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***Romanitas: Essays on Roman Archaeology in Honour of Sheppard Frere on the Occasion of his Ninetieth Birthday.***  
Edited by R.J.A. Wilson. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2006. Pp. xxx + 242, illus. Price: £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84217 248 3.

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*Romanitas: Essays on Roman Archaeology in Honour of Sheppard Frere on the Occasion of his Ninetieth Birthday*. Edited by R.J.A. Wilson. Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2006. Pp. xxx + 242, illus. Price: £30.00. ISBN 978 1 84217 248 3.

Sheppard Frere's impact on the study of Roman Britain is unquestionably immense. As founding editor of this journal, author of the standard textbook for generations of students, and excavator of several major sites, he has made outstanding contributions both in detail and in synthesis. His interests, as documented in the complete bibliography included in this volume, have been very wide, and this is also reflected in the eclectic collection of papers compiled to mark his ninetieth birthday. The chapters of this volume will certainly be of use to those other than its honorand, although they inevitably vary considerably in subject-matter and scope. It is perhaps only to be regretted that it was not possible to include a more forward-looking contribution that sheds light on the wider picture of Roman Britain currently being constructed, built as this is upon the firm foundations laid by scholars such as Frere.

The nine chapters contained in this book include material culture studies, discussions of urban and military settlement, and accounts of the reception of the northern Walls in post-medieval times. The first three papers are essentially concerned with the relationship between archaeological and historical evidence in understanding aspects of urbanism in Roman Britain. Wilson's chapter concisely surveys current evidence for town defences and seeks to relate several earlier examples to awards of the status of *municipium*. Discussion of the role of client kings and the military in urban origins will add to the current debate on the political scene in early Roman Britain. Tomlin and Fulford contribute shorter, more narrowly focused pieces on possible evidence for London being a *colonia*, and on civilian involvement in the construction of Hadrian's Wall, respectively. The latter in particular adds quite a new dimension to the understanding of military and civil organisation in the second century, simply by proposing that epigraphic evidence of the involvement of *civitates* in the building-work belongs to this period rather than the fourth century.

Two chapters then deal with military sites and assemblages. Manning presents a typological study of the major groups of weapons at Newstead, analysed in relation to the changing garrisons of the fort, while Sommer's paper is an extensive update of his 1984 volume on *The Military Vici in Roman Britain* (BAR Brit. Ser. 129). The latter discusses a range of important new evidence and contains some interesting pointers towards a pattern of regional variation in *vicus* layout. Returning to some of the problems of reconciling our different sources for the Roman world, Dannell tackles the functions of samian cups in the next chapter. This contribution compares volumetric data, graffiti and literary sources to address some key questions of terminology and use within a range of cultural contexts. Papers by Keppie and Young then shift the focus to more recent times. Keppie examines a fascinating, and anonymous, late seventeenth-century letter relating a journey along the Antonine Wall, exploring its context and authorship. Young looks to Hadrian's Wall, and gives a brief but interesting survey of the history of research on, and management of, the monument. Finally, the volume closes with a further material study, taking us far from Roman Britain, as Mackensen focuses on African Red Slipware from Upper Egypt.

Overall, the context of the volume's compilation accounts for the wide spread of subjects represented and this serves as a testimony to Sheppard Frere's influence on a considerable range of different areas of study. His role as a synthesist, and the debates which have followed on from his work on the broad picture of Roman Britain, are unfortunately not so well represented. What comes across most of all though, thanks particularly to the personal notes with which each paper begins, is the great affection with which he is regarded across the scholarly community.

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