a distinct geographic distribution. The first is a small group of flat bowled 'spoon shaped' objects with their terminals decorated with weapons – swords, spears and axes. They are a fourth century type with a tight distribution from Wroxeter to Frocester Court and south east Wales.

The second is an even more interesting group of objects – needle cases utilising sheep metapodia. Previously identified as handles, xrays of an example from Moyencourt, France, and Lankhills demonstrates that these retained iron needles. The distribution of the British examples is predominantly western – striking in that because of soil conditions the majority of objects in bone and antler occur in the eastern part of the province. A possible late fourth/fifth century date makes these finds all the more interesting.

Tatiana Ivleva : Glass adornments event horizon?': In search for the origins of Roman-period glass bangles in southern Britain

The paper revisits the emergence of glass bangles in southern Britain and suggests that their genesis should be seen as a part of changing attitudes towards the body in the Late Iron Age Britain rather than, as usually assumed, an one-off event starting after the Claudian invasion in AD 43. By placing the bangles' genesis into a wider context of material culture development, societal and political changes in Late Iron Age to Roman period transition in the south, the paper shows that bracelets' emergence is an expected result of the convoluted processes and amalgamation of various cultures in this transitional period.

The start of the production of the seamless glass annulars in Britain corresponds with the decrease in the circulation of these glass adornments on the Continent. In the late first century BC, the Continental glass bracelets gradually stopped being produced, yet the craft re-appears in Britain, which had no history of glass bracelets' production prior to the mid-first century AD. The presentation attempts to answer the question as to where the inspiration and skills for the British glass bracelets came from by discussing the biography of a glass bracelet craft. Earlier research into their distribution and typology suggested that British examples stand out in their decorative and production technique compared to bracelets made on the Continent. However, close inspection of the British glass bracelet fragments revealed that some types of British bangles widespread in the south were developed directly from the Continental La Tène ones.