

SIMON KEAY

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by

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Simon Keay was an archaeologist who made a substantial contribution to knowledge of the Roman Mediterranean. Early work on late Roman trade produced an amphora typology that continues in widespread use. His research in Spain included major excavations in Catalunya and Andalucia, as well as surveys in the hinterland of Tarragona and a pioneering geophysical work at Italica. Turning his attention Italy, he led a major programme of geophysical surveys of Roman towns and later large-scale excavations at Portus, the port of imperial Rome. In the last stage of his career, he extended this work to study port systems across the Mediterranean.



A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored, textured surface. The signature is stylized, featuring a large, sweeping 'S' or 'J' shape followed by a horizontal line and a small upward stroke.

I. Education

Simon Keay¹ was born in London, son of Lorelei (née Shiel) and Anthony Keay. His mother was Australian, and the family also had wide links across western Europe. He was educated at Downside School and then took a year out to work in Australia before starting his undergraduate studies at the Institute of Archaeology, then an independent institute in the University of London, in 1974. From the outset, his interests centred on the Roman world, and in particular the Mediterranean. In the tradition of the Institute at that time, his studies had a strong focus on material culture (especially coinage and pottery), and he spent long periods in his summer vacations working on excavations. It was also at the Institute of Archaeology that he gained an abiding fascination with the late Roman world, stimulated by the teaching of Richard Reece. His interest in the archaeology of Roman Italy also dates from this period, when he worked first on Rice University's excavation of a villa on the via Gabina, and later on Andrea Carandini's highly influential excavation of the Roman villa at Sette Finestre. The latter was particularly significant, as Simon there formed lasting friendships with a generation of Italian students and others also working on the project who were themselves later to become highly influential in the subject. Equally, the model developed at Sette Finestre was formative in Simon's own thinking. Carandini's team combined careful stratigraphic excavation with a strong emphasis on the analysis of material as well as with a regional survey approach, and also an imperative to write meaningful history. Through his love of Italy and his thirst for seeing its archaeology at first hand, Simon had gained an exceptional grounding by the time he graduated in 1977.

II. Catalunya

On graduating, Simon obtained a British Academy studentship to work on his PhD, remaining at the Institute of Archaeology where he was supervised by Professor John Wilkes. Developing his interest in the later Roman Empire, he opted to work on Roman Spain. He had family contacts in Alella north of Barcelona, as well as in the French part

¹A *Festschrift* for Simon Keay is currently in production: A. Collar, P. Johnson & K.D. Strutt (eds), *Archaeologies of the Roman Mediterranean: Papers Presented in Honour of Prof. Simon Keay* (Oxford, Archaeopress). There is no complete bibliography of his numerous published works, although his *Festschrift* and two extended obituaries (M. Millett, 'Simon Keay, 1954–2021', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 89 (2021), 1–8; and I. Rodà de Llanza, 'In honorem et memoriam Simon J. Keay, adlectus inter Hispanos (1954–2021)', *Madriider Mitteilungen*, 62 (2021), 584–96) list many of his publications. This memoir considers the principal phases of his career and his key contributions rather than attempting to review all that he wrote.

of Catalunya. Following the death of Franco in 1975, Spain was just beginning to open up to outside scholars. With the aim of working on the economy of late Roman Spain, Simon travelled to Catalunya, basing himself primarily in Barcelona. Here he studied museum collections of amphorae (that had hitherto been little researched). Access to these collections required considerable perseverance, but this was rewarded as he developed an unparalleled first-hand knowledge of a considerable body of material as well as an understanding of the sites from which it had come. Whilst engaged on this work he networked with an emerging generation of young Catalan archaeologists. He worked with them on their excavations at Empúries and came to be accepted as a member of that group, and became responsible for the publication of coin finds.² In the post-Franco era these scholars were helping to rebuild society and reclaiming Catalan national identity, with archaeology growing to be a central aspect of that cultural mission. As at Sette Finestre, many in that group subsequently became leaders in Spanish archaeology, and they always counted Simon as one of them. This was in part a tribute to Simon's linguistic skills, as he was both able and enthusiastic to converse in Castilian or Catalan, but it also reflects his attitude, which respected their culture and their approach to the subject, and engaged with them as friends and academic equals, always with a great sense of humour and generosity.

Academically, his work on the late Roman trade and economy, based on amphorae, was an enormous success. His thesis, completed in 1983, and published in the following year, became a standard work of reference for amphorae of this period.³ In particular, his systematic study of this hitherto neglected field, and the typology and chronology he devised came to be universally adopted, so the Keay typology now sits alongside those produced by others such as Dressel. It is worth emphasising that it was not just of importance for Spain; as he covered imports too, it was transformative for the study of major production zones like North Africa. The widespread use of his typology perhaps overshadows the other contribution of this study: the use of pottery to understand trade in the western Mediterranean in the late Roman period. To some extent this built on the approaches of Italian colleagues who had used Republican and early imperial amphorae to reconstruct aspects of earlier Roman trade. Simon's focus on this topic, which continued later in his career, itself constitutes a very significant historical contribution.

² S. Keay, 'Les monedes', in E. Sanmartí, J.M. Nolla & J. Aquilué, 'Les excavacions a l'àrea del pàrking al sud de la Neàpolis d'Empúries (preliminary report)', *Empúries*, 45–46 (1983–84), 148–51; S. Keay, 'Les monedes de l'excavació de 1982 a Empúries', in J. Aquilué, R. Mar, J.M. Nolla, J. Ruiz de Arbulo & E. Sanmartí (eds), *El fòrum romà d'Empúries* (Barcelona, 1984), 479–92.

³ S. Keay, *Late Roman Amphorae in the Western Mediterranean: A typology and economic study. The Catalan Evidence*, 2 vols (BAR International Series, 196; Oxford, 1984) – with revised edition issued in 2011. His continued interest in amphorae is later represented by the online resource created with David Williams in 2005 and revised in 2014: https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/

Alongside his work on pottery, Simon remained committed to active fieldwork. Whilst a PhD student, he was invited to co-direct a new excavation on the Roman villa at Vilauba, near Banyoles in the Province of Girona, working in collaboration with Josep Tarrús i Galter and Josep-Maria Nolla I Brufau. He was joined on this excavation by various UK friends and colleagues, including Rick Jones from Bradford University, who brought students and funding to support it. This excavation was of importance, not only in introducing contemporary methods of stratigraphic excavation and analysis to Catalunya, but also in following the Sette Finestre model, by looking at the villa in its landscape context, deploying geophysical prospection and field survey methods, albeit on a modest scale. It also resulted in one of the first instances where it was possible to identify archaeologically a Visigothic phase of occupation on a villa site in the Iberian peninsula. Equally significant was the way that the project became focal for a new generation of Catalan students. The excavation has continued in the decades since, with the results from Simon's period as a co-director (1979–83) fully published in 1988.⁴

During this period, there was a growing interest in Iberian archaeology in the UK, and Simon took a leading role in promoting it, becoming well-known for his work here as in Spain. He was particularly keen to encourage knowledge of Iberia in the UK academic community and also to introduce young Spanish archaeologists to colleagues in the UK. This was reflected in the line-up for a conference he co-organised in Canterbury in 1981, which like so many later meetings involved him in a huge effort to bring the Iberian papers to publication, often undertaking translations himself.⁵ However, in the very difficult climate of the early 1980s, there then seemed little prospect of him being appointed to the academic post that he so clearly merited. As a result, much of his work in this period was completed in his spare time whilst he worked at Waterstones bookshop on Regent Street.

The 'new blood' lectureship scheme, devised by the government to invest in new areas of knowledge in UK university's that had just been decimated by a period of cash cuts, proved Simon's salvation. Southampton University was successful in obtaining funding for the new field of 'Iberian archaeology' and, in 1985, Simon was appointed to this lectureship. At Southampton, where he remained until his retirement in 2020, he developed a very deep and productive relationship with David Peacock, sharing many research interests and reinforcing Southampton's position as a major centre for the study

⁴A. Roure i Bonaventura, P. Castanyer, J.-M. Nolla, S. Keay & J. Tarrús, *La vil·la romana de Vilauba (Comós)* (Generalitat de Catalunya & La Diputació de Girona, 1988); also R.F.J. Jones, S.J. Keay, J.-M. Nolla & J. Tarrús, 'The late Roman villa of Vilauba and its context: a first report on field-work and excavation in Catalunya, North-East Spain, 1978–81', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 62 (1983), 245–82, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581500065902>

⁵T.F.C. Blagg, R.F.J. Jones & S.J. Keay (eds), *Papers in Iberian Archaeology* (Oxford, 1984).

of Roman ceramics. It was at this stage that Simon moved from London to Winchester, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

His appointment to an academic job enabled him to broaden and intensify his archaeological work. In the year before he moved to his new post, he and I were invited to visit Tarragona by Xavier Dupré I Raventós. Simon was a good friend of Dupré, who had been appointed as provincial archaeologist of the Servei d'Arqueologia del Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya in 1981, thus being responsible for the archaeology of the Roman city of Tarraco (Tarragona), and he was very keen to establish a collaboration. Dupré was at the same time developing innovative plans for the creation of the Taller-Escola d'Arqueologia (TED'A) in Tarragona. This was an innovative and collaborative venture designed to transform the practice of urban archaeology in Spain whilst also bringing forward a new generation of researchers. In discussion with Dupré it was agreed that we would initiate an Ager Tarraconensis survey that would seek to complement the work in the Roman city by undertaking a systematic survey of its hinterland. This project, in which we were joined as co-directors by Josep Maria Carreté, continued with annual month-long seasons of fieldwork from 1985 to 1990. It was the first large-scale and systematic field survey undertaken in Spain, and drew on methods developed in Italy and the UK that sought to study a representative sample of the landscape in order to draw broader historical conclusions. It had a long-term impact on the understanding of the Catalan rural landscape and approaches to it, although Simon was saddened that our final report on the survey was published in the USA, not Spain.⁶ By that time, the political climate in Tarragona had changed, with the closure of the TED'A in 1990, and Dupré moving to Rome. Nevertheless, the research had a significant impact, and has more recently been complemented by a study of the adjacent area undertaken by the Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica.

III. Roman Spain

Alongside his work on the Ager Tarraconensis survey, the period following his appointment at Southampton was marked by an energetic flourish in Simon's career. In 1988 he published a general account of Roman Spain, the first serious synthesis in English to appear since 1956 and the only one yet to put the archaeological evidence at its core.⁷ This became a highly influential introduction to the province, which was also published

⁶J.-M. Carreté, S. Keay & M. Millett, *A Roman Provincial Capital and its Hinterland: the survey of the territory of Tarragona, Spain, 1985–1990* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary series, 15; Ann Arbor, 1995).

⁷S. Keay, *Roman Spain* (London, 1988).

in Spanish in an enlarged edition in 1992.⁸ Research for this book took him to visit sites across the peninsula and provided him with a unique perspective on the whole region. Combined with his impressively wide knowledge of the archaeological literature, this established him as the leading authority on Roman Spain in the UK, whilst also being increasingly highly regarded amongst those working across Spain and Portugal.

With the completion of fieldwork for the Ager Tarraconensis survey, Simon's field focus moved towards southern Spain and shifted to urban sites. From 1987 to 1992, in collaboration with José Remesal Rodríguez and John Creighton, he led major excavations on the town of Celti (Peñaflor, Andalucía). This settlement, beside the Guadalquivir river, was a key centre for the production of the olive oil that was traded to Rome in huge volumes. The site was chosen for its potential to provide a good stratigraphic sequence, and the excavation provided key evidence for the area, allowing him to explore the development of the urban landscape in this important region from the pre-Roman period through to the 5th century AD.⁹ The work at Peñaflor included successful geophysical surveys (both magnetometry and electrical resistance survey) as well as the surface collection of ceramics. This built on some small-scale work that had been undertaken both at Vilauba and in the Ager Tarraconensis, and deployed technologies of data capture and analysis which were just coming to maturity at the time. This in turn led to a surface survey combined with a pioneering large-scale geophysical survey on the key Roman town of Italica (Santi Ponce), near Seville. This used large-scale electrical resistance survey and magnetometry to great effect, providing impressive new evidence for the Hadrianic planned town, including the plan of a previously unknown suite of baths and a late Antique defensive wall.¹⁰ Building on these interests in the urban landscape of Andalucía, he worked with colleagues in Southampton to develop new approaches that explored the networking of sites and issues of intervisibility on a regional scale, through computational means.¹¹ This methodological innovation complemented Simon's thinking

⁸ S. Keay, *Hispania Romana* (Barcelona, 1992).

⁹ S. Keay, J. Creighton & J. Remesal Rodríguez, *Celti (Peñaflor): the archaeology of a Hispano-Roman town in Baetica* (Oxford, 2000); S. Keay, J. Creighton & J. Remesal Rodríguez, *Celti (Peñaflor): la arqueología de una ciudad hispanorromana en la Baetica: prospecciones y excavaciones 1987-1992* (Sevilla, 2001).

¹⁰ J. Creighton, D. Jordan, S.J. Keay, I. Rodà de Llanza & J.M. Rodríguez Hidalgo, 'La Itálica de Adriano. Resultados de las prospecciones arqueológicas de 1991 y 1992', *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 72:179-180 (1999), 73-97, <https://doi.org/10.3989/aespa.1999.v72.297>

¹¹ L. Isaksen, G. Earl & S. Keay, 'Towns and Road Networks in Southern Spain During the Iberian and Roman Periods', in V. Mayoral & S. Celestino Pérez (eds), *Archaeological analysis of the territory, 2: Proceedings of the V International Symposium on Archeology of Mérida* (Mérida, 2011), 617-30; S. Keay & G. Earl, 'Inscriptions and social networks in western Baetica', in A. Sartori, & A. Valvo (eds), *Hiberia Italia, Italia-Hiberia* (Cisalpino, 2006), 269-90; S. Keay & G. Earl, 'Structuring of the provincial landscape: the towns of central and western Baetica in their geographical context', in G. Cruz Andreotti, P. Le Roux & P. Moret (eds), *La invención de una geografía de la Península Ibérica: II La época imperial* (Madrid, 2006), 305-58.

about the historical understanding of the region, a topic to which he returned in a series of papers over a number of years.¹² Indeed, those computational researchers with whom he worked frequently saw their disciplines and approaches in wholly new ways as a consequence of Simon's interventions and perspectives.

As his interests in Iberia broadened, he was also instrumental in organising a series of conferences which were successfully brought to publication, effectively bringing much significant Iberian scholarship to a broader audience.¹³ Always, he fulfilled a highly significant role in ensuring that research in the area was better known in the Anglophone world.¹⁴ Hence, even after the principal focus of his own research moved to Italy, Simon remained a key contributor to archaeology in Spain, serving in a series of advisory roles and receiving various honours. In 2009 he was elected corresponding member of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (where he also served on its scientific advisory board) and, in 2017, a corresponding member of the Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona.

IV. Italian towns

Simon's interest in Roman Italy went back to his undergraduate days, and he returned to active field research there in the mid 1990s. On his appointment as Director of the British School at Rome (BSR), Andrew Wallace-Hadrill made a strong effort to involve a wide group of UK academics in collaborations with the School. In this context Simon and I discussed our common interest in Roman urbanism and the application of geophysical survey for the large-scale mapping of sites. At Andrew's suggestion, we all three visited sites in the Tiber Valley, most notably Oriculum and Falerii Novi, and developed a plan to trial the use of magnetometry on these two sites in 1997. In the event, it proved difficult to gain a permit to do significant work at Oriculum (although this later became

¹² S. Keay, 'The Romanization of Turdetania', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 11:3 (1992), 275–315; S. Keay, 'Romanization in southern and eastern Spain to the time of Augustus', in J.M. Blázquez & J. Alvar (eds), *La romanización en el sur y el levante de España hasta la época de Augusto* (Madrid, 1996), 147–77; S. Keay, 'Romanization and the Hispaniae', in S. Keay & N. Terrenato (eds), *Italy and the West: Comparative Issues in Romanization*, (Oxford, 2001), 117–44.

¹³ B. Cunliffe & S. Keay (eds), *Social Complexity and the Development of Towns in Iberia (Proceedings of the British Academy)*, 86; 1995; S. Keay (ed.), *The Archaeology of Early Roman Baetica* (Portsmouth RI, 1998); M. Díaz-Andreu & S. Keay (eds), *The Archaeology of Iberia* (London, 1997); L. Abad Casal, S. Keay & S. Ramallo Asensio (eds), *Early Roman Towns in Hispania Tarraconensis* (Portsmouth RI, 2006).

¹⁴ S. Keay, 'Recent archaeological work in Roman Iberia (1990–2002)', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 93 (2003), 146–11; S. Keay, 'Map 24: Hispania Tarraconensis', in R. Talbert (ed.), *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Princeton, 2000); S. Keay, 'Iberia', in C. Smith (ed.), *Cambridge Ancient History Plates to volumes VII.2 and VIII* (Cambridge, 2013), 242–69.

possible), but the initial results from Falerii Novi were spectacular, allowing the team to map the whole of the intramural area, providing remarkably clear evidence for the plan of the whole site.¹⁵ The clarity of the image of the whole town plan had a major academic impact in Italy, and led to a broader plan using the same methods to map a series of other sites¹⁶ in the area under the umbrella of the British School at Rome's broader Tiber Valley Project.¹⁷ The quality of the evidence from Falerii was undoubtedly a catalyst that led to the wider adoption of magnetic survey within Italian archaeology.¹⁸ Our approach was subsequently extended to sites further afield in Italy,¹⁹ and led Simon to promote it institutionally through a long-lasting partnership between the BSR and Southampton University's Archaeological Prospection Service of Southampton (APSS) that he had established in 2001.

V. Portus and the Mediterranean

In terms of Simon's own research, the initial results from Falerii Novi also provided an opportunity that changed his career. At a dinner in the BSR in 1998 we showed Lidia Paroli the results of this survey, and she immediately saw the potential of such an approach in helping in the understanding of Portus, the port of imperial Rome, where the then Soprintendenza per I Beni Archeologici di Ostia needed further information to manage this huge and complex site. This led to an initial agreement with the Soprintendente,

¹⁵ S. Keay, M. Millett, S. Poppy, J. Robinson, J. Taylor & N. Terrenato, 'Falerii Novi: a new survey of the walled area', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 68 (2000), 1–93.

¹⁶ S. Keay, M. Millett & P. Johnson, 'Lesser urban sites in the Tiber Valley: Baccanae, Forum Cassii and Castellum Amerinum', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 72 (2004), 69–99; S. Keay, M. Millett & K. Strutt, 'An archaeological survey of Capena (La Civitucola, Provincia di Roma)', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 74 (2006), 73–118; C. Carlucci, M.A. De Lucia Brolli, M. Millett, S. Keay & K. Strutt, 'An archaeological survey of the Faliscan settlement at Vignale, *Falerii Veteres* (Province of Viterbo)', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 75 (2007), 39–121; S. Hay, P. Johnson, S. Keay & M. Millett, 'Falerii Novi: further survey of the northern extra-mural area', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 78 (2010), 1–38; S. Hay, S.J. Keay & M. Millett, *Otriculum (Otricoli, Province of Terni): an archaeological survey of the Roman town* (London, 2013).

¹⁷ H. Patterson, F. di Gennaro, H. di Giuseppe, S. Fontana, V. Gaffney, A. Harrison, S. Keay, M. Millett, M. Rendeli, P. Roberts, S. Stoddart, & R. Witcher, 'The Tiber valley project: the Tiber and Rome through two millennia', *Antiquity*, 74 (2000), 395–403.

¹⁸ See for instance F. Vermeulen, G.-J. Burgers, S. Keay & C. Corsi (eds), *Urban landscape survey in Italy and the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2012).

¹⁹ R. Ferraby, S. Hay, S. Keay & M. Millett, 'Archaeological survey at Fregellae 2004–05', in C. Corsi & E. Polito (eds), *Dalle sorgenti alla foce. Il bacino del Liri-Garigliano nell'antichità: culture contatti scambi*, (Roma, 2008), 125–31; S. Hay, S. Keay & M. Millett, 'Teano (*Teanum Sidicinum*), Campania', in F. Vermeulen, G.-J. Burgers, S. Keay & C. Corsi (eds), *Urban landscape survey in Italy and the Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2012), 105–13.

Anna Galina Zevi, for a survey of the area around the hexagonal harbour. The success of this work led to a survey of the whole of the port complex, which was published as a monograph which included the first major archaeological synthesis of the whole site.²⁰ On the basis of this reappraisal, Simon then embarked upon a major research programme to further elucidate Portus and its landscape.

His project included further geophysical survey undertaken over a number of years, exploring the Isola Sacra and leading to the discovery of a major canal system and the mapping of a hitherto hardly known quarter of Ostia on the northern side of the Tiber.²¹ This was complemented by collaborative geoarchaeological work which involved drilling cores in a number of the canals that had been found in the geophysical surveys. This innovative work has contributed to an entirely new understanding of the development of the landscape of the Tiber delta, and thus the whole development of Ostia and Portus.²²

However, the main focus of Simon's research was on large-scale excavations which explored a complex of buildings at the centre of the harbour area. The focus was on the so-called *Palazzio Imperiale* and an adjacent complex which Simon showed identified as *navalia* (ship-sheds) that opened onto the hexagonal inner harbour basin. These key excavations were undertaken on a grand scale and deployed the latest technology for recording and digital reconstruction, whilst also bringing together a large number of specialists and students from across the world. As such, they transformed both under-

²⁰ S. Keay, M. Millett, L. Paroli & K. Strutt, *Portus: An Archaeological Survey of the Port of Imperial Rome* (London, 2005).

²¹ P. Germoni, S. Keay & K. Strutt, 'Ostia beyond the Tiber: Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Isola Sacra', in *Ricerche su Ostia e il suo territorio: Atti del Terzo Seminario Ostiense (Roma, École française de Rome, 21-22 ottobre 2015)* (Rome, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.efr.3637>; S. Keay, M. Millett, K. Strutt & P. Germoni, *The Isola Sacra Survey: Ostia, Portus and the port system of Imperial Rome* (Cambridge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.55280>

²² F. Salomon, H. Delile, J.-P. Goiran, J.-P. Bravard & S. Keay, 'The Canale di Comunicazione Traverso in Portus: the Roman sea harbour under river influence (Tiber delta, Italy)', *Géomorphologie: Relief, Processus, Environnement*, 18:1 (2012), 75-90, <https://doi.org/10.4000/geomorphologie.9754>; S. Keay, M. Millett & K. Strutt, 'The canal system and Tiber Delta at Portus. Assessing the nature of man-made waterways and their relationship with the natural environment', *Water History*, 6:1 (2014), 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12685-013-0094-y>; F. Salomon, J.-P. Goiran, J.-P. Bravard, P. Arnaud, H. Djerbi, S. Kay & S. Keay, 'A harbour-canal at Portus: a geoarchaeological approach to the Canale Romano: Tiber delta, Italy', *Water History*, 6 (2014), 31-49, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12685-014-0099-1>; F. Salomon, S. Keay, K. Strutt, J.-P. Goiran, M. Millett & P. Germoni, 'Connecting Portus with Ostia: preliminary results of a geoarchaeological study of the navigable canal on the Isola Sacra', *Revue Archéologique de Narbonnaise*, 44 (2016), 293-303; F. Salomon, S. Keay, N. Carayon, & J.-P. Goiran, 'The development and characteristics of ancient harbours: Applying the PADM chart to the case studies of Ostia and Portus', *PLoS ONE*, 11:9 (2016), 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0162587>; F. Salomon, J.-P. Goiran, B. Noiro, E. Pleuger, E. Buckowiecki, I. Mazzini, P. Carbonel, A. Gadhoum, P. Arnaud, S. Keay, S. Zampini, S. Kay, M. Raddi, A. Ghelli, A. Pellegrino, C. Morelli & P. Germoni, 'Geoarchaeology of the Roman port-city of Ostia: fluvio-coastal mobility, urban development and resilience', *Earth-Science Reviews*, 177 (2018), 265-83.

standing of the site and the careers of many young researchers. At time of his death, the final reports on these excavations were nearing completion with Volume 1 soon to appear in print.²³ A regular series of interim reports had however been published throughout as well as other summary discussions,²⁴ and a scientific paper presenting the results of an isotopic study of bone and botanical remains from the excavation.²⁵ Alongside these, Simon also edited a pair of influential volumes which placed thinking on the site of Portus in its regional and imperial context.²⁶

This substantial work completely transformed understanding of Portus and its relationship both to the City of Rome and the Mediterranean as a whole. Simon's contribution further stimulated a wide range of other new research and so has placed the site at the centre of debates on the Roman economy. One of the key strands of his own thinking led to his elaboration of ideas about ports as systems and as nodes within networks, concepts that linked the archaeology with broader debates about the Roman economy. This formed the subject of his final major scheme – the *Portuslimen* Project – which was funded by a European Research Council Advanced Grant and co-directed with Pascal Arnaud.²⁷ This boldly sought to explore the character of and inter-connections between thirty selected ports in order to understand their role in the integration of the Mediterranean under the Roman Empire. This applied a range of archaeological methods in combination with ancient historical and palaeo-environmental studies, integrating the results, and thus interpreting individual port sites within a broader Mediterranean context to better

²³ The first volume is in press with Cambridge University Press: S. Keay with G. Earl & F. Felici, *Uncovering the Harbour Buildings. Excavations at Portus 2007–12, Volume 1: The Surveys, Excavations and Architectural Reconstructions of the Palazzo Imperiale and Adjacent buildings*. Two further volumes are planned: a second on the 2007–23 campaign, *Living and Trading at the Harbour of Imperial Rome. Excavations at Portus 2007–12, Volume 2: The Finds from the Palazzo Imperiale and Adjacent buildings*; and one on later work, *Excavations of the Residential Area of the Palazzo Imperiale (Areas D and K) at Portus (2013–15)*.

²⁴ Annual reports (under the title 'The Roman Ports Project') appeared in the *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 78 (2010), 330–33; 79 (2011), 385–87; 80 (2012), 374–76; 81 (2013), 366–71; 82 (2014), 335–38; 83 (2015), 302–08; 84 (2016), 306–11. See also S. Keay, G. Earl & F. Felici, 'Excavation and survey at the Palazzo Imperiale 2007–2009', in S. Keay & L. Paroli (eds), *Portus and Its Hinterland* (London, 2011), 67–92; S. Keay, G. Earl, F. Felici, P. Copeland, R. Cascino, S. Kay, C. Triantafyllou & A. Pellegrino, 'Interim report on an enigmatic new Trajanic building at Portus', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 25 (2012), 484–512; S. Keay, G. Earl, G. Beale, N. Davis, J. Ogden, K. Strutt, F. Felici, M. Millett, S. Kay & R. Cascino, 'Challenges of port landscapes: Integrating geophysics, open area excavation and computer graphic visualisation at Portus and the Isola Sacra', in P. Johnson & M. Millett (eds), *Archaeological Survey and the City* (Oxford, 2013), 303–57.

²⁵ T. O'Connell, R. Ballantyne, S. Hamilton-Dyer, E. Margiritis, S. Oxford, W. Pantano, M. Millett & S. Keay, 'Living and Dying at the Portus Romae', *Antiquity*, 93 (2019), 719–34.

²⁶ S. Keay & L. Paroli (eds), *Portus and its hinterland* (London, 2011); S. Keay (ed.), *Rome, Portus and the Mediterranean* (London, 2012).

²⁷ The importance of ERC funding was discussed in S. Keay, 'Connectivity – in the Roman Mediterranean, and in archaeological research', *British Academy Review*, 31 (Autumn 2017), 28–31.

understand the economic, social and political convergence that was achieved by the Roman empire.

The research included artefact studies as well as topographic work, and was conceived in a way that drew on a vast range of evidence central to contemporary debates about the nature of the Roman world. The first major publication from the work, *Roman Port Societies*,²⁸ illustrates the ambition and thinking behind the *Portuslimen*, illustrating the scale of the contribution that Simon was making at the peak of his academic career which was so tragically cut short. It demonstrates his mastery of the whole range of evidence across the Mediterranean. Furthermore, it served a key function in bringing together a network of academics, and especially younger scholars to create a vibrant research community.

V. The man

Simon's drive and energy will be obvious from the scale of his various contributions outlined above, particularly in the ambition of his final project which was conceived of on a scale that was appropriate to attempting to understand an entity as large as the Roman Empire. This reflects one aspect of his personality – his determination to undertake innovative research and not to be put off by any apparent barriers in the way. Despite this drive Simon was always a generous and outgoing person, who was at the centre of a series of networks of academic friends and colleagues, enjoying social interactions and conviviality. He also actively promoted the careers of younger colleagues, giving many of them important opportunities in the teams that he led, making them feel part of the enterprise, and ensuring that their contributions were valued and recognised. This was underpinned by his internationalism – Simon was a passionate European, one of the few UK-based archaeologists fully integrated within the community of Classical Archaeologists in the Mediterranean World where he was held in the highest regard. He was also a cultured man with a deep interest in music and the arts. Beyond all this, he was above all a family man and, despite his hectic professional life, Simon's wife, Nina, and sons, James and Leo, always remained at the centre of his world.

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²⁸ P. Arnaud & S. Keay (eds), *Roman Port Societies* (Cambridge, 2020). See especially Chapter 1 where Simon explains his thinking in designing the *Portuslimen* project.

Note on the author: Martin Millett is Professor Emeritus of Classical Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, and a Life Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2006.

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