

# HEROM: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

## EDITORIAL PREFACE

*Jeroen Poblome, John Lund and Daniele Malfitana*

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### Abstract

*HEROM. Journal on Hellenistic and Roman Material Culture* was launched in 2012, and we have over the past five years tried as editors to invest our time wisely in order to contribute positively to the kind of archaeology we consider worthwhile pursuing. As much as always, we remain firmly convinced that the study of Hellenistic and Roman material culture requires and deserves its own medium in the ever expanding universe of academic publishing. Material studies are different from presentations of excavated or surveyed sites and regions or more historically inclined topics. To most of us involved in the study of Hellenistic and Roman material evidence, our beloved (mostly broken) stuff represents a world on its own, providing unique access to – and perspectives on – wider issues related to our understanding of the past.

Together with Leuven University Press, we are happy to continue to offer *HEROM* as an international platform for this enthusiasm. *HEROM*'s core-business is – and will be – wider interpretative studies on how artefacts were produced and used from the time of the Hellenistic Kingdoms and Roman Empire into Late Antiquity. We remain committed to publish papers on the widest possible range of subjects, from conceptual studies in the transdisciplinary domain of material culture studies, to advances in archaeometry and presentations of meaningful assemblages found during the course of archaeological fieldwork. Contributions by young scholars with fresh ideas and approaches are still our favourite.

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### Keywords

HEROM, biannual, material culture, Hellenistic, Roman, late antique

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According to his own epitaph, Publius Vergilius Maro (70-19 BCE) sang of pastures, countrysides and leaders. Rome's most revered poet left us many a famous hexameter, including, on line 284 of his third *Georgica* book, the fragment *fugit irreparabile tempus*, from which the shorthand proverb *tempus fugit* has been derived. Fitting for a great poet his lines may mean more than one thing. "*Fast flies meanwhile the irreparable hour*" was the eloquent translation of the original verse by James Rhoades (1841-1923), while the shorthand version translates somewhat more prosaically into "*time flies like the wind*" or "*time flies when you are having fun*". Virgil (as he is commonly called) implies that we experience time as stern and restrictive when the pressure is on, and as too fast gone by when those pressures are momentarily less present – a human condition we all share. Difficult to manage as it is, as archaeologists we know all too well that time passes and things come to a certain end. Gavin Lucas kindly reminds us that especially we, as scholars working with the past, should make sure to get our understanding of time right, because "*the way we understand time affects the way we do archaeology*".<sup>1</sup>

*HEROM. Journal on Hellenistic and Roman Material Culture* was launched in 2012, and we have over the past five years tried as editors to invest our time wisely in order to contribute positively to the kind of archaeology we consider worthwhile pursuing. As much as always, we remain firmly convinced that the study of Hellenistic and Roman material culture requires and deserves its own medium in the ever expanding universe of academic

1. Lucas 2005, p. 1.

publishing. Material studies are different from presentations of excavated or surveyed sites and regions or more historically inclined topics. To most of us involved in the study of Hellenistic and Roman material evidence, our beloved (mostly broken) stuff represents a world on its own, providing unique access to – and perspectives on – wider issues related to our understanding of the past.

Together with Leuven University Press, we are happy to continue to offer HEROM as an international platform for this enthusiasm. Indeed, in the words of another Lucas (George, the father of Star Wars): “if you want to be successful in a particular field, perseverance is one of the key qualities”. HEROM’s core-business is – and will be – wider interpretative studies on how artefacts were produced and used from the time of the Hellenistic Kingdoms and Roman Empire into Late Antiquity. We remain committed to publish papers on the widest possible range of subjects, from conceptual studies in the transdisciplinary domain of material culture studies, to advances in archaeometry and presentations of meaningful assemblages found during the course of archaeological fieldwork. Contributions by young scholars with fresh ideas and approaches are still our favourite.

As in previous years, HEROM will continue to provide a platform for region-, period- or material-specific studies in order to allow one field of study to inspire another and foster more effect by integrating such fundamental work. Integration can be consolidated in thematic issues, for which we remain open to proposals. Reaching a higher level of insight can also be achieved in stand-alone papers, simply from explaining why we find our case-studies to be important and relevant in approaching wider issues related to social, political, religious or cultural developments in the ancient world.

The challenges sketched in our original editorial preface<sup>2</sup> remain as crucial as ever. It is fair to state that in the past issues, especially, aspects of social sciences theory have been validated for Hellenistic and Roman material culture. We consider this to mirror wider developments within the discipline of Archaeology. No doubt, the archaeological record will continue to amaze us in providing the essence for the study of material culture: arbitrary, context specific practices documenting relationships among people and things. In that respect, the value of social and archaeological theory should continue to play a role on HEROM’s pages. In addition, however, we also hope to welcome contributions considering economic practices as well as aspects of economic theory in the next issues.

2. Poblome *et al.* 2012, pp. 7-21.

As announced in our previous editorial,<sup>3</sup> we would especially welcome contributions dedicated to the memory and intellectual legacy of Professor David Peacock, former member of HEROM's scientific committee. His aim was consistently to understand the people of the past – the only topic that really matters in archaeology. He achieved this in pioneering archaeometric studies that made full use of a wide array of chemical and physical scientific analyses, which have affected our lives and careers profoundly, as well as many of those on HEROM's scientific committee and readership.

With the aid of our scientific committee, further enhanced by Dr. Roberta Tomber (The British Museum), we hereby launch an open call for papers in memory of David Peacock (in addition to the excellent volume by E. Sibbesson, B. Jervis and S. Coxon<sup>4</sup>). We wish to elicit studies that may enrich our understanding of how communities and individuals lived, worked and died in the Hellenistic Kingdoms and Roman Empire. We are particularly interested in studies building on his implicit theoretical legacy for combining science and archaeology, dealing with the subject matters at the forefront of his own research: from quarries and other production sites to ceramics and stone artefacts (architectural elements, mill- and grindstones), as well as the networks through which they were distributed.

May David's force be with HEROM!

## References

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3. Poblome *et al.* 2015, pp. 7-9.  
 4. Sibbesson *et al.* 2016.