



Session Proposals Limes Congress 2021

6

Feminists at the gates. Frontier research by female academics

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Session Abstract: Traditionally Roman frontier archaeology acquired a reputation as field led by brilliant men. Research by women has broadly tended to focus on 'softer' topics such as analysis of finds assemblages, study of literary sources, approaches to leisure on the frontier, and more recently, the study of environmental material. Gendered differences in the choice of subjects studied often mirrored the division of roles during the excavation of archaeological sites. Conversely, the voices leading on tackling the 'bigger picture' questions, addressing issues of frontier systems, structural archaeology of frontier installations and tackling chronology and phasing of individual sites has mostly been accomplished by male scholars.

The Roman frontiers research community is renowned for its openness and collegial support. In the last two decades, there has been a marked increase in the quantity of research produced by female scholars, inviting the opportunity to reflect on the changes and its meaning for the discipline. What approaches are being represented by female scholars? Does gender play a part in the way female scholars approach the archaeological material? Does the increase in the representation of female scholars necessitate engagement with feminist approaches, or not? Separately to the gender of the researcher, what can feminist approaches offer to our field?

The session invites female scholars to present on subjects relating to all themes in archaeology of Roman frontiers in order to review the breadth and scope of research led by women, while reflecting in the discussion on the role of gender in the production of knowledge about Rome's frontiers. Papers relating to uncovering the history of female involvement in the discipline or applying feminist approaches to material are also welcome. This session provides an opportunity for celebration of achievements of female scholars and a glimpse into the future through reviewing current themes and interests represented by female and, or feminist Roman frontier archaeologists worldwide.