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Roman Archaeology for Historians

Citation for published version:

Sauer, EW 2013, 'Roman Archaeology for Historians', *Classical Review*, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 570-572.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X13001248>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1017/S0009840X13001248](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X13001248)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:

Classical Review

Publisher Rights Statement:

© Sauer, E. W. (2013). Roman Archaeology for Historians. Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 63(2), 570-572.
[10.1017/S0009840X13001248](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X13001248)

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R. Laurence *Roman Archaeology for Historians*. Pp. xiv + 192, figs, ills, maps. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Paper, £21.99, US\$35.95 (Cased, £70, US\$120). ISBN: 978-0-415-50592-5 (978-0-415-50591-8 hbk).

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The Classical Review / Volume 63 / Issue 02 / October 2013, pp 570 - 572
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X13001248, Published online: 12 September 2013

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X13001248

How to cite this article:

Eberhard W. Sauer (2013). The Classical Review, 63, pp 570-572 doi:10.1017/S0009840X13001248

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All students and scholars of Greek religion will find much of interest here. The model of international, intergenerational and interdisciplinary collaborative inquiry on display in this volume is admirable and, one suspects, vital to the continued good health of the discipline.

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ARCHAEOLOGY FOR HISTORIANS

LAURENCE (R.) *Roman Archaeology for Historians*. Pp. xiv + 192, figs, ills, maps. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Paper, £21.99, US\$35.95 (Cased, £70, US\$120). ISBN: 978-0-415-50592-5 (978-0-415-50591-8 hbk).

doi:10.1017/S0009840X13001248

Are ‘historians’ a group of scholars quite distinct from ‘archaeologists’, yet in need of initiation into the latter discipline? L., Professor of Roman History and Archaeology at the University of Kent, has a foot in both camps and were there only scholars like him there would have been no need for the book. Yet, whilst the number of students taking joint honours in Archaeology and Ancient History may outnumber those studying Archaeology alone, those teaching them are mostly separated into archaeology and ancient history staff (p. x). Such divisions are far from minor and administrative. In L.’s own experience, in classics departments colleagues have often ‘regarded the archaeology department and archaeology as “the other” and at times “the enemy”’ – and vice versa (p. 23). This is the result of archaeologists and ancient historians feeling the need to define their discipline as distinct, for example ‘of archaeology as a discipline that need not include the textual record’, subject definition resting on a circular argument (pp. 162–3). These divisions understandably leave students, following common sense rather than the disciplinary doctrine, baffled. Why should relevant textual evidence not feature similarly prominently in an archaeology essay as in ancient history (p. 1)? Where not disregarded, beliefs in the primacy of one’s own evidence over that of the ‘other’ discipline, in terms of significance or reliability, are not uncommon (pp. 1–2, 40–2). One hopes that the book, primarily aimed at ancient historians, notably students, will achieve its aim that ‘the strong assertive boundaries between the two disciplines are pulled apart’ and a hybrid created (p. 163). Having myself observed further entrenchment of disciplinary boundaries since editing a book with a similar aim (*Archaeology and Ancient History: Breaking Down the Boundaries* [2004]), as well as the odd step towards integration, I am not optimistic.

A number of themes are introduced, often with specific case studies, and there is no space here to summarise them all. A particular highlight is the chapter ‘Peopling the Roman Past’. L. makes a persuasive case for how much historians can learn from taking on board human osteoarchaeology, on topics as diverse as average height, health, infanticide and migration. Indeed, the study of human remains is likely to revolutionise our understanding of ancient demography. Recent studies on the potentially high proportion of migrants in Italian and British cemeteries are thought-provoking, though we are only at the start. More samples are required to reveal regional differences in immigration rates and to calibrate the method. The concluding chapter, warning us that it is down to our own initiative to prevent the future from becoming the ‘Post-Archaeology Age’, in a time of funding cuts and risk-averse media offering little effective promotion, is timely and thought-provoking.

With few exceptions, most modern authors are spared from criticism, and one is sometimes left with the impression that their views are all equally valid. Whilst this is excellent diplomacy, is it true? L. aptly observes in his discussion of ‘Imperialism and Cultural Change’ that ‘archaeologists are conducting a debate in which the heritage of Britain is implicitly aligned with that of the colonized in the Third World and the heritage of modern Italy is implicitly aligned with that of the colonizer’ (p. 66). Yet such a comparison, which certainly underpins J. Webster’s hypothesis, initially not unfavourably reviewed (p. 67), that archaeology provides evidence for widespread resistance against Roman rule, is surely fundamentally flawed. Much of the evidence cited by Webster dates to the second and third centuries, a time when the Empire was no longer mainly ruled by Italians, armies in the provinces consisted almost exclusively of non-Italians, more and more provincials gained full citizenship and there is no longer any firm evidence for any armed resistance in most provinces. It is precisely because the Roman Empire, however brutal in crushing initial resistance, was more inclusive that it lasted longer than colonial empires, where ethnic minorities jealously held on to all the strings of power. Elsewhere, Webster’s desire to find evidence for resistance in ‘colonial’ art in Roman Britain (in S. Scott and J. Webster [edd.], *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art* [2003], pp. 24–51) rightly receives a more critical appraisal: ‘we are at a loss to define the “what” that is being resisted’ (p. 123).

The Roman Empire encompassed all of the Mediterranean for as long as four centuries and the majority of Europe’s population for half a millennium – not to mention its sizeable inland possessions in the Near East, Egypt and North Africa and its long history before and after holding dominant power status in the west. No scholar could have covered everything relevant in a book of some 200 pages, let alone presented it all in depth and detail. Criticism for what is missing would thus be unfair, especially as L. declares at the outset that he has no pretence of comprehensive coverage (p. ix) and as no other author attempting this feat could have avoided being selective. It may none the less be permissible to discuss what is and is not included, as prospective readers may wish to know what interests are catered for. Whilst a wide range of imperial possessions feature in the book, Italy and Britain clearly dominate, even if the theoretical approaches presented could be applied to other territories too. Furthermore, as the book is a taster for those unfamiliar with material culture but interested in the period, it is worth asking in what areas inclusion of archaeological evidence will allow us to move very significantly beyond what we can learn from literary sources on their own. Late Republican to early imperial industry causing pollution on a scale unparalleled in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, as shown by Greenland ice cores (*JRA* 22.1 [2009], pp. 47–9, 78–9, with references), is a prime example and perhaps worth discussing in a future edition.

The chapter on ‘Military and Civilian’, with Vindolanda as the key example, introduces the reader to key debates, for example the much-contested question to what extent women and children may have lived within Roman forts. Conventional wisdom is frequently challenged, though one wonders whether the hypothesis that bath houses at auxiliary forts may not have been available to non-citizen soldiers (pp. 102–4, cf. L. Revell, *Britannia* 38 [2007], 230–7, especially 231–4) is really persuasive, if the space available per garrison member was probably no less than in the average legionary bath house. The focus in this chapter is very much on social and economic history, and readers interested in warfare *per se*, for example the effectiveness and use of military equipment and defensive architecture, may feel a little short-changed. S. James aptly observed that Roman archaeologists in Britain are split into two groups, traditionalists pursuing military studies and modernisers mostly uninterested in warfare (*AJ* 159 [2002], 1–58); L. belongs to the latter. Indeed, notwithstanding the undeniable importance of the army’s economic impact and, even more so, its integration into local society, what made it militarily strong might have deserved more

attention, all the more so as there would have been no Empire without an army whose capabilities matched, or more than matched, those of its opponents.

The volume is too selective to provide us with an appreciation of the sheer size and cultural diversity of Rome's cosmopolitan mega-empire or the factors enabling it to reach such an extraordinary geographic extent and longevity. Yet, the book is much to be recommended to those believing that one category of evidence, written or material, should be studied in its own right. Disciplinary hybrids (p. 163), such as L. himself, taking advantage of the full range of evidence at our disposal, challenged and stimulated by ideas and approaches from more than one school of thought, have a much better chance significantly to advance our knowledge of the past.

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THE *TAZZA FARNESE*

BELOZERSKAYA (M.) *Medusa's Gaze. The Extraordinary Journey of the Tazza Farnese*. Pp. xx + 292, ills, map. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Cased, £14.99, US\$24.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-973931-8.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X1300125X

In terms of individual artefacts, the *Tazza Farnese* (Museo Nazionale di Napoli) does not have the wide and popular recognition that the Euphronios Krater or the Portland Vase, for instance, have today. This lack of interest may explain 'why no story of its adventures has been written, and why this extraordinary object, so prized by its illustrious owners for 2,000 years, has become a historical footnote' (p. 225). Being concerned more with 'a sense of wonder and greed' that the *Tazza* 'incited to all those who were able to own it' (p. 6) and less with a reference to its artistic reception throughout the ages, this volume is a cultural history of a banded curved agate bowl, probably made in the first century B.C. in Ptolemaic Egypt. It presents a wealth of ideas and perspectives for reconstructing the locations the *Tazza* inhabited, the significance it held and, in line with much 'circumstantial' historical information, the characters that gave it meaning. Applied to a variety of socio-cultural and historical contexts, these insights provide a context for a new reading of the story. Amongst these 'contexts', reception and biography have already become two of the key constructs in contemporary scholarship.

To publish an authoritative biography of an artefact, starting with its production and looking at its changing functions and meanings up to the present day, is a highly ambitious task. In her introduction, B. sets out the pitfalls of such a task, especially when the missing links 'both frustrate and spur the imagination' (p. 6) and, therefore, encouraged B. to propose a number of imaginative scenarios by which the *Tazza* may have moved from place to place. Although B. does not explain her methodology and the structure of her thinking very clearly, she does include a world map which provides an eloquent visual image of the *Tazza's* journey; a delight for the demanding reader.

A thorough and insightful introduction discusses the origins of the object, though no relevant documents survive. B. treats the date of manufacture (which has long been debated by scholars), the description of the materials and technique, and there is a short, but well argued, analysis of the debate of the origins of the *Tazza's* stone (sardonyx). B. also considers the subject matter of the *Tazza*, the 'traditional apotropaic image of the Medusa' on