IV. SPOTLIGHT ON NEW RESEARCH

Bellis, L. 2020: *A Dog's Life: An Interdisciplinary Study of Human-Animal Relationships in Roman Britain*. University of Leicester; supervisors: R. Thomas (University of Leicester) and N. Sykes/W. Bowden (University of Nottingham). laurenbellis0@gmail.com

Dogs were a key animal in the Roman Empire, appearing in numerous texts and on art and artefacts. Newly conquered provinces were affected by this enthusiasm, showing abrupt change in the types of dogs kept, with 'dwarf' dogs appearing for the first time. How underlying attitudes changed is a question that has been asked of other aspects of provincial Roman life, such as rituals, buildings and diets, but rarely of interactions with live animals, despite their capacity to influence human society. Previous studies have examined single burials, selected only one attribute for study or are limited by poor recording in published reports. To avoid such problems, I selected 85 dog skeletons from Iron Age and Roman Britain to analyse directly. A purpose-built 'biography' system brought together several types of analysis, including pathology, to track the life and death of each dog. I also collected a background dataset from published reports and databases. The skeletal evidence indicates that traumatic and age-related lesions were equally common before and after the conquest of A.D. 43, suggesting continuity in how dogs were treated day-to-day. Yet congenital conditions, such as dwarfism and dental crowding, rose dramatically during the Roman occupation. New genetic stock was likely imported into Britain. Exploring these skeletons as individual biographies reveals the stories of dogs that were abused, cared for and changed the lives of the humans around them. Ultimately, dogs are an excellent 'case animal' by which to map cultural transformation in Roman Britain and can indicate where old ideas prevailed, despite new dogs. Perhaps the conquerors and conquered were not so different in this regard.

Greenwood, C.E. 2020: *Foodways in the Roman Cirencester Hinterland*. University of Bristol and Cardiff University; supervisors: Lucy Cramp and Peter Guest. caitlingreenwood57@gmail.com

This thesis explores changing foodways in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain. Focusing on one region, Cirencester and its hinterland, the study uses organic residue analysis to investigate the use of pottery at a range of different site types: a major town and its Iron Age precursor, three small towns, three rural settlements and two villas. It aims to characterise what pots were used for and to determine whether their uses varied across different types of site and changed through time. A total of 573 potsherds were analysed from ten different sites, dating from the first century B.C. to the fourth century A.D: Cirencester, Kingshill North, Asthall, Latton Lands, Whitewalls, Claydon Pike, Cotswold Community, Thornhill Farm, Kingscote and Chedworth. Organic residues were extracted from each sherd, and the resulting total lipid extract (TLE) was screened using gas chromatography (GC). Combined gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS) was used to identify biomarkers and gas chromatography combustion isotope ratio mass spectrometry (GC/C/IRMS) was used to determine the $\delta^{13}C$ values of the C_{16} and C_{18} saturated fatty acids from suitable TLEs. The resulting $\delta^{13}C$ values were then compared with suitable reference values to assign an origin to these residues. The results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis showed that more non-ruminant products, almost certainly deriving from pigs and/or chickens, were processed in vessels at Cirencester than at any other site. Moreover, dairy products, which had been frequently processed in the Iron Age, decreased in prevalence on Roman rural sites, including villas, and were seemingly rarely processed on other site types. It

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is suggested that pigs and chickens were not infrequently raised within Cirencester itself and that meat products began to be favoured over dairy products on other sites from the second century onwards. In both cases, this is interpreted as a strategy of extensification undertaken by inhabitants of the Cirencester hinterland who sought to maximise food production as a result of increased pressures from taxation and an expanding population.

Line, M. 2020: *Cursing in Roman Britain: Connectivity, Identity, and Belief*. Durham University; supervisors: R. Hingley, C. Draycott and P. Low. madeline.c.line2@gmail.com

This thesis explores cursing in Roman Britain as part of a wider Mediterranean practice and technology that was adopted and adapted to suit the specific needs and beliefs of dedicators. Such a perspective allows for an analysis of the factors that influenced this process of adoption and adaptation, and, to develop it, requires the use of globalisation theory. This work aims to bridge the divide between studies of archaeology and ancient languages by considering literary alongside material culture.

As a ritual practice, cursing is revealing of perceptions of divine or supernatural power and human-divine interactions. The majority of curse tablets in Britain are best understood as 'judicial prayers', which were created to seek justice or revenge for a perceived crime or wrongdoing. With few exceptions, this subcategory of curse tablet was adopted in the province, while 'standard' *defixiones* or binding spells were not. The thesis considers that this pattern may be related to regional concepts of belief and the role of the divine in securing justice for perceived wrongs. Observations that the curse tablets from Britain primarily deal with theft and display a preoccupation with blood-related suffering are also developed.

Studies of curse tablets in the ancient world have demonstrated that curses were employed in situations of individually perceived social crisis and inequality. This thesis builds on this observation by addressing identity expression and negotiation in Roman Britain. Significantly, the language and content of the tablets allow for and necessitate the consideration of aspects of identity that have previously received little attention in studies of the curses of Roman Britain, such as age, gender and status. It is argued that this medium provides a significant insight into the discrepant identities of those who created written curses in Roman Britain.

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