

have been able to piece together the history of lost inscriptions, to the point of authentication, including from the original and long-since-demolished buildings of La Sapienza, and of lost monuments in the Aracoeli. The most remarkable discovery was an unpublished fragmentary inscription of the future Pope Paul II in the Vatican Grottoes.

The Hugh Last Fellowship represented the start of what will hopefully be an ongoing collaboration with the BSR. I won a Leverhulme International Fellowship (LIF), with the BSR as host institution, which is enabling further months of research in Rome in 2024. The aim of the LIF is to provide support and time for developing further grant applications towards a new, collaborative venture for the systematic re-evaluation and re-publication of Christian epigraphy on sound philological, material and art-historical principles. As a first step I plan to establish a project for the digital annotation of the early modern and nineteenth-century sylloges in which the inscriptions have been recorded. Transforming these resources with up-to-date data and commentary promises to be a time- and cost-effective way to lay foundations for collective progress, allowing us to put Christian Rome's inscriptions at the disposal of scholars and a wider public alike, as real, layered, historical artefacts.

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MACQUARIE GALE SCHOLARSHIP

doi: 10.1017/S0068246224000230

The Trojan epic cycle within the Etruscan cultural identity/Etruscan scarab gems: new interpretations and approaches

The earliest literary reference to the Etruscans comes in Hesiod's *Theogony*, stating that the two sons of Odysseus and Kirke ruled the central Italian region. As such, from this early a period, the Greeks placed the Etruscans within their mythological understanding, particularly through the lens of the Trojan Epic Cycle. However, this Greek lens on the Etruscans persists into modern scholarship, even though much of the art depicting the Trojan Cycle in Etruria was created in parallel to the Greeks, not because of them. My first research project for the BSR focuses on the depictions and adaptations of the Trojan Epic Cycle within Etruscan cultural identity (a distillation of my 2023 Master of Research thesis). By examining a single iconographical repertoire over a selection of material culture, including pottery, bronze mirrors and tomb paintings, it is clear that the Trojan Cycle was integrated into this central Italian culture through adaptive selection rather than passive imitation. Specific themes and motifs were chosen to represent ideals and aspects of Etruscan culture, in many ways, differently from contemporary Greece, where the Trojan Cycle myth originated.

My six months at the BSR have been immensely important to my research. Not only have I been able to expand upon my thesis research with new examples found at Italian museums that have yet to be published, but I was also able to begin a second research project.

Scarabs are a ubiquitous symbol of ancient Egypt, yet in the first millennium BC, scarab gems can be found in central Italy. With a rounded half carved to resemble a

scarab and a flat half with iconography incised into it, these objects are found in funerary and votive contexts in Etruria, as they serve multiple functions in life and death. However, most scholarship on Etruscan scarabs comes in catalogues or studies focused on a few examples of a particular iconography. My research does not aim to create a new catalogue but rather to present new interpretations of the corpus, given the position of scarab gems within the significant artistic output shifts of central Italy in the fifth century BC, and explore why the medium persisted in Etruria. This change and continuity of scarabs in Etruscan art chronology are yet to be discussed, given the changes in their material, production locations, trade relations and functions.

My time at the BSR has been instrumental for both research projects. Access to the institute's expansive library with sources unavailable back home has been enormously influential. Additionally, as I come from Australia (a country not known for its Etruscan museums), it was incredible to be able to visit the many Etruscan cities and their respective museums and necropolises. Furthermore, as I study many ancient examples of art, conversing in multi-disciplinary discussions with the non-archaeologists at the BSR was a fantastic opportunity to gain new insights.

I am still relatively early in my academic career, yet this experience has been exceedingly valuable to my future in archaeology. I am incredibly grateful to my Macquarie University department and Mrs Gale for this fantastic opportunity to reside at the BSR in 2024. I am also very thankful to the BSR staff and fellow residents for all their support.

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RALEGH REDFORD ROME AWARD

doi: 10.1017/S0068246224000242

Genoa in the Islamicate Mediterranean: diplomatic and economic relationships between the Genoese and the Qalāwūnid sultanate of Egypt, 1279–1382

My PhD thesis investigates practices and modalities of Egyptian–Genoese diplomatic and commercial relationships in the port city of Alexandria during the Qalāwūnid Sultanate (1279–1382). To fully grasp the complexity of these relationships, it is essential to address diplomacy and commerce within the context of Egyptian and Genoese administrative practices in Alexandria and in light of the mediating role played by diplomatic and commercial agents in the city's distinct social and political environment.

During my three-month fellowship at the British School at Rome (BSR) as a Raleigh Radford Rome Award-holder, my research evolved into a micro-history of the geographies of Egyptian–Genoese relationships in Alexandria and the people and institutions involved. The study examined the activities of ambassadors, merchants, interpreters and clerks, and the functions of the Genoese *fondaco* (a system established to accommodate foreign merchants and store their merchandise) and consulate, along with the *dūwān* (customs office) of Alexandria and the chancery of the Sultanate.

My research at the BSR library centred on editions of Genoese chartularies, which provided significant insights into the Genoese network of people moving across the