

attempted here: accurate sourcing of sandstones to specific quarries is particularly challenging owing to the nature of the material (p. xxxix). A few colour plates would, however, have been a welcome addition to demonstrate colours and textures of the materials.

Indeed, turning to the images, a methodological innovation here is the use of ‘Structure from Motion’ photography and structured light scanning to prepare high-resolution 3D models of 65 of the pieces. This was an important element of the ‘Elusive Sculptures’ project at Newcastle University, funded by the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust, which ultimately ensured completion of this volume. The digital archive of the resulting scans is available, hosted by the Archaeological Data Service (<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/1004457/>). The replication of the scans within the plates is less successful, since the final render and feel of the images is, in black-and-white print, unconvincing. The quality of the photography more generally is patchy, and with some straightforward editing could be improved. Yet, given that many of the objects are dispersed and in less-than-ideal settings for good lighting and positioning, or even lost entirely, it is a bonus that so many are illustrated.

The completion of this volume and the series sets the foundations for future research into sculpture from specific sites from Roman Britain and the north-west provinces, since useful comparison may be made across the wider region. First, printed catalogues are invaluable for recording in durable format, but of course they are difficult to update when new discoveries or interpretations are made. There have been new finds and debates since previous volumes were published and some appendices may be needed, especially if further petrological analysis of southern limestones is possible. Beyond that, the format of the series with entries listed according to iconography or identification has allowed consistency, but the corpus needs to be analysed in different ways: reviews for the tenth fascicule noted the constraints that this arrangement applies. Chronology and geography are difficult, since dates of the pieces and original context are seldom well-known. Digital tools, applied advisedly, with long-term plans for updating and hosting, using definitions and ontologies that respect the multivalency of context and motif, can be crucial to understand comparisons and patterns: the impressive *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* online provides an excellent example. Connection and comparison, too, with corpora across Europe and beyond will be invaluable to show what choices and selections of visual culture were made regionally and locally in Britain, how this differs from other areas of the Empire, and will help us to ask and understand why. This tremendous work sets us on the path to do so.

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The Antonine Wall in Falkirk District. By Geoff B. Bailey with nine other contributors. Falkirk Local History Society, Falkirk, 2021. Pp. iv + 600, illus. Price £18 (hbk). ISBN 97818838298807.

The most easterly 15 miles of the Antonine Wall lay within Geoff Bailey’s purview in his role as Keeper of Archaeology and Local History for Falkirk Museums. This monograph brings together reports on excavations and occasional fieldwalking directed by him between 1991 and 2019 at various sites along the Wall from Castlecary to Carriden. Bailey is well known for the high quality of his excavations and for his emphasis on community involvement. Over time he has built up not only unprecedented local knowledge, but strong community contacts and support. This is most evident in the contribution of his band of local volunteer excavators, who rapidly came to be known as the ‘Walnuts’, and is further affirmed by the number of opportunities he was offered by homeowners to excavate in their gardens.

This large A4 volume, divided into three parts, is extensively illustrated with over 600 plans, diagrams, drawings, tables and colour photographs, the majority produced by Bailey himself. The first part is made up of a number of synthetic chapters that provide more general discussion of a range of topics reflecting the author’s varied interests. These include the linear components of the Wall and its construction, minor installations, a reinterpretation of the sequence of development at Duntocher, fort settings and their defences, three different types of internal buildings (*principia*, *praetoria* and *horrea*) and the identification

of possible aqueducts. The linear components of the Wall (ditch, rampart, berm and Military Way) are usefully introduced with tabulated data on their varying characteristics, and comparisons are drawn with Hadrian's Wall. There are, however, a number of issues of interpretation that are questionable. Though the case is not made explicitly in the text, Bailey's various reconstruction drawings seem to depict a vertical north face for the rampart, which is structurally improbable. Dealing with minor installations, his discussion of fortlets is somewhat marred by the generalisations made on the basis of the evidence from Laurieston. Its identification (presented in more detail in Chapter 8) is highly dubious as it is based on a drain that supposedly flanked a road running through the putative fortlet, but which seems most likely to be post-Roman as it is not perpendicular to the Wall-ditch and cuts through defensive pits on the berm. He also continues to assert that the Wall was provided with occasional towers on the basis of the somewhat tenuous evidence of a single possible post-pad at Callendar Park and an entirely hypothetical tower at Wilderness West.

In the two chapters that relate to building the Wall, it is clear that Bailey does not favour the hypothesis that it underwent a major change of plan during its construction. He offers his own interpretation of the sequence of building, preferring a variation of the concept of a phased implementation of the different elements. However, the basis for some of his critique of the structural evidence for primary and secondary forts is out of date, particularly his assertion that the ramparts of the fort at Rough Castle were contemporary with the Wall (compare Hanson in *Britannia* 51, 215–16). He suggests an interesting minor re-interpretation of the sequence of construction at Duntocher, pointing out that the Wall on the west side of the fortlet was aligned so as to incorporate it directly into the linear barrier. This rather undermines his general thesis, however, as it would imply that the addition of a fort was not part of the original plan.

The detailed reports on Bailey's numerous excavations constitute part two and provide the important core of the volume. They include examination of environmental evidence and finds reports, as appropriate, all of the former and some of the latter provided by relevant specialists. The detailed examination of the Roman pottery, authored throughout by Peter Webster, is particularly acknowledged in the introduction. Though some larger projects were undertaken – most notably at Mumrills, Carriden and within Falkirk itself – most of the excavations were very small-scale. These were often confined to gardens and provided with only limited resources, so that Bailey operated as something akin to a one-man research and rescue archaeology service for the Roman Wall in the area. The excavation reports are grouped together geographically and provided with useful individual and/or general contextual discussion.

As well as helping to identify or confirm the line of the Wall in the built-up areas that constitute much of its route through Falkirk District, Bailey's excavations have made a number of substantive contributions to our knowledge. Three stand out: the identification of the site of the fort and associated annexes at Falkirk; the discovery of a bathhouse at Carriden and the recognition that the fort there, identified from the air in 1945, was in fact an eastern annexe; and the discovery of defensive pits at various locations on the berm, similar to those recorded on Hadrian's Wall (though the best examples, at Callendar Park and Garnhall, are published in detail elsewhere). Some of the reports, however, illustrate Bailey's tendency to push interpretations beyond the limits of the data. The dubious identification of a fortlet at Laurieston has already been noted and his suggestion that there may have been an earlier fort on the site of the western annexe at Mumrills (Chapter 6) is open to serious challenge as there is no direct evidence of the hypothesised earlier ditch under the road leading to the annexe entrance (see Hanson in *Britannia* 51, 213).

The third and final section of the volume provides a number of brief synthetic overviews relating to certain categories of finds. Those covering Roman coins, pottery supply and brooches have been provided by specialist contributors (Brickstock, Webster and Hunter respectively), Bailey adding a chapter on box-flue tiles whose detailed study has led him to suggest that each fort produced its own.

The volume was written over decade or more, its publication delayed, in part at least, by unfulfilled waits for specialist reports. Navigating through the volume is not always straightforward as the subdivision of the chapters is not indicated within the list of contents, nor is there a list of illustrations. Most annoying to this reviewer was the habit of referencing particular features in the discussion sections but not always indicating the relevant figure on which they feature, thus making it more difficult to follow the argument. There are also a number of minor, if sometimes glaring, typographic errors.

Despite the various issues noted above, the full publication of this large corpus of work is most welcome. It provides, at a bargain price, a mine of well-illustrated, fundamental information about the Antonine Wall in

Falkirk District and offers some alternative interpretations of its layout and construction that are worthy of consideration.

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Mosaics in Roman Britain. By A. Beeson. Amberley Publishing, Stroud, 2022. Pp. 96, illus. Price £15.99. ISBN 9781445689883 (print), 9781445689890 (ebook).

This attractively presented book ranges widely over the subject and contains much within its slim compass. Chapters 1–6 tackle the origins of the medium, laying mosaics, coarse borders, possible sources of images, repairs, and other flooring types in Roman Britain. A chronological approach is adopted for Chapters 7–11, respectively covering mosaics from the first to fifth centuries C.E., while Chapters 12–17 touch on certain popular themes – marine subjects; gardens, symbolic pools and mosaics; some of the myths depicted in Romano-British mosaics; Bellerophon; Orpheus – culminating in a discussion of the extraordinary Boxford mosaic with which the author was extensively involved. The work concludes with a short but useful list of Further Reading.

The somewhat eclectic structure coupled with the lack of an index affects the usefulness of the book as a reference work, but the introduction explains that it is ‘intended as a popular introduction to Romano-British mosaics, their construction, mythology and imagery’ (p. 8). Given the target audience, it would have been preferable to write in more accessible language: even specialists do not normally refer to a sea bull as a *bovicampus* or a sea leopard as a *pardalocampus*, for example, while the multiple appearances of ‘sea denizens’ could have been curbed by firm editing. A glossary would be useful, although some words are defined on their first appearance.

However, one of the charms of the author’s highly individual approach is a refreshing take on some modern preoccupations. ‘Much is made of mistakes in the geometry of mosaics but it is doubtful if, faced with a riot of decoration, the client even noticed or cared that one corner of a large mosaic differed from another’ (p. 19). On dating, ‘much is still guesswork’, and the author offers several pertinent suggestions for ‘the apparent absence of third-century mosaics’ (p. 40) as well as endorsing the possibility of fifth-century floors (p. 55). The British Museum’s decision to display only the central roundel of the Hinton St Mary mosaic is evocatively described as ‘akin to the National Gallery cutting a detail out from a Van Dyke [*sic*] painting in order to save wall space’ (p. 8).

Factual and typographical errors are few, but a note of caution needs to be sounded about the interpretation of figured mosaics. While the book includes some inspired identifications previously made by the author which have been widely accepted, such as Diana at Hadsen (Bratton Seymour) (pp. 18, 47 and fig. on 48) and Orpheus at Wellow (pp. 87–8), other ideas remain controversial, yet there is no hint of this in the text. For instance, another figure found at Hadsen is identified as ‘probably Venus’ (pp. 18, 47, 68) despite being more plausibly interpreted as Bacchus in the site museum and reconstructed as such in the Villa Ventorum at The Newt in Somerset. We learn that busts of the Seasons possibly occupied the corner octagons of the recently excavated Stibbe factory mosaic at Leicester (p. 36), but there is no evidence for this. The interpretation of a figure in the Boxford mosaic merely as ‘a palace guard’ (p. 90, fig. on 96) ignores the views of others, including this reviewer, who consider he is likely to be a second representation of Bellerophon.

An important feature of the book is its wealth of illustrations. Arguably it might have been better to include fewer pictures so that they could be reproduced at a larger scale, but they are a useful complement to the text for those familiar with the mosaics and provide inspiration for readers new to the subject to explore further. Among the highlights are a number of interesting *in situ* photographs: the two figured mosaics at Hadsen (pp. 17, 18, 48); several views from the 1930s and 1950s of mosaics at Verulamium, including one showing a female student in skirt and heels energetically wielding a broom on a tessellated floor (pp. 24, 32–4); the famous Dido and Aeneas mosaic from Low Ham in its *frigidarium* setting (p. 49); and a rare view of Colonel Meates standing on a lacuna in the Lullingstone mosaic (but note that