

Urban Craftsmen and Traders in the Roman World

Edited by
ANDREW WILSON
and
MIKO FLOHR

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Fashionable Footwear: Craftsmen and Consumers in the North-West Provinces of the Roman Empire

Carol van Driel-Murray

In the Roman world, leather was used for a multitude of purposes, and it specifically played a key role in footwear. This chapter will focus on the economy of footwear and will analyse the remarkable similarities, throughout the empire, in both the final products and the technologies used in making them. Globalization is too fraught a concept, but there does seem to be integration to the extent that travellers would be familiar with most of the footwear displayed on market stalls wherever they went (Figs 6.1 and 6.7).¹ Regional differences may have persisted to a degree—certain forms of sandals in Egypt, for instance, or a preference for single-piece shoes (so-called *carbatinae*) in Germany—but craftsmen everywhere seem to have been able to participate in an empire-wide dialogue that comes close to our concept of ‘fashion’, in the sense of the contemporaneous stylistic development of clothing accessories across a wide geographical area and available to almost all social classes.²

The archaeological record is somewhat uneven in that finds tend to be concentrated at military settlements and in the frontier regions, while comparative material from the civilian hinterland is distressingly scarce. Nevertheless, in addition to a number of huge complexes, there are sufficient scattered finds to

¹ Woolf (1998: 169 ff.) also emphasizes the role of common ‘goods’ in the development of provincial culture.

² For dating and development, see van Driel-Murray (2001b). The term *carbatinae* is one of convenience used by archaeologists to identify footwear made of a single piece of leather, seamed at the back, of type without modern equivalents (Fig. 6.1, nos 10, 20, 25). For details of manufacture and shoe styles, see van Driel-Murray (2001a) and Volken (2014). See also Goldman (1994) and Leguilloux (2004), which includes Egyptian material,

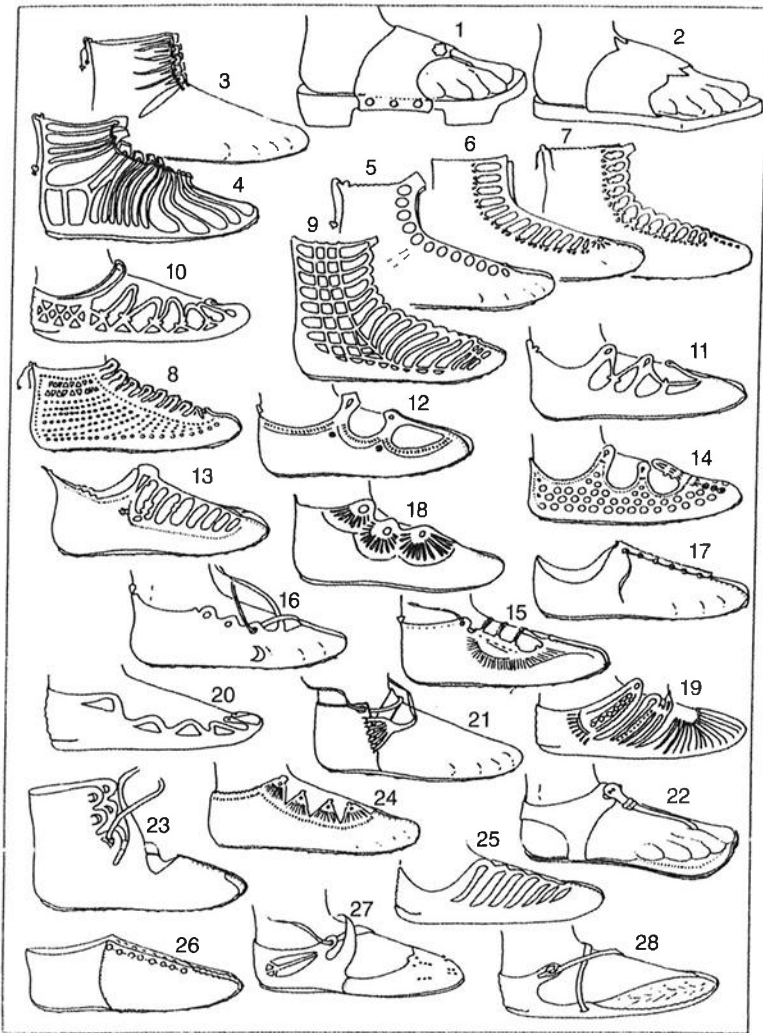


Fig. 6.1. Selection of Roman footwear, from first century AD (top left) to fourth century (bottom right). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

confirm that footwear was easily available, widely used, and readily discarded by both urban and rural populations (see Table 6.1). It was not a scarce and luxurious good, available only to the rich: indeed, footwear gave people of modest means a way of exhibiting individuality, taste, and style. As such it is not only the craftsmen but also the consumers who need to be taken into account when attempting to explain the remarkable similarities in the surviving material.

INTEGRATION

Images on coinage may have introduced the provincial population to elite hairstyles, but how did shoemakers acquire the knowledge of the latest models and the special technologies used to make them? That the *caligae* worn by Roman soldiers in Augustan Mainz are similar to those left by legionaries at Qasr Ibrim or Didymoi in Egypt is perhaps explicable in terms of military manufacturing conventions (Fig. 6.1, no. 4), but other parallels are more intriguing.³ With remarkable perspicacity, Martine Leguilloux recognized that a small fragment from Didymoi resembles a child's sandal from a barrack room in Vindolanda (Fig. 6.2).⁴ Identical shoes, of an infrequent and complicated pattern, appearing at the extreme north and the extreme south of the empire might suggest the movement of an individual, but this instance is by no means unique. Also recorded from Didymoi are front-laced shoes with frilled edges (style designation: Irthing, Fig. 6.3), well known in north Britain in the Antonine period, as well as the slightly later shoes with integral laces of style Geltsdale (Fig. 6.1, no. 16).⁵ Many more examples from Egypt or the Near East that happen to find their way into the published record can be paralleled in northern Europe, suggesting a considerable degree of uniformity in footwear

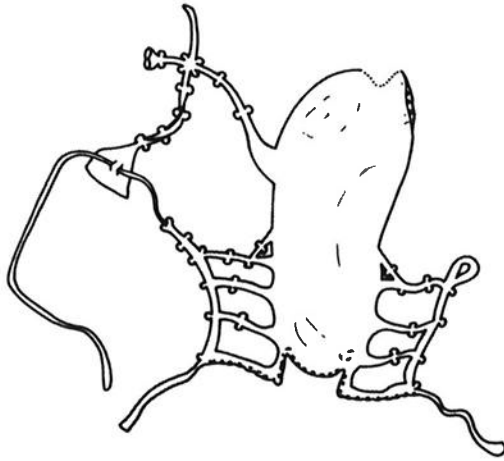


Fig. 6.2. Child's sandal from Vindolanda period IV (scale 1:3). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

³ Van Driel-Murray (1985; 1999a; 2001a: 362–4).

⁴ Leguilloux (2006: 31, fig. 9); van Driel-Murray (1998: fig. 5).

⁵ For ease of identification, common shoe styles are named after a settlement site or a location near a characteristic find spot: van Driel-Murray (2001b); Volken (2014: 78–9). Irthing: Leguilloux (2006: pl. 26, no. 135), cf. Charlesworth and Thornton (1973: no. 5). Geltsdale: Leguilloux (2006: pl. 26, no. 134) (laces snapped); cf. van Driel-Murray (2001a: 366–7). In all these cases, as with the *caligae*, there are sufficient differences for local manufacture to be certain.

design and technology throughout the Roman period. Connections over vast regions are even more pronounced in the case of sandals. Not only do the shapes, decorative motifs, and quite complex details of manufacturing technology appear in every province, but the entire trajectory of stylistic development also runs parallel throughout the empire. Thus the exaggerated shape of sandals after the second quarter of the third century can be paralleled at numerous sites all over the empire, from remote villas in the Yorkshire Wolds to North Africa (see Fig. 6.8).⁶

Remarkable expressions of what might be called *Zeitgeist* are the patterns in which shoe nails are arranged. Basically, the nails serve to hold the shoe construction together and to reinforce the sole, but shoemakers regularly embellished their work with elaborate, non-essential decorative patterns (Fig. 6.5). Some, like tridents and swastikas, occur fairly regularly, but others are quite restricted in their popularity. Thus diamonds tend to occur after AD 150, elaborate tendrils appear after AD 170, S's after c.190, big asymmetrical

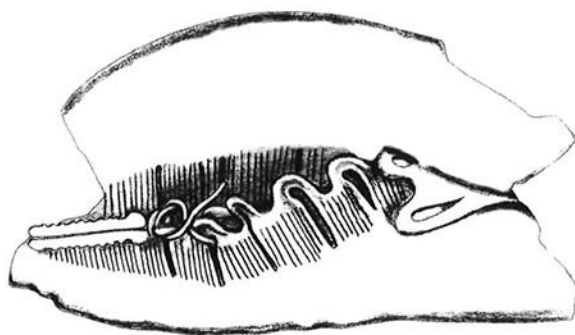


Fig. 6.3. Shoe style Irthing from Didymoi, Egypt. Image: Carol van Driel-Murray after Leguilloux (2006: pl. 26).

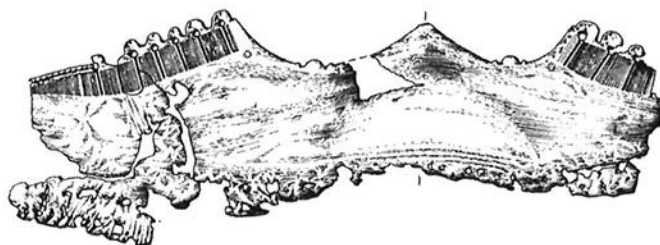


Fig. 6.4. Shoe style Irthing from Hardknott UK. Image: Charlesworth and Thornton (1973: fig. 5). Not to scale.

⁶ Dunbabin (1990); Mould (1990), van Driel-Murray (2001b: fig. 3).

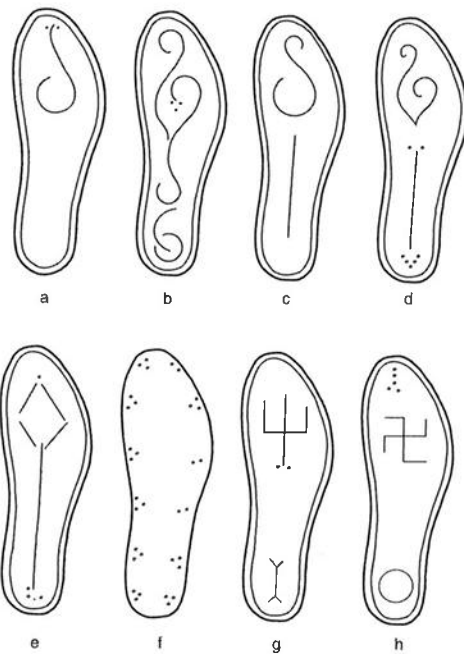


Fig. 6.5. Diagrammatic selection of nailing patterns. Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

S-shapes *c.* AD 220–30, while groups of triple nails are characteristic of the second half of the third and early fourth centuries.⁷ These are not random momentary inspirations: people evidently drew on common experiences that could be expressed in a tangible form. Whatever the actual meaning of the symbolism, or the methods by which this knowledge was communicated, the choices made clearly involve the mechanisms of production as well as the desires of consumers.

LEATHER PRODUCTION AS AN ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

In the northern provinces, the Roman Conquest marked a distinct change in leatherworking practices. Not only was the method of vegetable-tanning introduced as a new procedure, but an entire package of novel products appeared, together with the specific technologies associated with their manufacture.⁸ There was a considerable increase in the scale of leather production, and procedures

⁷ Van Driel-Murray (1999b: fig. 1).

⁸ Groenman-van Waateringe (1967); van Driel-Murray (2001a: 345–8; 2008); Winterbottom (2009).

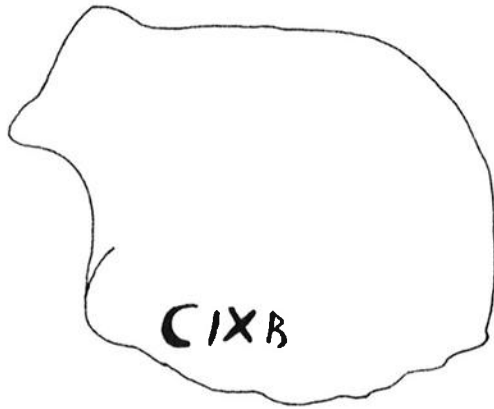


Fig. 6.6. Vindolanda: off-cut stamped with *C(oh). IX Bat(avorum)* (scale 1:3). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

became more complex and time-consuming. Newly introduced, alien technologies often remain divorced from the pre-existing economic structures, and retain their separate organization primarily on account of capital investment and the restriction of technical knowledge.⁹ In the case of tanning, we may also be seeing a shift from female-controlled skin-processing to male-dominated large-scale manufacturing, which would further dislocate native practices.

Although tannery structures have been identified in the cities of Roman Italy, north of the Alps tanning was not an urban industry: as a newly introduced technology, operations could be freely sited in the most appropriate location, and the economic rationale for organization may well differ from what we would expect on the basis of medieval and early modern practice.¹⁰ For instance, separating operations such as flaying and initial cleansing from the actual tanning process may have made economic sense, in order to maximize the extraction of what we would now deem 'waste products'. Recuperating horn, sinew, hair, and glue in addition to the hides would affect not only the location of the industry but also the nature of the waste left over. This is perhaps why it is so very difficult to identify tannery locations in the archaeological record.¹¹

The military demand for leather goods—footwear, tents, covers of all kinds, horse gear—was vast, and the introduction of tanning was initially geared exclusively to military supply.¹² The imposition of taxes in kind, such as the cowhide tax levied on the Frisians, drew raw materials from underdeveloped regions for processing in the more stable hinterland, and, though soldiers may have been

⁹ Bennett (1996: 82–4).

¹⁰ On tannery structures in Roman Italy, see Leguilloux (2002).

¹¹ Vanderhoeven and Ervynck (2007); van Driel-Murray (2011).

¹² Groenman-van Waateringe (1967); van Driel-Murray (1993); Winterbottom (2009).

involved in preparing the hides for transport, tanning (in contrast to shoemaking) was not carried out at the forts themselves.¹³ Tanning seems always to have remained in the hands of large operators—it is a capital-intensive industry, where investments are tied up for several years, and it also requires a well-organized infrastructure with secure and continuous supplies of hides and other raw materials. The organization of the process and the installations involved also imply an increase in the scale of production and the availability of leather, thus further stimulating its use. Presumably only major entrepreneurs would have the managerial skills and financial resources to do this, but details of tannery organization are obscure. It may be significant that the so-called tanners' stamps on hides are generally in the *tria nomina* form, but examples are relatively infrequent, and there is so little duplication that extreme consolidation is unlikely.¹⁴ Indeed, it is strange that such a major industry has left so little epigraphic or iconographic evidence, and I sometimes wonder whether major estate-owners controlled the entire chain of activities, from slaughter to glue making, using their own personnel, but perhaps putting certain activities, like tanning itself, out to specialists. Likewise, the Cohors IX Batavorum, stationed at Vindolanda, seems to have retained administrative control of hides taken from its own food animals, putting them out to be tanned by non-military entrepreneurs (Fig. 6.6).¹⁵ Exactly how a new industry is established, and how the transition from military to civilian control occurs, are difficult to track archaeologically. However, here an analogy with the introduction of vegetable tanning in sub-Saharan Africa may be instructive. In this region, the spread of leather technology was closely associated with that of Islam, and the first tanners were brought to Niger in the 1850s as slaves of the sultan. As freed men, they later worked in the households of the great pre-colonial merchants; as a result, leatherworkers and tanners still continue to be regarded as outsiders.¹⁶ The restriction of knowledge to select groups might account for the loss of tanning technology in the northern provinces, as Roman influence waned in the fourth century.

CRAFTSMEN AND PRODUCERS

Archaeologically, shoemakers' workplaces are practically invisible: the tools are simple, and the products are sold and dispersed—all that is left is the characteristic refuse, small snippets of leather that reveal the presence of shoemakers at settlements of all kinds: urban, military, and roadside settlements (*vici*), and even some rural locations. The mass market in Rome may have encouraged considerable specialization, but modern re-enactors have

¹³ Van Driel-Murray (1985, 2008).

¹⁴ Van Driel-Murray (1977).

¹⁵ Van Driel-Murray (1993: 64–5, figs 26–7).

¹⁶ Arnould (1984: 137).

convincingly demonstrated that a competent craftsman is quite capable of producing the full range of footwear, from cork-soled slippers to nailed boots, using the same basic toolkit.¹⁷ Shoemakers in the mining community at Vipasca were expected to supply varied footwear styles as well as their own hobnails as part of their concession, and failure to do so meant clients were free to take their custom elsewhere.¹⁸ The small provincial town at Nijmegen (*Ulpia Noviomagus*) was able to support a professional association of shoemakers, which suggests the presence of a number of independent craftsmen, while rather enigmatic, official-looking stamps on late-second-century AD sandals and slippers in the Rhineland also hint at craftsmen working in some sort of corporate organization (see Fig. 6.10, right).¹⁹ Details of organizational structures are elusive, and it is here that one could perhaps expect the differences between the northern provinces and the Mediterranean areas to be most marked.

This all tends to suggest a lack of product specialization, but whether these individuals worked alone or were collected into larger workplaces must remain open. Perhaps too much conditioned by medieval analogies and literary conventions, we frequently envisage the shoemaker as a humble, poverty-stricken, yet independent and argumentative figure.²⁰ Nevertheless, the apparent personal links recorded between wealthy families and freedmen involved in shoemaking in Pizzone and Ostia are a salutary reminder that, in a society with slaves, freedmen, and—in the northern provinces—tribal dependants, larger-scale organizations are certainly conceivable, particularly when the technology had been introduced to new regions in the wake of military conquest.²¹ In many cases, tombstones with depictions of craftsmen in all probability commemorate entrepreneurs controlling the activity rather than the workers themselves, with symbolic vignettes illustrating the trade concerned.²² Bringing craftsmen together could lead to specialization and economies of scale, but individual shoemakers would have the advantage of flexibility, and, perhaps, innovation. Nevertheless, the contrast between the ubiquity of shoemakers' off-cuts, the scarcity of shoemakers' tombstones, and the remarkable lack of memorials to tanners suggests considerable caution in the interpretation of this sort of evidence.

Without documentation, degrees of dependency cannot be reconstructed from finds alone. Moreover, shoemaking and cobbling are mobile trades relying more on the skill of the craftsman than a complex toolkit or fixed installations, and are therefore easily taken up by individuals seeking means of support. On the

¹⁷ As Ivor Lawton demonstrated vividly in 2007 in the archaeological park at Xanten. See also Volken (2008, 2014). On specialization in Rome, see Leguilloux (2004: tableau IIA).

¹⁸ Domergue (1983).

¹⁹ Van Driel-Murray (1977; 2001a: 33, 38–9, figs 2–3 and 26c).

²⁰ Lau (1967).

²¹ De' Spagnolis (2000: 71–3).

²² Such as the well-dressed Septimia Stratonice, who flourishes what seems to be a last or a shoemaker's anvil as a trade symbol (*CIL* 14, suppl. 4698), while the sarcophagus dedicated to T. Flavius Trophimus by friends with links to Pizzone depicts both shoemaking and the twining of flax or tendons. Zimmer (1982: nos 47–52); van Driel-Murray (2008: 491).

other hand, dependent craftsmen answering to a distant master, and the personal networks of slaves and freedmen acting as agents abroad, would enable the rapid dissemination of new ideas and technological information.²³ Furthermore, the widespread use of papyrus patterns in the Egyptian textile industry raises the intriguing possibility of the more general existence of craftsmen's workbooks with details of manufacturing technology.²⁴ Parallel modes of transmission, applicable to both free and dependent labour, may be found in apprenticeships.²⁵ Apprenticeships outside the family, coupled to the mobility of trained craftsmen in order to reduce competition in their home town, provide a dynamic context for transmission of ideas. There is likely to be considerable diversity in actual practice, with operators acting at different levels of complexity. Regional markets also provide an environment for communication and competition, with craftsmen from different areas coming together to offer their wares for sale, interacting with each other as well as with clients.

CONSUMERISM

All military camps on the frontiers—legionary as well as auxiliary—were self-sufficient in footwear manufacture, and it is a small step to seeing ex-servicemen as the initiators of this craft in the new provinces. The role of military shoemakers may also explain the overwhelming preference for nailed footwear in the northern provinces (Table 6.1). Though evidence is not particularly abundant, in the Mediterranean and Egypt civilian footwear is

Table 6.1. Shoe types per site

Site	Carbatina (%)	Sewn (%)	Sandal (%)	Nailed (%)	Slipper (%)	Total no.
Vindolanda VI	5	5	5	83	2	333
Vindolanda 7/8	8	5	12	72	3	365
London NFW	2	11	26	59	2	129
Voorburg	6	4	15	75	0	111
Valkenburg Marktveld	1.5	1.5	13	83	1	304
Welzheim	24	6	8	57	5	177
Saalburg	18	12	10	60	?	262

Sources: Vindolanda: van Driel-Murray (2001b: 187); Saalburg: Busch (1965); Welzheim: van Driel-Murray (1999c); London: MacConnoran (1986); Valkenburg: Hoesenberg (1993); Voorburg: van Driel-Murray, Pollmann, and Richter (2014). The sites are not all quantified in the same way, though it may be assumed that each author is consistent. The totals for the Saalburg have been corrected to account for fragmentation.

²³ Broekaert, Chapter 10, this volume.

²⁴ Stauffer (2008).

²⁵ Freu, Chapter 8, this volume.

generally soft soled, and only certain forms of heavy-duty footwear—as worn by soldiers or labourers—had the additional hobnails. But north of the Alps, shoes and sandals with nailed soles are the norm, even for very young children, and remain so until the fourth century

Civilian settlements founded in Britain soon after conquest already reveal a rapid uptake of new footwear types, all radically different in style and technology from the footwear of the Iron Age communities and by the mid-second century even quite remote areas were obtaining Roman-style shoes and boots. On the continent the process is completed rather earlier, and it seems as though it takes about three generations from the earliest introduction in towns and military settlements to general availability in rural areas.

The population at large was being offered an unprecedented choice of desirable novelties, a situation not repeated till the 'consumer revolution' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Fig. 6.7). Kevin Greene has shown the potential of applying the concept of 'consumerism' to Roman material culture, drawing the wishes of the consumer into explanations for technological innovation in craft production.²⁶

Roman footwear of the first three centuries AD answers all the consumerist criteria. In the northern provinces, for the first time, a simple desire for novelties becomes visible in the basic apparel of a wide segment of the population. The adoption is not just a matter of improved quality: shoes are indeed better made and longer lasting than previously, but they are above all extremely attractive and varied (Figs 6.1 and 6.7). Hallmarks of consumerism



Fig. 6.7 A choice of fourth-century shoes from Cuijk (reproductions made by Olaf Goubitz 2004). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

²⁶ Greene (2007–2008).

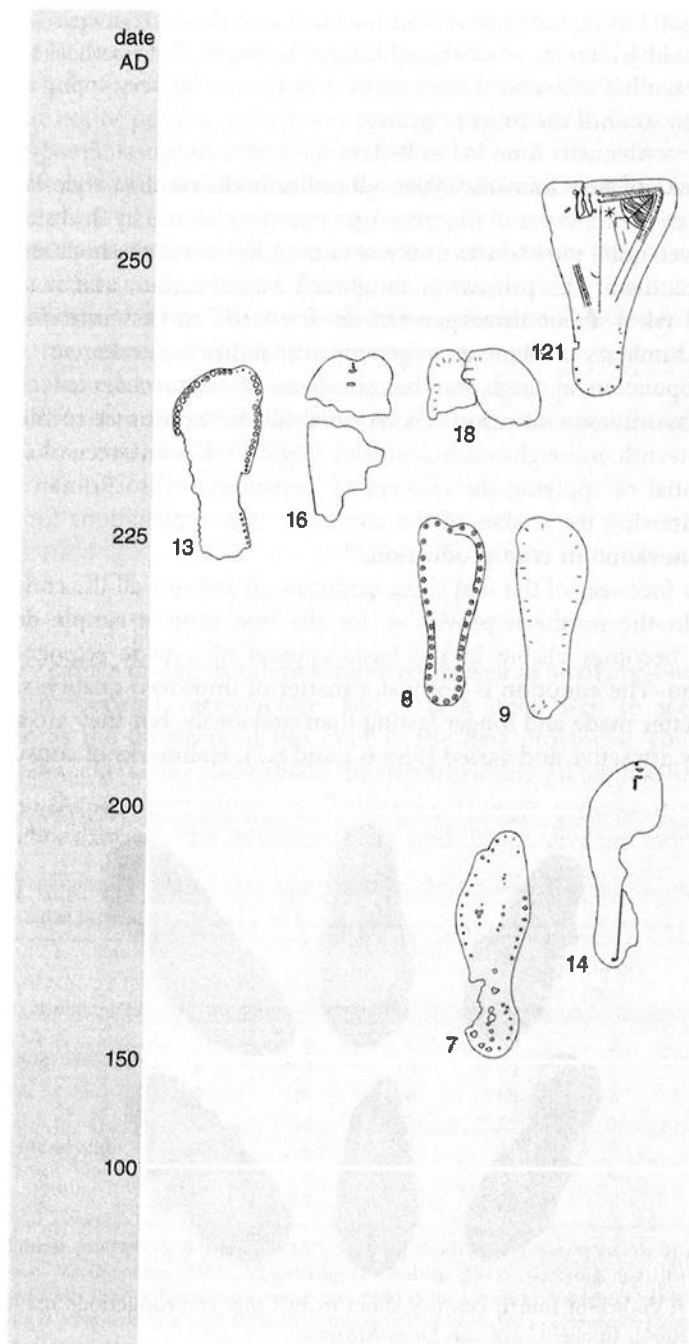


Fig. 6.8. Dated sequence of changing sandal shapes from Voorburg (The Netherlands).
Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

are rapidity of change and inbuilt redundancy: and this is exactly what we see in footwear. Change is often radical, following classic fashion cycles—high to low, narrow to broad, rounded toes to pointed—the extremes often being followed by the disappearance of the style and the emergence of something completely new. Within the general trend there is also ample room for personal expression. At Voorburg (*Forum Hadriani*), a small and not very successful town in the territory of the *Canannefates* in *Germania Inferior*, most men wore fashionable wide sandals in the 220s and 230s, but a few trend-setters went for really exaggerated forms—forms that also appear elsewhere across the empire, as though defining a particular lifestyle (Figs. 6.5 and 6.9). These exaggerated soles are more simply made than earlier sandals: perhaps they were meant to be worn only briefly during the summer, but a simple construction also allows for more experimentation and a quicker turnover. Renewal of clothing in the spring (as is suggested by the appearance of springtime astrological symbolism on third-century sandal soles) may also lie behind the rather abrupt changes in shape in this period.²⁷

Among the issues emerging in the debate surrounding pre-industrial consumerist behaviour is functional differentiation in material culture. In contrast to both earlier and later periods, the provincial Roman population had access



Fig. 6.9. Sandal soles from Voorburg (mid-second century—c. AD 230). Image: A. Dekker, Amsterdam Archaeological Centre, University of Amsterdam.

²⁷ Van Driel-Murray (1999b: 134, figs 2–3); van Driel-Murray, Pollmann, and Richter (2014: 723–5, fig. II-10.20)

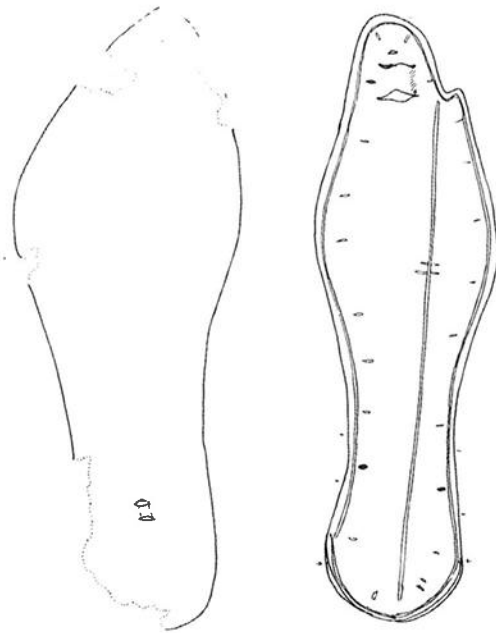


Fig. 6.10. De Meern: the boatman's shoes. One of each pair: left, insole of the nailed shoe; right, sandal (scale 1:3). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

to footwear made for different purposes, and individuals evidently possessed more than one set of shoes.²⁸ Unsurprisingly, the family of the commander at Vindolanda possessed a wide range of footwear, but even the boatmen on two capsized barges in the Rhine aspired to sandals for best wear in addition to their closed, work shoes (Figs. 6.10–6.11).²⁹ Simply differentiating footwear from a number of late second- and early third-century sites on the basis of construction method reveals the extent of consumer choice (Table 6.1). Within each technological group further variation in style, fastening method, and decoration was available, allowing the consumer to vary apparel according to the occasion. The high proportion of single-piece shoes in *Germania Superior* contrasts markedly with the scarcity of the form elsewhere at this time, while sandals increase sharply in popularity in the third century, especially in urban centres like London. Military sites are characterized by very high (<70 per

²⁸ Closed shoes, low-cut shoes, boots, sandals, shoes with soft soles or with hobnails, slippers, wooden pattens, single-piece shoes (*carbatinae*): for the range available at a particular point in time at a single site, see Van Driel-Murray (1999c) (Welzheim).

²⁹ Vindolanda: Van Driel-Murray (1993: 45–7 fig. 16); Woerden: Van Driel-Murray (1996: fig 11–12).

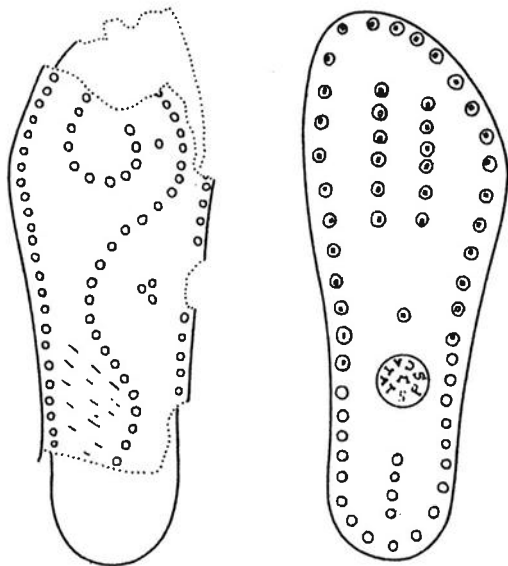


Fig. 6.11. Woerden: the boatman's shoes. One of each pair: left, nailed shoe; right, sandal (scale 1:3). Image: Carol van Driel-Murray.

cent) percentages of closed, nailed footwear, but the extent of the accompanying civilian population at some forts, like the Saalburg, is revealed by the more even distribution across the different types.

The importance of being correctly dressed resonates with studies stressing the role of gentility, style, and good manners in the consumer revolution of the eighteenth century. Leaving aside the ongoing discussion around 'Romanization', such factors evidently affect any assessment of the depth of Roman influence on daily life as experienced by the provincial population. At present the provincial Roman debate is dominated by the idea of 'elites' stimulating the uptake of Roman goods, with acquisition being seen in terms of competition and political status. But imitation is not necessarily emulation, and the varying proportions illustrate rather a sense of community, within which personal display was negotiable.³⁰ In its recognition of the cumulative power of small inexpensive purchases, consumer theory is particularly relevant for items like footwear. As Spufford shows for the immediately pre-industrial period, such novelties gave people of modest means the opportunity of expressing both taste and individuality within their own circles. Even the workers at a remote upland cattle yard at Pontefract (Yorkshire) aspired to fashionably pointed hobnailed boots, contrasting with a distinct lack of interest in Roman pottery.³¹ The appearance of Roman-style footwear on rural sites

³⁰ Woolf (1998: 170–1).

³¹ Van Driel-Murray (2001d: pl. 9).

especially reveals a very real diversion of resources towards items of readily discarded apparel, something hardly seen at all either in the Iron Age or for much of the Middle Ages.

While it is widely recognized that clothing and accessories are culturally constructed commodities, with complex symbolic properties, there is little research into exactly why people purchase some items but not others. Was choice dependent on availability (that is, production driven) or does the consumer actually activate the producer?

CONSUMERS

In some circumstances the makers were certainly free to respond to specific client demand. At both the Saalburg (late second or early third century) and Cuijk (Netherlands, fourth century) a substantial proportion of the footwear collection is composed of distinctive styles with parallels in north Germany and Denmark, which were made for the Germanic mercenaries (and their families) serving at the fort (Fig. 6.1, no. 19; Fig. 6.7, top right).³² Style and design are foreign, but the materials and technology follow the established traditions of provincial Roman footwear manufacture. Here, the desire of clients to maintain their tribal identity stimulated local craftsmen to add to their repertoire.³³

The shoe sizes themselves can tell us something about who was making the purchases. The size distribution of footwear in most Roman settlements reveals fairly equal proportions of men, women, and children, a pattern comparable to that seen in Late Medieval towns such as Lübeck or London.³⁴ Here, the increasing prominence of children's shoes throughout the Middle Ages is an indicator of prosperity levels and contrasts strongly with prehistoric and early medieval footwear, which is largely confined to male sizes. Footwear is not actually an essential item of clothing: until quite recent times, women and children went barefoot in rural Ireland and Scotland, while men were shod.³⁵ Even though the very poorest remain invisible to us, in the Roman provinces shoes seem to have been accessible to much of the population: men, women, and children alike. This seems to me to be a fairly obvious measure of increasing standards of living and attention to the comfort of the entire family. Indeed, the obviously Mediterranean fashion of wearing sandals seems to have been seized upon by women already in the first century AD, while men begin to wear sandals regularly only from the later second century AD onwards. In

³² Busch (1965); van Driel-Murray (2007).

³³ Van Driel-Murray (2009: 815–6).

³⁴ Vons-Comis (1982: fig. 90); Grew and Neergard (1988: 104); van Driel-Murray (2001a: 360–1).

³⁵ Lucas (1956: 353).

footwear, we can to some extent see gendered responses to Roman consumer goods. The feminization of consumption is a significant factor in the development of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century production and retail distribution, and it would certainly be worth investigating other Roman consumption patterns from this perspective.

MARKETING

Did people simply buy what was on offer? Studies of early modern consumerism emphasize the importance of developing communication networks and retail outlets in making novelties accessible to a wide clientele. Margaret Spufford, in her study *The Great Reclathing of Rural England*, emphasized the role of chapmen and peddlers in the quite rapid diffusion of novelties in apparel from urban centres to rural areas and the mechanisms she describes for the seventeenth century would certainly be applicable to the Roman world. The interesting thing here is that the whole system of suppliers, distributors, and retailers mediated between producers and consumers. Knowledge of the most recent developments in fashion and accessories was passed via personal networks to the country towns and into the rural hinterlands. But, ultimately, it was the consumer who actually made the choices, thereby affecting the selection of goods on offer on the chapman's next journey out.

For the Mediterranean area De Ligt has discussed the networks of local and regional markets and annual festivals that brought consumers and producers together.³⁶ This model of periodic gatherings for commercial exchange has never been fully exploited to explain the spread of low-value consumer goods in the northern provinces, though it would reinforce the significance of rural cult centres and roadside settlements in the social and economic structures of poorly urbanized regions. In conjunction with travelling peddlers, even quite remote areas could connect with international trends. Markets also form the arena for negotiation between consumer and producer: leatherworkers from different ethnic groups congregating at weekly markets in West Africa exchange ideas, and, though distinct ethnic traditions are maintained, Frank observed that craftsmen are prepared to make anything according to the wishes of the customer.³⁷ The Germanic-style shoes and *fibulae* manufactured on the Saalburg are products of similar processes of negotiation, where customer demand prevailed. Shoes may have been made in series and hawked around, but sandals at any rate seem to have been made individually, and the regular finds of small

³⁶ De Ligt (1993).

³⁷ Frank (1998: 148–9).

amounts of offcuts in rural sites from the mid-second century onwards may even suggest itinerant shoemakers making to order.

However, the interpretation of rural consumer economies is not so straightforward. Indeed, it may be questioned whether people had free access to consumer goods at all. Many possibly lived in various forms of dependency and may have been constrained, receiving goods only on special occasions or directly through their patron, and landowners may have controlled not only travel to fairs and markets, but also the goods offered there, if these were on their land—as was the case on Russian and Polish serf estates.³⁸ This makes some find contexts hard to interpret. Large numbers of worn-out shoes dumped in wells in, for example, Welzheim or Tollgate Farm (Staffordshire) may represent the welcome visit of an itinerant shoemaker, but could just as well be the result of a great re-clothing of estate (or military) personnel.³⁹ Complicating the interpretation of such unusual complexes still further is the widespread use of footwear in ritual activities, which makes finds from wells and water sources somewhat suspect for simple economic explanations.⁴⁰

MOBILITY

The mobility of the customers themselves is an issue hardly raised in connection with consumption patterns, despite the evidence for regular private travel.⁴¹ Indeed, the worn-out boots left by travellers could well have served as models for local craftsmen. Occasionally individual travellers may be suspected, and the Germanic-style footwear on military sites such as the Saalburg and Cuijk (Netherlands) has already been mentioned. Familiarity with Roman footwear, and some actual imports, seem to have influenced shoes outside the frontier, in Scotland and northern Germany.⁴² Especially in the frontier provinces, the influence of the highly mobile military population—soldiers as well as their families—should not be underestimated in the spread of new ideas. Fashion change in the sixteenth century is strongly related to military movements, and, though the army cannot be the only instigator, the general impression of the appearance of new stimuli at times of high military mobility does remain. The elaborate nailing and the spread of sandal-wearing among males at the time of the Marcomannic wars may not be coincidence, while the profusion of new forms in the first half of the third century is

³⁸ Domianal markets, cf. de Ligt (1993: 156–8).

³⁹ Van Driel-Murray (1999c); Tollgate Farm: Hollis (2011); Thomas and Thomas (2012).

⁴⁰ Van Driel-Murray (1999b). ⁴¹ Handley (2011: 11).

⁴² Hald (1972: 56–7) was the first to draw attention to this, and work in progress on finds in various northern museums confirms the extent of influence on native footwear, particularly in decorative details.

suggestive of social as well as political insecurity. But such renewal in fashions can also signal times of social change and increasing competition, and the lack of comparative evidence from the Mediterranean regions makes me wary of such simplistic explanations. Nevertheless, personal mobility, both military and civilian, must be a factor in the homogenization of fashion consciousness and the development of a communal aesthetic sense.

CONCLUSION

Many scholars dispute whether it is possible to reach the mass of the population of the Roman Empire, and, indeed, the poorest will no doubt remain ever invisible. But consumer theory, developed in relation to the material legacy of the period immediately before the Industrial Revolution, does offer the possibility of understanding the motivation of the non-elite and the influence their individual choices brought to bear on the manufacturing process. Items of dress such as shoes (but also *fibulae*, hairpins, and buckles), widely distributed and easily discarded, offer an insight into the way quite ordinary people (the 'middling sort' of consumer studies) accessed new idioms and developed a taste for goods that made them recognizably part of the wider world. They were prepared to divert resources from basic subsistence needs to obtain ephemeral goods that added to the comfort of themselves and their family as well as enhancing their feelings of self-worth. That international styles of footwear are so widespread and are found in such large quantities reveals, I believe, that the Roman impact on technology, craft production, and personal bearing went far deeper than is often allowed.

REFERENCES

- Arnould, E. J. (1984). 'Marketing and Social Reproduction in Zinder, Niger Republic' in R. M. Netting, R. R. Wilk, and E. J. Arnould (eds), *Households. Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*. Berkeley, 130-62.
- Bennett, J. M. (1996). *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World 1300-1600*. Oxford.
- Busch, A. L. (1965). 'Die römerzeitlichen Schuh- und Lederfunde der Kastelle Saalburg, Zugmantel und Kleiner Feldberg' *Saalburg-Jahrbuch* 22: 158-210.
- Charlesworth, D., and Thornton, J. H. (1973). 'Leather Found in Mediobogdum, the Roman fort of Hardknott' *Britannia* 4: 141-52.
- De' Spagnolis, M. (2000). *La Tomba del Calzolaio: Dalla necropolis monumentale romana di Nocera Superiore*. Rome.
-

- Domergue, C. (1983). *La Mine antique d'Aljustrel (Portugal) et les tables de bronze de Vipasca*. Paris.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1977). 'Stamped Leatherwork from Zwammerdam' in B. L. van Beek, R. W. Brandt, and W. Groenman-van Waateringe (eds), *Ex Horreo, IPP 1951-1976*. Amsterdam, 151-64.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1985). 'The Production and Supply of Military Leatherwork in the First and Second Centuries AD: A Review of the Archaeological Evidence' in M. C. Bishop (ed.), *The Production and Distribution of Roman Military Equipment* (BAR International Series, 275). Oxford, 43-81.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1993). 'The Leatherwork', in R. Birley (ed.), *Vindolanda Research Reports*, iii. *The Early Wooden Forts*. Hexham, 1-75.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1996). 'Die Schuhe aus Schiff I und ein lederner Schildüberzug', in J. K. Haalebos, 'Ein römisches Getreideschiff in Woerden', *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 43: 493-8.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1998). 'Women in Forts?', *Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa. Jahresbericht 1997*: 55-61.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1999a). 'Dead Men's Shoes', in W. Schlüter and R. Wiegels (eds), *Rom, Germanien und die Ausgrabungen von Kalkriese*. Osnabrück, 169-89.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1999b). 'And did those feet in ancient time Feet and Shoes as a Material Projection of the Self' in P. Baker, C. Forcey, S. Jundi, and R. Witcher (eds), *TRAC 98: Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Leicester 1998*. Oxford, 131-40.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (1999c). *Das Ostkastell von Welzheim, Rems-Murr-Kreis: Die römischen Lederfunde* (Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg, 42). Stuttgart.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2001a). 'Footwear in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire', in O. Goubitz, W. Groenman van Waateringe, and C. van Driel-Murray, *Stepping through Time: Archaeological Footwear from Prehistoric Times until 1800*. Zwolle, 337-75.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2001b). 'Vindolanda and the Dating of Roman Footwear', *Britannia* 32: 185-97.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2001c). 'Technology Transfer: The Introduction and Loss of Tanning Technology during the Roman Period', in M. Polfer (ed.), *L'Artisanat romain: Évolutions, continuités et ruptures (Italie et provinces occidentales)*. Montagnac, 55-68.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2001d). 'Hobnails', in S. Wrathmell, *Romano-British Enclosures at Apple Tree Close, Pontefract, West Yorkshire*. Wakefield, 20-23.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2007). 'Mode in de nadagen van het Keizerrijk: De schoenen van Cuijk' *Westerheem* 56: 133-41.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2008). 'Tanning and Leather', in J. P. Oleson (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*. Oxford, 483-95.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2009). 'Ethnic Recruitment and Military Mobility', in A. Morillo, N. Hanel, and E. Martín (eds), *Limes XX: Roman Frontier Studies*. Madrid, 813-23.
- Driel-Murray, C. van (2011). 'Are we Missing Something? The Elusive Tanneries of the Roman Period', in R. Thomson and Q. Mould (eds), *Leather Tanneries: The Archaeological Evidence*. London, 69-83.

- Driel-Murray, C. van, Pollmann, K., and Richter, E. (2014). 'De leervondsten van Voorburg-Arentsburg' in M. Driessen and E. Besselsen (eds), *Voorburg-Arentsburg. Een Romeinse havenstad tussen Rijn en Maas* (University of Amsterdam, Themata 7). Amsterdam, 717–39.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. (1990). 'Ipsa deae vestigia Footprints Divine and Human on Graeco-Roman Monuments' *JRA* 3: 85–109.
- Frank, B. E. (1998). *Mande Potters and Leatherworkers: Art and Heritage in West Africa*. Washington.
- Goldman, N. (1994). 'Roman Footwear' in J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante (eds), *The World of Roman Costume*. Madison, 101–29.
- Greene, K. (2007). 'Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Invention and Innovation: The Case of Lead-Glazed Pottery', *AJA* 111. 653–71.
- Greene, K. (2008). 'Learning to Consume: Consumption and Consumerism in the Roman Empire', *JRA* 21. 64–82.
- Grew, F., and Neergard, M. de (1988). *Shoes and Pattens: Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 2*. London.
- Groenman-van Waateringe, W (1967). *Romeins lederwerk uit Valkenburg Z.H.* Groningen.
- Hald, M. (1972). *Primitive Shoes: An Archaeological–Ethnological Study Based upon Shoe Finds from the Jutland Peninsula*. Copenhagen.
- Handley, M. (2011). *Dying on Foreign Shores: Travel and Mobility in the Late-Antique West* (JRA, Supplementary Series, 86). Portsmouth, RI.
- Himmeler, F. (2008). 'Testing the 'Ramshaw' Boot—Experimental Calceology on the March', *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 16: 347–57
- Hoevenberg, J. (1993). 'Leather Artefacts' in R. M. Dierendonck, D. P. Hallewas, and K. E. Waugh (eds), *The Valkenburg Excavations 1985–1988*. Amersfoort, 217–340.
- Hollis, W (2011). 'Rubbish or Ritual? Roman Well Yields its Booty' *Current Archaeology* 253: 36–41.
- Lau, O. (1967). *Schuster und Schusterhandwerk in de griechisch-römischen Literatur und Kunst*. Inaugural-Dissertation Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn.
- Leguilloux, M. (2002). 'Techniques et équipements de la tannerie romaine: L'Exemple de l'*officina coriaria* de Pompéi' in F. Audoin-Rouzeau and S. Beyries (eds), *Le Travail du cuir de la préhistoire à nos jours (XXIIe rencontres internationales d'archéologie et d'histoire d'Antibes Octobre 2001)*. Antibes, 267–81.
- Leguilloux, M. (2004). *Le Cuir et la pelleterie à l'époque romaine*. Paris.
- Leguilloux, M. (2006). *Les Objets en cuir de Didymoi, praesidium de la route caravanière Coptos-Bérénice*. Le Caire.
- Ligt, L. de (1993). *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire*. Amsterdam.
- Lucas, A. T (1956). 'Footwear in Ireland' *County Louth Archaeological Journal* 13: 309–94.
- MacConnoran, P (1986). 'Footwear', in L. Millar, J. Schofield, and M. Rhodes (eds), *The Roman Quay at St Magnus House, London: Excavations at New Fresh Wharf, Lower Thames Street, London 1974–78* (London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, Special Paper, no. 8). London, 218–26.
- Mould, Q. (1990). 'The Leather Objects' in S. Wrathmell and A. Nicholson (eds), *Dalton Parlours: Iron Age Settlement and Roman Villa* (Yorkshire Archaeology, 3). Wakefield, 231–5.

- Overton, H., Whittle, J., Dean, D., and Hann, A. (2004). *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600–1750*. London.
- Spufford, M. (1984). *The Great Reclathing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century*. London.
- Stauffer, A. (2008). *Antike Musterblätter: Wirkkartons aus dem spätantiken und frühbyzantinischen Ägypten*. Wiesbaden.
- Thomas, D., and Thomas, M. (2012). 'Roman Shoes Report' Stoke-on-Trent Museum, Archaeological Society <http://www.stokearchaeologysociety.org.uk/html/tgfm_shoes.htm>.
- Vanderhoeven, A., and Eryvnc A. (2007). 'Not in my Backyard? The Industry of Secondary Animal Products within the Roman Civitas Capital of Tongeren, Belgium' in R. Hingley and S. Willis (eds), *Roman Finds: Context and Theory: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Durham 2002*. Oxford, 156–75.
- Volken, M. (2008). 'Making the Ramshaw Boot, an Exercise in Experimental Archaeology' *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 16: 359–66.
- Volken, M. (2014). *Archaeological Footwear: Development of Shoe Patterns and Styles from Prehistory till the 1600s*. Zwolle.
- Vons-Comis, S. Y. (1982). 'Das Leder von Lübeck, Grabung Heiligen-Geist-Hospital, Koberg 9–11', *Lübecker Schriften zur Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte* 6: 239–50.
- Weatherill, L. (1996). *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660–1760*. 2nd edn. London.
- Winterbottom, S. (2009). 'The Leather and Other Organic Artefacts' in C. Howard-Davis (ed.), *The Carlisle Millennium Project: Excavations in Carlisle 1998–2001* Lancaster, 817–41.
- Woolf, G. (1998). *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. Cambridge.
- Zimmer, G. (1982). *Römische Berufsdarstellungen*. Berlin.