



Objects and Identities: Roman Britain and the North-Western Provinces

Hella Eckardt

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This volume explores Rome's northern provinces through the portable artefacts people used and left behind. Objects are crucial to our understanding of the past, and can be used to explore interlinking aspects of identity. For example, can we identify incomers? How are exotic materials (such as amber and ivory) and objects depicting 'the exotic' (e.g. Africans) consumed? Do regional styles exist below the homogenizing influence of Roman trade? How do all these aspects of identity interact with others, such as status, gender, and age?

In this innovative study, the author combines theoretical awareness and a willingness to engage with questions of social and cultural identity with a thorough investigation into the well-published but underused material culture of Rome's northern provinces. Pottery and coins, the dominant categories of many other studies, have here been largely excluded in favour of small portable objects such as items of personal adornment, amulets, and writing equipment. The case studies included were chosen because they relate to specific, often interlinking aspects of identity such as provincial, elite, regional, or religious identity. Their meaning is explored in their own right and in depth, and in careful examination of their contexts. It is hoped that these case studies will be of use to archaeologists working in other periods, and indeed to students of material culture generally by making a small contribution to a growing corpus of academic and popular books that develop interpretative, historical narratives from selected objects.

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