AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship: “The Iron Age to Roman Transition in Britain from the Perspective of Coin Hoards”

The School of Archaeology & Ancient History, University of Leicester and the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded three-year doctoral grant for 2019–22 to explore and reassess the significance of coin hoarding in late Iron Age Britain and in the decades immediately following the Roman invasion.

This studentship is funded through the AHRC's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) scheme. See https://www.ahrc-cdp.org/

Collaboration between a Higher Education Institution and a museum, library, archive, or heritage organisation is the essential feature of these studentships. This will be a fully funded AHRC research studentship covering three years of tuition fees at the university and maintenance (living costs), with additional funds available to support some research costs. There is also the option to apply for additional ‘Student Development Funding’ which covers up to six months’ extension of the studentship, or use of the equivalent funding for training, work placements and other development opportunities. See https://www.ahrc-cdp.org/resources/

These studentships are covered by standard AHRC eligibility rules.

This project will be supervised by Professors Colin Haselgrove and David Mattingly (Leicester) and Professors Chris Howgego and Chris Gosden (Oxford). The student will be expected to spend time working both at Leicester and in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, as well as becoming part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK.

The successful candidate will commence their PhD in October 2019. They will hold their studentship at the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at Leicester, one of the UK’s leading archaeology departments and a major centre for research in Iron Age and Roman archaeology; he/she will work in partnership with the Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, whose holdings include part of the collection of British Iron Age coins belonging to Sir John Evans, the founding figure of the subject and author of The Coins of the Ancient Britons, 1864) and bequeathed to the Museum by Sir Arthur Evans. The Heberden Coin Room is also home to the Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project (https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/), whilst the Celtic Coin Index, which constitutes the most extensive record of Iron Age coins found in Britain is housed next door to the museum in the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

The Project

The later Iron Age in Britain is a period of social change, as clearly evidenced in alterations in technologies and material culture. This is also the period in which the first coins appear, imported from Gallic neighbours across the Channel, and later minted locally across southern Britain; such material provides a major source of information on Iron Age society, trade, religious beliefs, and continental contacts. Many aspects of Iron Age coinage are still poorly understood, but they combine aspects of ‘money’ since they have standardized weight and metal composition; they exhibit complex and localized iconography; and they are generally deposited in careful ways, probably as part of a broad ‘sacrificial’ economy. This CDP studentship will take as its focus this last aspect, examining and interpreting hoards deposited in a time of major cultural change, namely the late Iron Age to Roman transition in Britain.
Surprisingly, research to date has rarely worked across the Iron Age–Roman boundary in Britain, but whilst much obviously changes, there were also surprising continuities of practice and culture, often obscured because the two periods are generally studied by different specialists. Importantly, therefore, this thesis seeks to bridge these subject divisions to shed new light on the transition from Iron Age to Roman through a close study of hoarding. Hoards of Iron Age coins are found in Britain from the later 2nd century BC onwards, but the principal focus will be on the period from c. 60 BC to AD 100, although earlier hoards will be considered as a background to hoarding and deposition in Iron Age Britain prior to Roman influence. Equally, the thesis will need to take account of early Roman coin hoards, since it is now clear from their evidence and from analytical studies of Iron Age coin composition and iconography that there was a significant influx of Roman coins into Britain before AD 43, which has important implications for how Roman coinage was initially assimilated alongside indigenous issues. Furthermore, mixed Iron Age and Roman coin hoards provide a valuable perspective on peri-conquest developments.

The questions to be addressed by the thesis will thus focus on the extent to which hoarding can illuminate:

- the nature of the sacrificial economy in Iron Age societies and its implications for human and cosmological power
- how Iron Age coin hoarding relates to the landscape and archaeological context of single coins, both archaeological and metal detector finds
- whether there are continuities of practice in coin hoards/hoarding, as well as differences, from Iron Age to Roman: Roman coins operated within a market and monetary economy, probably quite different to that of the late Iron Age.
- the similarities and differences in how Britain and Gaul responded to Roman conquest
- how Roman secular activity, including military activity, supply routes, and bases, roads, and the creation of “civitas capitals” (towns), but also new religious structures in shrines and temples, influenced deposition
- the extent to which regional preferences persisted throughout the transition

The Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project will provide an online vehicle for gathering and analysing resultant hoard data, and the Celtic Coin Index (for which a new digital platform is being created) will provide a linked-open-data classification for the coinage to facilitate analysis and data on single finds for comparison. Data will also be drawn from the online database of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

The Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project web app will provide the student with the technology to record and analyse data from the Caesarean period onwards, and provide comparative data for other regions, notably Gaul. The Project has already developed a major international network of collaborators, who will be available to the student. The student will validate existing hoard data for Britain in the project’s web app, and enter new hoard data, thereby themselves contributing to the Project.

Financial Support

Subject to standard AHRC eligibility criteria, the studentship will cover tuition fees at home/EU rate and provide a maintenance award at RCUK rates for a maximum of 3 years of full-time doctoral study from 1st October 2019 with the option of up to 6 months additional funding for related professional development. See https://www.ahrc-cdp.org/resources/

The University of Leicester and the Ashmolean Museum will supply appropriate facilities to support the research studentship and limited additional funds for archive visits and conferences. In addition, the Ashmolean Museum will provide research expenses of up to £2,000 to the student each year, to a maximum of £6,000 over the duration of the studentship, to cover costs associated with undertaking research in Oxford.
Eligibility

We are looking for an excellent, highly promising and appropriately qualified student who will embrace the opportunity to bring together academic research with experience and training in a leading British museum. We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming students from different backgrounds to apply for our studentships.

NB. All applicants must meet the AHRC’s academic criteria and residency requirements. See https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/research/researchfundingguide/

Candidates should:

1. Hold or be expecting to obtain a Master’s degree in Archaeology or a related discipline at good merit level or above. Alternatively Doctoral applicants who have not completed a research preparation master’s degree may also be considered if they hold a UK Bachelor Degree at 2:1 Hons or better (or overseas equivalent) and can demonstrate that they have equivalent experience that has prepared them for doctoral research in line with AHRC guidelines https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/research/researchfundingguide/
2. Be a resident of the UK or European Economic Area (EEA).
3. In general, full studentships are available to students who are settled in the UK and have been ordinarily resident for a period of at least three years before the start of postgraduate studies. Fees-only awards are generally available to EU nationals resident in the EEA. International applicants are normally not eligible to apply for this studentship.

The student will require a good understanding of the archaeology of Iron-Age and/or Roman Britain pursued at the level of a good Masters degree and will need to have, or to develop:

• a good knowledge of both Iron Age and Roman numismatics, and associated methodologies. Tuition is available in Leicester for Iron Age numismatics (Haselgrove) and in Oxford for Roman numismatics (Howgego)
• a basic understanding of developments in Digital Humanities, including Linked Open Data.
• the IT skills to analyse complex data, including through GIS.
• the skills to present their research through seminar and other research presentations, but also through a display in the Ashmolean Museum, as mentored by the Museum’s curatorial staff.

Deadline for applications: 8 April 2019.
Interview date: 29 April 2019

How to apply

Applications be submitted using our online application system.

Applicants are asked to include the following:

1. A Curriculum Vitae
2. A research proposal of 1,000–1,500 words. This should identify how your current academic interests relate to the doctoral project and explain your reasons for wishing to undertake this research. It can also outline how you might wish to refine the project so as to meet specific research aims of your own.
3. Copies of your degree certificates and transcripts.
4. For applicants who still have to complete their Master’s programme, a letter from their course coordinator predicting the expected degree result. (add this to the transcript section)
5. Two academic references or include the contact details of your referees in the relevant section. Please ask you two referees to submit their references by 8 April as these must be submitted for you to be considered.
Submission of application

In the funding section of the application please indicate you wish to be considered for the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Studentship: “The Iron Age to Roman Transition in Britain”. In the proposal section please provide the names of the supervisor and project cited above.

Only complete applications received, with both references, by the deadline, can be considered.

Further Information

For informal enquiries relating to studentship, please contact Professor Colin Haselgrove (cch7@le.ac.uk) or Professor Chris Howgego (chris.howgego@ashmus.ox.ac.uk). Questions regarding the application process should be addressed to pgradmissions@le.ac.uk

Further information about the School of Archaeology & Ancient History is available at: https://le.ac.uk/archaeology

For questions relating to the CDP programme within Oxford University Museums please contact Dr Harriet Warburton, harriet.warburton@glam.ox.ac.uk. Further information about Oxford University Museums is available at: https://www.glam.ox.ac.uk/home