

# Editorial

The loss of so many senior Roman archaeologists marks out 1994 as an exceptional year. Notices for our Vice-Presidents George Boon and Kenneth St Joseph follow this editorial which also offers an opportunity to pay tribute to the work of two other leading scholars, Michael Jarrett and Ralph Merrifield.

Michael Jarrett, who died aged 60 last November, had been Professor of Archaeology at the University of Wales at Cardiff since 1978. He had first been appointed there as lecturer in 1960. Although his doctoral work was on Roman North Africa, he is best known for his revision of Nash-Williams, *The Roman Frontier in Wales* (1969), to which his own investigations of Roman forts in Wales made an important contribution, and for his excavations of the Iron Age and Roman farmstead at Whitton in Glamorgan (M.G. Jarrett and S. Wrathmell, *Whitton: an Iron Age and Roman Farmstead in South Glamorgan* (1981)). He also carried out important work in the medieval period, notably at West Whelpington, a deserted medieval village in Northumberland and, more recently, at Durham Cathedral. It is hoped that sufficient was completed to eventually publish the promised Part Two of his long-awaited paper 'Non-legionary troops in Roman Britain: Part One. The units', *Britannia* xxv (1994), 35–78.

Ralph Merrifield, who died aged 81 in January 1995, is remembered above all for his work on Roman London. Appointed first as Assistant Keeper at the Guildhall Museum in the City of London in 1950, he later became Deputy Director of the new Museum of London, which resulted from the merger of the Guildhall and the London Museum in 1975. As Senior Keeper, with his profound knowledge and understanding of Roman London, he was responsible for the Roman Gallery of the new museum. Of comparable importance was his synthesis of the archaeology of Roman London, first published as *The Roman City of London* in 1965, and subsequently revised and extended as *London City of the Romans* (1983). He also played a major part in the setting up of the Department of Urban Archaeology (now the Museum of London Archaeology Service) in 1973. This organisation and its successor body have revolutionised the execution and publication of rescue archaeology in London. A less well known aspect of his work was his interest in magic and religion, which saw expression in the publication of *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (1987).

In paying tribute to four outstanding scholars of the Roman world, but above all of Roman Britain, we recognise the particular loss that it has created in the study of the military aspects of frontier studies. Although the latter remains a major interest for some scholars, for very few indeed does it now represent their sole research interest. However, while there may have been a significant shift in interest away from the study of the Roman army and frontiers over the last two decades, there has been no detectable overall decline in the study of the archaeology of the Roman world. It is especially pleasing, therefore, to note the appointment of a distinguished Romanist, Roger Wilson, to the newly established Chair of Archaeology at the University of Nottingham. While he enjoys a distinguished reputation beyond our shores for his authoritative work on Roman Sicily (notably R.J.A. Wilson, *Sicily under the Roman Empire. The Archaeology of a Roman Province 36 B.C.–A.D. 535* (1990)), at home he has long been known for his *A Guide to the Roman Remains in Britain*, which has seen two editions and now been in print for some twenty years.

Further evidence of encouraging developments within the sphere of Roman archaeology is provided by the Society's initiative in establishing a conference of Roman archaeology which is being held for the first time at the University of Reading in the spring of 1995. It is very much hoped that this will be the first of many such events where it will be possible to learn about the latest developments in our subject area, both in this country and abroad, and in the company of academics, amateurs, professionals, students, and teachers. The intention at present is to hold the conference at different venues every other year, although the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference and special interest groups such as the Roman Finds Group will continue to meet each year.

With the shift in emphasis towards policies of conservation *in situ*, rather than the recording by excavation and other fieldwork prior to development, there has been a conspicuous decline in the volume of significant excavation carried out each year in Britain. Thus it is particularly pleasing to note what must undoubtedly be the most important development of the year for Romano-British studies: the establishment of the Audrey Barrie Brown Memorial Fund by The Roman Research Trust which is based in Wiltshire. Although the Trust has an obligation to support work in the county of Wiltshire and neighbouring counties to the west, archaeologists working anywhere in Britain are eligible for grant aid. The Trust gives priority to supporting work in three areas: excavation and other archaeological fieldwork, including post-excavation; museums and conservation of sites and structures; educational projects, including summer schools, adult education, training schemes, and conferences. It is very much hoped that grants from the Trust will ensure that excavation, as one of the most important tools for research, will continue to make its mark in the advancement of our understanding of Roman Britain.

Although editorial policy will continue to emphasise *Britannia's* role as a journal of record, it is equally important for it to provide opportunities for the expression of well researched new ideas and syntheses. The Editor will be pleased to hear from anyone who is working on material which could be appropriate for publication here. There is no fixed timetable for submissions, but potential contributors should be aware that final decisions about the content of any one volume are generally taken in the November preceding publication.

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