

Editorial

One of *Britannia's* central roles has always been to serve as a 'journal of record'. A conspicuous element in this is the report on recent discoveries in Romano-British archaeology which has appeared annually in *Britannia* since the latter's inception in 1970, and before that in the *Journal of Roman Studies*, from 1921. The Administrators of the Haverfield Bequest, who were instrumental in its launch in 1921, have provided generous financial assistance to the Roman Society over many years. The compilation of the report has always been a major task for its editors, some remarkably long-serving; one can note that the section in 1970 amounted to 46 pages, while in 2004 (see below, pp. 253–349) it fills 97 pages. This year there is a new section, which it is intended will become a long-term constituent element, on Roman material brought to light in England and Wales through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which is placed below (p. 317) between the sections on 'sites' and on 'inscriptions'. The PAS section is edited for the Roman Society by Sally Worrell, the Scheme's Iron Age and Roman Finds Adviser, and the cost has been generously met by the Scheme through the good offices of its Co-ordinator, Dr Roger Bland.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme was established as a consequence of the passing of *The Treasure Act* (1996), in order to encourage and co-ordinate the reporting of chance finds, made chiefly through metal-detecting. Initial concerns over the funding for the Scheme have been eased in the medium-term with support offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), with the latter minded to secure its long-term future. A network of Liaison Officers, fully in place by 2003, covers England and Wales (but not Scotland where Treasure Trove law remains unchanged, and was always broader than the English definition). The Scheme has a website and publishes Annual Reports. The impact of the Scheme is manifest in the quantity of finds reported (in 2002–3 just short of 50,000 from all archaeological periods), and its significance in their exceptional quality. The appearance of this first report in *Britannia* (which complements that which has appeared for several years in *Medieval Archaeology*) is marked by this journal's first-ever colour frontispiece showing the spectacular 'Staffordshire Moorlands Patera' (below, p. 326, No. 8, pp. 344–5, and frontispiece). It should be noted that coin hoards will continue to be included in the 'Sites Explored' section of the annual 'Roman Britain' report.

Readers will be aware of World Heritage Sites, a listing inaugurated in 1972 by UNESCO, and under the particular umbrella of ICOMOS (The International Council on Monuments and Sites). Currently there are 25 British sites designated: one of these is a Roman frontier work, Hadrian's Wall, which was 'subscribed' as a World Heritage Site in 1987. A number of new British proposals are being developed, and will be submitted for scrutiny in due course. These include the Antonine Wall across central Scotland, not in isolation, but as part of a trans-national initiative to embrace 'The Frontiers of the Roman Empire', extending for a distance of over 5000 km between the Atlantic and the Black Sea, and subsuming Hadrian's Wall and the *limes* in Germany (the latter already under consideration, separately, for WHS status). Historic Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Executive, is working with colleagues in DCMS and English Heritage and with the state archaeological services of Germany and Austria to carry forward the proposal. Other countries have indicated that they will propose their own sections of the frontier, and it is hoped that in time the World Heritage Site will embrace all surviving elements which meet WHS criteria for nomination. The potential of the supra-national aspect has attracted particular attention and support, and a line which was once a barrier between two halves of Europe can now be lauded as a unifying chain linking modern countries along its length. In the same vein, a recent handbook entitled *The Roman Army in Pannonia* (Pécs, 2003), published to coincide with the 19th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies held in Hungary, brought together contributions by scholars from the five countries which contain within their modern borders some part of the *ripa Pannonica*.

A multinational working group has been set up under the chairmanship of Professor David Breeze, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic Scotland. The proposal could, if successful, attract EU funding, give added impetus to local initiatives, strengthen the hand of planning authorities, encourage international research projects, and perhaps lead in due course to uniformity in signage, presentation, and publications. Copies of an explanatory leaflet on the proposal, by Professor Breeze, Dr Sonja Jilek and Dr Andreas Thiel, are available from the offices of Historic Scotland, Edinburgh. For the Antonine Wall the proposal goes hand-in-hand with improved mapping and clearer definition of the monument, a task being undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. There is clearly a role here too for museums, and great educational and tourism potential. The outcome of the application should be known by 2008.

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