



Session Proposals Limes Congress 2021

8

Home away from home. Roman frontiers as movers and mixers of people

Tatiana Ivleva, Stijn Heeren & Pete Wilson

Affiliation: *Newcastle University, United Kingdom*

Affiliation co-organiser: *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

Affiliation second co-organiser: *Rarey Archaeology, United Kingdom*

Session Abstract: Migration is often treated as a given in LIMES studies. It is undeniable fact that Roman army spurred a large-scale movement of people: at any military fort, be it legionary or auxiliary, soldiers of mixed descent were garrisoned together and were supposedly living happily alongside side each other never to settle properly in one place. Widely accepted and often explored is the theme of the movement of peoples and artefacts both into and out of the Roman Empire across its frontiers. Sessions dealing with cross-frontier interaction between Roman soldiers and 'barbarians', and between soldiers and natives within frontiers, as well as sessions devoted to the topic of units' movements and their mixed composition have become a regular feature at LIMES Congresses.

Yet, migration as such was and still is an often-contested issue in archaeology in general. As a discipline it has moved a long way from drawing arrows on maps based on material culture styles in the 19th and early 20th century, with the later 20th century seeing a retreat from migrationism. With the advent of the third science revolution in the recent decades, the ban on migration in archaeology was lifted: strontium isotope studies and aDNA made the identification of migrants easier. Spectacular results were obtained for prehistory and also much work has been invested in the Early Medieval period. Roman provincial archaeology is not far behind these developments with several scientific studies finding evidence for medium and long-distance mobility. However, can the same be said for the Roman frontier studies?

This session invites case-based papers that focus on method and manifestation: how to recognise and define migration and mobility in a frontier setting? At the same time, we welcome papers that address impact: what was happening on the frontiers when so many people of various origins from places far and near cohabit together? For the latter, we ask potential speakers to consider the following questions: can we detect evidence of clashes, exclusion, and marginalization within the garrisons, or can the example of three-nations series of inscriptions from Birrens (RIB 2100, 2107 and 2108) be extrapolated to the other frontiers? Apart from gathering the evidence for the multicultural make-up of the frontiers, the session also aims to move the discussion on and invites papers that explore transgression of personal and social identities within such multicultural milieu. Is there evidence that supports the deliberate construction of 'home away from home'? Or can we talk of transcultural frontier environments where new norms were produced and curated, not specific to any entity?