30 May 2018

Dear Fiona Haarer,

It was a pleasure to meet you at this year’s TRAC/RAC conference in Edinburgh.  I am grateful for having been awarded a 100GBP bursary from the Roman Society, which helped defray the cost of the 70GBP fee for participation and for covering costs for food during my four-day stay in Edinburgh.

As a PhD student in bioarchaeology at the University of Western Ontario, I realize that conference attendance is an absolute requisite in order to both broaden my knowledge of current research initiatives in the world of antiquity and also to facilitate and further fortify my academic network.  I particularly enjoyed the presentations given by Liana Brent on the *Transformation of Mortuary Space in Late Antiquity at Vagnari*, given my own experiences working extensively with human remains from several Late Antique necropoli in Campania; Session 1d on *Defining Viridia*, given my experience leading the excavation of the viridarium at Villa San Marco at Stabiae in summer 2014; Angela Trentacoste’s lecture on pork consumption in Italy, given my own PhD research assessing dietary trends in Roman Italy using stable isotope analysis; Duncan Keenan-Jones’ lecture on *Harbour Core Pb Isotopic Records*, given the study’s objective to correlate Pb records with known historical events (a secondary goal in my own paleo-dietary research); the entirety of Session 3b on Isotopic Studies in Roman Archaeology; and finally Session 6c on Imperial properties in Roman Italy, given my experience excavating at Villa Magna and my interest in the necropolis at Vagnari as a source of comparative data for my research on diet from the 1st to 5th centuries AD in Campania.

Attending this conference allowed me to reconnect with colleagues from the past and also to forge new connections that may prove beneficial to my academic career going forward.  I was fortunate enough to meet and speak at length with John Humphrey, founder and editor of the Journal of Roman Archaeology and was honored when he invited me to submit an article to the JRA on research I am conducting on the multiple infant amphora burials disinterred at the Late Antique site of Pollena Trocchia in Naples, Italy.  I was also approached by ancient garden specialist Kathryn Gleason, who was interested in learning about the root casts had made in the viridarium at Villa San Marco several years back.  Finally, it was a pleasure to watch numerous colleagues present their research and to lend moral support and appreciation whenever possible.

My ability to attend the TRAC-RAC 2018 conference at Edinburgh, was in part made possible thanks to the generous support of the Roman Society.  It is my sincere intention to attend future conferences and to hopefully present my own research in the near future as well.

Sincerely,

Amanda James