

Carrott, post-Roman pottery by Cumberpatch and coins by Brickstock exemplify the wealth of information gained from this excavation. The book ends with an insightful review of the evidence by Wilson, which includes an intriguing glimpse into Norton and Malton in the early fifth century.

All in all, this book sets a high standard for the production of archaeological reports, and the publishers are to be congratulated on the very attractive presentation of this volume, which I fully recommend.

University of Hull
Peter.Halkon@outlook.com

PETER HALKON
doi: 10.1017/S0068113X24000084

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies

Roman Rural Settlement in Wales and the Marches: Approaches to Settlement and Material Culture Through Big Data. By L. Reynolds. BAR British series B670: Archaeology of Roman Britain Vol. 6. BAR Publishing, Oxford, 2022. Pp. xix + 177, illus. Price £46 (pbk). ISBN 9781407358963.

This volume represents an excellent and up-to-date academic assessment of the Roman period in Wales and neighbouring areas of England. It is useful for those already familiar with the region's Roman archaeology, but also suitable for scholars new to this area or period. Drawing upon the author's PhD, it represents an important step forward for the archaeology of a largely under-studied region. It also represents a significant contribution to wider settlement studies from this period, through innovative use and further analysis of existing 'Big Data' collected by the *Rural Settlement of Roman Britain* Project (<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/romangl/>), showcasing the value of academic research utilising such data-sets.

The monograph aims to move beyond traditional regional narratives which prioritise Roman military dynamics and relegate rural settlements to mere backdrop, stating in its abstract: 'this study seeks to refocus and move beyond a simplistic Roman/native opposition to present a more nuanced understanding of the nature and development of rural settlement during this period'. In this it is successful, forming a valuable update and different approach to previous syntheses (e.g. *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches*, Burnham & Davies 2011). By including the Marches of western England, it also avoids artificial divides formed by the modern national boundary upon data-sets and approaches.

The book's structure is clear and accessible to any reader, but particularly an academic audience, with an introduction stating its position within the wider field and a literature review discussing the archaeologies of the Iron Age (Chapter 2) and Roman period (Chapter 3). These form a concise and current narrative discussing wider British developments in later prehistoric and Roman archaeology, before identifying how these have influenced previous approaches to the study region, highlighting gaps in the knowledge base and the need for new approaches going beyond mere contextualisation for Roman military and urban sites. The following chapters (4 and 5) introduce the study's data-sets, derived primarily from *Rural Settlement of Roman Britain (RSRB)* but drawing upon other regional and national sources (including the Portable Antiquities Scheme). Settlement types, building forms and artefactual evidence are introduced critically, showing an understanding of the material needed for the study's further analysis. Also introduced here is the author's own methodology for quantification of ceramic evidence, building upon the data analysis from *RSRB* in order to better assess distribution and uses of, and engagement with, ceramic materials across the region.

The results are discussed via three clearly defined, well-structured themes: landscape, economy, and identities/socio-cultural practices, decreasing in scale from regional to site-level to individual. Chapter 6 represents a fluent critical discussion of the region's settlement landscapes, highlighting issues but nonetheless drawing out important regional variations spatially and over time. The following chapter's focus on economic developments also successfully draws out patterns in the rural economy and varying relationships with Roman supply networks and production, highlighting a variety of indigenous responses to the Roman presence. Chapter 8 confidently utilises artefactual data to discuss identity and socio-cultural practices through focus upon personal objects and dietary consumption. In thus mirroring the three broad themes chosen by *RSRB* for publication, the book is able to compare results with the original 'Big Data' evidence.

The final discussion (Chapter 9) effectively and succinctly draws the analysis together, placing it into the wider context and critically assessing both the project's results and the application of 'Big Data' for secondary projects. Its main conclusions concern regionality in settlement and material culture, and a variety of responses to Roman occupation and resulting developmental trajectories. The book's aim to move away from binary Romanisation arguments is consequently successful, linking back to the earlier theoretical discussion. It also acknowledges the gaps within its own scope (for instance, its focus on rural settlement naturally leading to an avoidance of military or urban sites, and prioritising of artefactual over ecofactual material) and that of the wider *RSRB*, putting forward useful suggestions for future work on both. A good number of illustrative and easy-to-understand maps, graphs and tables are found throughout the data analysis sections, essential support for the text. There is, however, a lack of other imagery (e.g. photographs of sites, landscapes or artefacts) that would further illustrate the narrative. Nevertheless, the text is well written and accessible. An Appendix comprises a full list of sites mentioned in the text, with helpful references back to the original data-set, while a comprehensive bibliography supports further reading into the subject.

This book is therefore a recommended read for anyone studying the late Iron Age and Roman periods in Britain, not just for its own study region but also other areas with rural settlement similarly neglected by previous archaeological research. For the specialist studying the archaeology of Wales, it represents an essential update and re-evaluation of the Roman period.

University of Edinburgh
Ian.Hardwick@ed.ac.uk

IAN HARDWICK
 doi: 10.1017/S0068113X24000096

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies

Roman Religion in the Danubian Provinces: Space Sacralisation and Religious Communication During the Principate (1st–3rd Century AD). By C. Szabó. Oxbow, Oxford & Philadelphia, 2022. Pp. xiii + 298, illus. Price £38. ISBN 9781789257830; 9781789257847 (eBook).

Following a monograph on the Sanctuaries of Roman Dacia (2018), Szabó, with this volume, expands his geographical scope to embrace the vast territories of the Danubian provinces, which include Reatia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dacia and the Moesias, while maintaining the same temporal focus to the period between the first and third centuries A.D.

The theoretical framework of the volume is permeated by the lived ancient religion approach, which focuses on action and agency of individuals and groups, while at the same time interjecting several elements of the current glocalisation debate. The evidence presented is mostly epigraphic and archaeological, mainly architectonic. The book is divided into six chapters.

The first introduces the Danubian region from both a geocultural perspective and a religious studies one. Starting with the fascination of nineteenth-century travellers with this 'mystical, exotic and ancient part of the continent', the Danube is framed via a brief discussion of the Latin sources, highlighting that the region did not have a unique macro-regional identity initially, but rather it developed historically from the early nineteenth century onwards. The second half of the chapter presents a concise overview of the history of Roman religion studies culminating, for the author, in Rupke's work on lived ancient religion. The methodological approach to the material is threefold: the lived ancient religion approach, for which the author suggests that the rich religious material from the Danubian provinces would provide a case study for its applicability; space sacralisation, where the interconnection between the three levels of macro-, meso-, micro-spaces structures different levels of religious communication expressed by different types of material evidence; and the glocalisation paradigm where 'religiosity' is customised based on the individuals and their interactions with varying levels of society changed after the Roman conquest.

The second chapter, 'Emerging Roman religion: the beginnings', illustrates examples of pre-Roman religious traditions dating back to the Bronze and Iron Ages, acknowledging their diversity also in the timing in which different areas of the Danube came under the Roman influence, resulting in a 'reinvention' of religious traditions.