

**LAURENCE SEMINAR, FACULTY OF CLASSICS, CAMBRIDGE, 28-29 MAY 2015**  
**RETHINKING ARTEFACTS IN ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY: BEYOND REPRESENTATION**

This workshop starts from the identification of two issues in the way Roman archaeology deals with artefacts. Firstly, the synthetic narratives shaping the agenda of Roman archaeology – e.g. debates on socio-cultural change and economic performance – tend to approach material culture in a representational way whereby objects come to stand for or reflect motives external to them (such as status or identity). Recent material culture studies show that this is a partial approach, and that in addition to ‘what does this object mean’ we need to ask what it *does*. Although this critique has been taken on board by an increasing number of recent studies of Roman artefacts, a second problem arises: in response to the representational dictate of the synthetic narratives, there is a tendency for those recent artefact analyses to steer clear altogether from the ‘big’ questions like power, value, empire, or trade. This workshop seeks to discuss the implementation of (a) new model(s) and understanding of material culture that will allow us to reintegrate the empirical richness of Roman artefacts with the general working principles of the Roman world.

## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

(Please register your interest with Astrid Van Oyen, av360@cam.ac.uk)

### THURSDAY 28 MAY

9.30-10.20 **Astrid Van Oyen** (Cambridge) and **Martin Pitts** (Exeter): Introduction

#### *Part 1: Pottery and choice*

10.20-11.00 **James Gerrard** (Newcastle): A case study in 'granular data': Castor Boxes and choices in Roman Britain

*(coffee)*

11.20-12.00 **Jeroen Poblome** (Leuven): Sagalassos, ICRATES, FACTA, HEROM and back to Sagalassos. Deconstructing personal practices, flirting with concepts and dreaming about catering to key debates

12.00-12.20 Discussant: Martin Millett (Cambridge)

*(lunch)*

#### *Part 2: Practice*

14.00-14.40 **Hella Eckardt** (Reading): Writing power: inkwells and identities

14.40-15.20 **Andrew Gardner** (UCL): Taking the wrong turn? The potential for material and practice approaches in Roman archaeology

15.20-15.40 Discussant: Miguel John Versluys (Leiden)

*(coffee)*

#### *Part 3: Big questions*

16.00-16.40 **Hilary Cool** (Barbican): The siren lure of the big picture

16.40-17.20 **Rob Collins** (Newcastle): When *militaria* is not *militaria*: relational realism and late Roman soldiers

17.20-17.40 Discussant: Cyprian Broodbank (Cambridge)

17.40-18.00 General discussion

*(19.30: dinner)*

**FRIDAY 29 MAY**

*Part 4: Function and style*

- 9.00-9.40 **Ellen Swift** (Kent): Design, function and everyday social practice: artefact case studies and Roman social history
- 9.40-10.20 **Eva Mol** (Leiden): Rethinking cultural classifications for Egyptian objects in Roman contexts: from artefact to perception
- 10.20-10.40 Discussant: Robin Osborne (Cambridge)

*(coffee)*

*Part 5: Material Agency*

- 11.00-11.40 **Martin Pitts** (Exeter): Roman artefact suites, circulation and material agency. Re-thinking 'Gallo-Belgic' wares
- 11.40-12.20 **Alicia Jiménez** (Duke): title tba
- 12.20-12.40 Discussant: John Robb (Cambridge)

*(lunch)*

- 14.00-14.40 **Greg Woolf** (Institute of Classical Studies): Concluding statement
- 14.40-15.30 General discussion
- 15.30-16.00 Conclusion