

Post–Roman Europe

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12.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to characterize the post-Roman (*c.* 500 CE–present) archaeological collections from Europe held in the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM), and to suggest their value in future research. The material provides a potential but underused resource to answer questions not only about the objects and the lives of people in the past, but also the history of collecting. The archaeological collections are however, difficult to define and quantify. More than for any other part of the collections, a central issue for this material is the overlap between what has been defined as ‘ethnographic’ on the Museum database and material of archaeological and historical research value. The PRM holds *c.* 36,611 objects from early medieval, medieval and post-medieval Europe (including Mediterranean Europe). These have been collected for a range of interests, including folklife/folklore studies, the comparative study of technology, art history, social history, ethnography, and archaeology. However, only *c.* 2,534 of these objects appear on the database as ‘archaeological’: less than 7% of the estimated quantity of post-Roman material culture from Europe. The remaining 93% is listed as ‘ethnographic’: a classification that draws attention away from their value as resources for the study of European past. For Europe, the lack until recent years of basic data on the age of objects on the Museum database is felt most sharply, and the limits of the definition of material as ‘ethnographic’ are most visible. Even within the ‘archaeological’ collections, a significant body of post-Roman material is currently un-dated. For example, a bone apple-corer (1884.118.266) collected by Pitt-Rivers during works at Cannon Street Steelyard in London is probably post-medieval in date (see 12.4 below): but until such assemblages are sorted, examined and described, then the full picture of British and European archaeology held in the PRM will remain unclear.

This chapter points to the potential of such European collections for archaeological and historical research (12.2 below), before focusing on the *c.* 2,534 early medieval, medieval and post-medieval objects that are currently defined as ‘archaeological’. Some 1,967 (78%) of these objects are from the United Kingdom and Ireland, but significant collections are also represented from France (*c.* 199 objects), Italy (*c.* 138 objects), Denmark (*c.* 80 objects), Ukraine (*c.* 33 objects) and Germany (*c.* 25 objects). Smaller bodies of material (<25 objects) are present from 12 further countries. The chapter presents an account of the development of the collections (12.3), with reference to the material in the PRM founding collection from the UK and Ireland (12.3.2) and from continental Europe (12.3.3), and to that acquired after 1884 (12.3.4), and a discussion of the collections’ research value (12.4). Brief concluding comments are presented in section 12.5.

12.2 'Archaeology', 'Ethnography', and the Post-Roman Past

While General Pitt-Rivers is best known for his work on prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological material, he conducted a good deal of medieval archaeological fieldwork, and collected a significant amount of post-Roman (including post-medieval) European material. The General was one of the first archaeologists to encourage the acquisition of post-Roman material culture, but even in the decades after the foundation of the Museum medieval and post-medieval archaeology were still fledgling sub-disciplines (e.g. Bruce-Mitford 1948: 2). While the fields expanded in the second half of the 20th century, this coincided with a reduction in the PRM's accessioning of archaeological material. Consequently, a large proportion of the Museum's medieval and post-medieval collections are from the PRM founding collection. His early publications included studies of early medieval Irish ogham stones (Lane Fox 1867; Caulfield 1870), of a fine medieval brooch known as the Galway brooch (now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York) (Lane Fox 1868a; Petch 2012), of a medieval sword from the River Thames at Battersea (Lane Fox 1868b; see 12.3.2 below), and of early medieval burials near Guildford (Lane Fox 1877; Saunders 1980). His excavations at Caesar's Camp, Folkstone turned out to demonstrate that the site was not an Iron Age hillfort but a Norman defensive site (Pitt-Rivers 1883) – and thus represented perhaps 'the first scientific excavation of a medieval site in Britain' (Bowden 1991: 86). Pitt-Rivers' interest in the post-Roman period also continued after the founding of the PRM, notably at King John's House, Tollard Royal, Wiltshire (Pitt-Rivers 1890), where he stripped away post-medieval plaster and paint, and even Elizabethan windows, to expose a medieval hunting lodge in an early exercise in architectural recording. He also conducted excavations which recovered medieval and later artefacts, the results of which were published with the first section drawing of medieval ceramics (Gerrard 2003: 58). In this light, it is perhaps no surprise that the PRM founding collection included significant quantities of post-Roman archaeological material from Europe (see 12.3.2–3 below).

However, despite such relatively early interest from Pitt-Rivers, the fields of medieval and post-medieval archaeology, as conventionally understood, developed little during the PRM's principal collecting period for archaeological material, between the 1880s and 1940s. Instead, European material culture was more commonly the focus of museum-based collecting for folklore/folklife studies and various forms of social history. Such material is at present a neglected resource for post-Roman material culture studies, with which historical archaeology has made few connections. Instead, post-Roman archaeology developed in the field at sites associated with the Church and the state, such as castles, churches and monasteries (Gerrard 2003; Hicks 2007), and in city museums, where the post-war expansion in urban rescue archaeology led to the development of new typologies and sequences for post-Roman material culture, especially for ceramics (e.g. Ward Perkins 1940; Jope 1947; Leeds 1949; Evison *et al.* 1974; see discussions by Barker and Majewski 2006). Interpretive agendas drew increasingly from particular forms of economic, social and industrial history, and medieval and post-medieval archaeologists focused on excavating artefact production sites or tracing past trading networks. In contrast, the past two decades have seen a remarkable expansion in the study of everyday life through medieval and post-medieval material culture (Brown 1997; Hicks and Beaudry 2006; Hicks 2007; Standley 2008; Owens *et al.* 2009; Gilchrist 2012). A glance at the tables of contents of journals such as *Medieval Archaeology*, *Medieval Ceramics*, *Post-Medieval Archaeology* or the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* reveals how themes such as human identity, household life, the politics of archaeology, deposition and curation in the past, material form, interdisciplinary relationships with historical anthropology and material culture studies,

and the idea of ‘contemporary archaeology’ have increasingly revitalized the field. Such impulses have often been characterized by an effort to move beyond a purely descriptive model of post-Roman archaeology, sometimes through the idea of ‘social’ archaeology. At the same time, the complex relationships between historical and contemporary archaeology and anthropological material culture studies are the focus of considerable contemporary debate (Hicks 2010). But theoretical debate (e.g. Harrison and Schofield 2010) has not yet developed into sustained studies of particular bodies of early modern and modern material culture, which can focus on the everyday as well as the exceptional, and upon the slower-paced research which excavated assemblages or museum collections require (but see Gilchrist and Sloane 2005; Dwyer 2011).

In this context, the presence of *c.* 34,077 historical objects from post-Roman Europe (500 CE–present) in the PRM, which are currently not defined as ‘archaeological’ but as ‘ethnographic’, and so fall outside of the detailed review conducted for this chapter, is striking. These objects include material often studied by archaeologists, such as ceramics, metal, bone and stone tools, and a wide range of weaponry and armour. For example, the collections defined as ‘ethnographic’ include objects from the PRM founding collection such as a medieval wooden carving of Christ carrying the cross (1884.67.111) and two further medieval carved wooden figures from Brittany (1884.67.114, 1884.67.124); a wide range of medieval and post-medieval firearms; and items related to the post-medieval history of archaeology itself, such as casts and models of archaeological sites, monuments and objects. The nominally ‘ethnographic’ objects from post-Roman Europe, whether collected before or after the Museum’s foundation in 1884, even include objects which have been excavated, such as a 19th-century bell, ‘dug up in T. Allen’s garden’ in Hethe, Oxfordshire in 1961 (1986.40.181), and a post-medieval combined pistol and knife (1933.20.1) and a 17th-century German engraved horn gunpowder flask (1932.15.4) reportedly ‘dug up near Cheltenham’ by one Oliver H. Wild. But they also include a tremendous amount of more diverse historical material, often of organic materials: wooden religious icons, tobacco pipes, cigarette holders and cigar lighters; drawings, prints and decorative arts; coins, tokens and banknotes; clothing and items of personal adornment; pins, needles, thimbles, buttons, bobbins and distaffs; musical instruments, rosaries and other religious (especially Christian) objects; cutlery, clocks and candlesticks; Masonic objects; lamps, locks and keys; many kinds of ‘amulet’; models, toys and games; wicker baskets and brass bells; wooden furniture and iron horse gear; fire-making objects and gramophone records; wood panels and parchment manuscripts; human remains; hand mangles and bicycles; man-traps and telephones. All of these are of post-Roman date and have been collected in Europe – and mainly from England – and are virtually unstudied as historical, or archaeological, sources of evidence.

A small, local example of the archaeological potential of apparently ‘ethnographic’ collections is represented by the material collected by Percy Manning (1870–1917). Manning had a keen interest in folklore, and collected material from Oxfordshire and further afield (see 12.3.4 below). Some 219 objects (149 of which were from Oxfordshire) were donated to the PRM by Manning, and all were recorded as ethnographic apart from 27 medieval and post-medieval objects that were accessioned in 1911. Around 192 objects, which range in date from the 17th to 19th centuries, are therefore obscured by their classification as ethnographic. Those objects classed as ‘archaeological’ comprise dress accessories, tools and ceramics, while those classed as ‘ethnographic’ include lace-making tools, candlesticks, tinderboxes, cooking utensils, weapons, keys and other household implements. Some were found during excavations in Oxford, such as ‘an old pair of iron compasses’ from the site of the City Ditch, Broad Street (1911.29.61), while others were from houses, such as a quartzite pebble known as a ‘Dick’ stone which came from a cottage oven

at Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire and was used to indicate when the oven was hot enough for baking (1911.29.43). Together with material that Manning donated to the Ashmolean Museum and the Bodleian Library, along with Manning's archive in the Ashmolean Museum, these collections represent a resource through which 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century Oxfordshire can be studied through historical archaeology and material culture studies.

At the outset, then, we note a principal result of our characterization of the European post-Roman collections of the PRM: that the wide variety of objects that are not currently defined as 'archaeological' hold enormous, untapped potential for historical, material cultural, and scientific research. The discipline of archaeology, having developed since these collections were assembled to encompass the study of the medieval, the more recent, and the contemporary past, is uniquely placed to start to realize the research value of these collections.

12.3 The Development of the Post-Roman Archaeological Collections

12.3.1 Overview

The rest of this chapter is mainly focused on the *c.* 2,534 post-Roman European objects that are currently defined as 'archaeological'. Of these, *c.* 1,967 are from the UK and Ireland, and 83% of these (*c.* 1,624 objects) are from England. The UK and Irish material ranges from personal ornaments to weapons, pottery, tiles, pin manufacturing tools, locks and keys, horseshoes, lace-making bobbins, wig curlers, spurs, a pewter spoon, spindle whorls, and 3 stone fragments decorated with ogham script from southern Ireland.

There are just *c.* 198 archaeological objects recorded from outside the UK and Ireland, and the objects are similar in type to those from the UK, but also include horse furniture, and objects decorated with religious iconography. The following sections outline the material currently defined as post-Roman archaeological collections: material from the PRM founding collection recorded as from the United Kingdom and Ireland (12.3.2), PRM founding collection material from elsewhere in Europe (12.3.3), and material deposited in the PRM after 1884 (12.3.4).

12.3.2 The Founding Collection: United Kingdom and Ireland

The Museum holds *c.* 1,967 post-Roman objects from the UK and Ireland that are currently defined as archaeological, and of these the vast majority – *c.* 1,810 objects – is from the PRM founding collection: mostly from England, and relating to Pitt-Rivers' fieldwork and collecting activities prior to 1884.

The largest component is represented by assemblages from Pitt-Rivers' excavations at the Norman ringwork and bailey at Castle Hill (Caesar's Camp) near Folkstone, Kent, which were conducted between June and July 1878 (1884.138.1–50; Pitt-Rivers 1883). The material comprises some 573 sherds of pottery, at least 548 of which are medieval in date, the remaining *c.* 25 sherds being Neolithic (1884.138.36). At least 2 of the medieval vessels are complete and have been reconstructed (1884.35.43–44, *Figures 12.1* and *12.2*). There are also pieces of ferrous and non-ferrous metalwork (1884.138.19–50), worked bone (1884.111.24), and worked stone of both medieval (1884.138.12–13, 1884.138.23–24) and Neolithic (1884.138.36) dates. Previous work on the ceramic material conducted by Streeten (1985) saw 7 sherds thin-sectioned for petrographic analysis.¹ A further unquantified assemblage of ceramics from the PRM

¹ Provided with sample numbers 810–816 in Streeten (1985). The current location of the Streeten's slides is unknown, but they may be held at the British Museum where Alan Vince's thin section archive was deposited.



Figure 12.1 (Left)
Handbuilt jar or cooking
pot in local sandy
courseware, Saxo-
Norman, 11th-13th
centuries CE. From an
assemblage of more than
1,500 pottery sherds
from Pitt-Rivers' 1878
excavations at Castle
Hill (Caesar's Camp),
Kent (PRM Accession
Number 1884.35.43).

founding collection from this site is recorded as possibly held by the Museum, but currently unlocated/unaccessioned. A full assessment of the archaeological assemblage from Caesar's Camp is desirable, perhaps especially for the ceramics. The PRM founding collection also contains a smaller assemblage of post-Roman material from Pitt-Rivers' fieldwork at Mount Caburn near Lewes in East Sussex (Lane Fox 1881). The small Iron Age multivallate hillfort was excavated at the same time as Caesar's Camp by Pitt-Rivers. From the Mount Caburn excavation it was revealed that the site was reused in the medieval period and the post-Roman finds include an unquantified assemblage of medieval ceramics (1884.137.17, 1884.137.33), a Portuguese coin of John V (1884.137.173), and a piece of undated iron slag (1884.140.490).

Some 197 accession numbers record a currently unquantified amount of post-Roman archaeological material from London from the PRM founding collection. This significant body of material includes a Viking Age sword known as 'The Battersea sword' (1884.121.21; Figure 12.3), which was published by the General in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London* (Lane Fox 1868), and has since 2009 been on loan to the Ashmolean Museum (Hook and MacGregor 1997: 9, figure 8). Also from the River Thames are 3 iron padlocks (1884.2.22–24). Further London material from the PRM founding collection derives from Pitt-Rivers' 'rescue' collecting, such as a horse shoe from the Cannon Street Steelyard (1884.50.3), a green glazed jug excavated from Bell Yard, Fleet Street (1884.37.33), ceramics recovered from Bishopsgate (1884.37.39–40), 4 iron styluses from London Wall (1884.98.58–61), and an iron horse bit (1884.52.10; no site recorded). A small collection of 11 medieval tiles and tile fragments from the UK (1884.140.606) are also not provided with a detailed geographical provenance. A wooden canoe and a horse skull (1884.54.40), found at Hampton Court and published by Pitt-Rivers in the *Journal of the Anthropological*

Figure 12.2 (Right)
Handbuilt jar or cooking
pot in local sandy
courseware, Saxo-
Norman, 11th-13th
centuries CE. From an
assemblage of more than
1,500 pottery sherds
from Pitt-Rivers' 1878
excavations at Castle
Hill (Caesar's Camp),
Kent (PRM Accession
Number 1884.35.44).

Figure 12.3 A Viking
Age sword dating from
the 10th century CE,
known as 'The Battersea
Sword' (PRM Accession
Number 1884.121.21),
found in the Thames near
Battersea.



Figure 12.4 Early medieval tanged iron knife recovered during Pitt-Rivers' excavations at Merrow Down, Surrey in May 1877, and recorded as 'found in barrow no. 3 with burnt body' (PRM Accession Number 1884.121.11).



Institute (Lane Fox 1878), is of uncertain antiquity, but is presumably post-Roman in date. Some of the ceramics collected by Pitt-Rivers from Walthamstow may also be post-Roman in date (e.g. 1884.37.28).

Beyond London, the PRM founding collection contains assemblages from across the south of England. For example, ceramic burial urns (1884.35.24–25) and 4 iron shield bosses (1884.30.52–55) from an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Stowheath, Suffolk, as well as further early medieval ceramics from Suffolk (1884.41.39) and an amber bead from Standlake, Oxfordshire (1884.76.140), iron axe heads from Southampton, Hampshire (1884.120.23) and Bigberry Wood, Canterbury, Kent (1884.120.25), an iron knife from a barrow at Merrow Down near Guildford (1884.121.11, *Figure 12.4*), an iron key from Winchester (1951.13.90), and an iron spear head from Fairford, Gloucestershire (1884.120.46), are all recorded on the Museum database as of early medieval date.

A few further UK artefacts from the PRM founding collection currently have no regional provenance, and may be of post-Roman date, but require further examination, description, and analysis. These include a wooden comb (1884.71.55), 2 iron socketed axe heads (1884.120.12, 1884.120.14), an iron spear head (1884.120.62), an iron knife with gold inlay (1884.121.6), a number of amber and glass beads (2005.81.1), and 5 silver and gilt bronze fibulae (1884.79.46, 1884.79.49, 1884.79.60–62).

Beyond England, there are *c.* 270 post-Roman objects from Ireland (including Northern Ireland) in the PRM founding collection. Three stones from County Cork are incised with ogham script (1884.98.4–6, *Figures 12.5* and *12.6*), purchased by Pitt-

Figure 12.5 Stone with Ogham-style inscription (PRM Accession Number 1884.98.5). A forged ogham stone, recorded as from 'a pagan cemetery' at Agbabulloge, County Cork, Ireland. From the Pitt Rivers Museum founding collection, and purchased by Pitt-Rivers with two other stones in March 1864 (Lane Fox 1867).





Figure 12.6 Stone with inscribed medieval Ogham script (PRM Accession Number 1884.98.6). Recorded as from 'a pagan cemetery' at Aghabulloge, County Cork, Ireland. From the Pitt Rivers Museum founding collection, and purchased by Pitt-Rivers with two other stones in March 1864 (Lane Fox 1867). In July 1865, the Cork Examiner reported that 'some antiquarian discoveries have been made by Colonel Lane Fox in the Blasquet Islands, and in the neighbourhood of Dingle. The ruins of several ancient churches, called oratories, are to be found on the islands, and amongst these Colonel Fox has discovered a number of inscriptions in the Ogham [sic] character' (reprinted by London Gazette 14 July 1865).

Rivers in March 1864, and published by him six years later (Lane Fox 1867). At least one of these (1884.98.5), if not two (1884.98.4), thought to be forgeries (Macalister 1945: 107, 112). The undated material includes large amount of later prehistoric metalwork, but also much of post-Roman date, within which almost certainly there are significant quantities of early medieval metalwork. Detailed quantification, assessment and description is required to facilitate future research on these objects: bronze weaponry, copper alloy, silver and gold brooches, silver rings, lead spoons, iron tools, horse gear, etc. Together with the metalwork, items such as stone spindle whorls, glass and amber beads, bone pins, and various kinds of ceramics require sorting, analysis and description before their full research potential can be defined. There are unquantified and unstudied assemblages from Pitt-Rivers' own collecting and excavations in Cork, including an early medieval iron spear head from a bog in Cork (1884.120.58) and a Viking-period silver ring (1884.78.48). Also from the Viking period, but collected in Northern Ireland, are a finger ring (1884.78.53) and 2 silver armlets (1884.78.50–51). The design and decoration of the armlets is vvery similar to those in the Viking silver hoard found in Cuerdale (Lancashire), buried in the early 10th century which are now in the Ashmolean Museum and the British Museum. Further items from Northern Ireland include copper alloy pins (1884.72.3, 1884.72.21), bone pins (e.g. 1884.72.26), glass beads (1884.76.105–107), buckles (1884.80.52), armlets (1884.78.57) and rings (1884.53.17, 1884.119.551–554), a range of gold, silver and copper alloy brooches (1884.64.10, 1884.79.20–24, 1884.79.18), several unidentified copper alloy objects (1884.119.640, 1884.119.642), a tin bowl (1884.119.245) and wooden and bronze harp pegs (1884.113.11, 1884.113.13), and a pair of iron shears (1884.33.46). A further significant body of copper alloy metalwork and worked bone and antler from Ireland – and even some worked stone, such as whetstones, polishers and hook sinkers (e.g. within 1884.129) – may be prehistoric or post-Roman in date, and requires further sorting and analysis. The material from Northern Ireland also includes organic materials from bog deposits, such as a wooden shuttle (1884.46.25)

The post-Roman archaeological material from Scotland in the PRM founding collection is dominated by weaponry – 2 spear heads (1884.120.60–61), 4 rapiers (1884.24.96, 1884.24.99, 1884.24.101–2), and 5 swords of various kinds (1884.24.89–90, 1884.24.94–95, 1884.24.98) – but also includes 2 copper alloy sundials (1884.140.577–578), 2 iron spurs (1884.140.432–433) and c. 14 sherds of pottery (1884.35.58, 1884.41.36). Also from Scotland, and probably from the PRM founding collection, is an undated – but probably medieval – fragment of wood with an iron



Figure 12.7 Undated fragment of painted wall plaster, depicting naked female figure riding a seahorse with a cherub flying behind her, from Farnese Palace, Rome. Pitt Rivers Museum founding collection (PRM Accession Number 1884.140.980).

rivet, recorded as being ‘found with skeleton of human being and horse in ancient grave, Island of Coestray, Orkney, July 1863’ (1908.83.5). Meanwhile, the post-Roman archaeological material from Wales in the PRM founding collection comprises only a human skull from Twyn-Capel, Anglesey, Wales (1884.140.150).

12.3.3 The Founding Collection: the Rest of Europe

Outside the UK and Ireland, the post-Roman material from the PRM founding collection is a varied assemblage. The PRM holds *c.* 567 objects from this area which are currently defined as ‘archaeological’, and all but 30 of these are from the PRM founding collection. Of the *c.* 537 continental European post-Roman objects, some may derive from Pitt-Rivers’ own travel and fieldwork in Europe, such as the unquantified, undated collections of glass beads (e.g. 1884.79.64, 1884.79.134–136) and buckles and brooches from France (e.g. 1884.79.36, 1884.79.63, 1884.79.66–73, 1884.80.45–48). The French material also includes small quantities of material from Paris – e.g. a 13th-century ceramic vessel found at the Boulevard St Marcel (1884.37.108), a majolica lamp (1884.116.91), and an iron axe head from the River Seine (1884.120.8) – and from Brittany (e.g. 1884.2.29). Pitt-Rivers’ travels in Austria, Germany and Scandinavia in 1879 and 1882 might have provided the occasion for some of the collecting visible here, such as the weaponry and armour from continental Europe, including Albania (1884.24.117–119), Austria (1884.31.22), Germany (1884.24.93, 1884.24.100, 1884.24.269, 1884.32.6), and material from Denmark including as an undated bone comb (1884.71.73) and glass beads (1884.76.112). There is a range of post-Roman keys and padlocks from across Europe. Meanwhile, the database entries for medieval archaeology include just one object from Italy – a

bronze female head (1884.67.58) – and a single carved wooden figure from Spain (1884.67.103). However, potentially substantial unquantified, undated archaeological assemblages (which therefore are not defined at present as post-Roman) exist from Italy, as well as from Denmark, Cyprus and Turkey. Also from Italy are 5 fragments of painted wall plaster (1884.140.976–980, *Figure 12.7*), which are recorded as coming from the 16th-century Palazzo Farnese in Rome. The material from Sweden includes a single early medieval copper alloy fibula (1884.79.28), recorded as possibly from Gotland, a set of chess pieces from Gothenburg (1884.100.13–15), and a glass bottle also from Gothenburg (1884.140.288). The PRM also holds a collection of *cartes-de-visites* assembled during Pitt-Rivers' trip to Scandinavia in 1879 (Morton 2011).

Similarly varied are those 'archaeological' objects from the PRM founding collection which are recorded as European, but for which the country of origin is currently unknown. They include a copper alloy spoon (1884.5.41), 3 silver medallions (1884.67.108–110), a copper alloy aquamanile in the shape of a horse (1884.68.121), an iron shield boss (1884.30.55), 2 iron swords (1884.121.15–16) a ceramic costrel (1884.35.30), 2 pieces of worked bone from which buttons appear to have been cut (1884.117.14–15), a spur (1884.51.15), and 6 wooden and ivory carved Christian figures – depicting the Virgin and Child (1884.58.33–35), the Resurrection (1884.67.134), Christ carrying the cross (1884.67.111), and the Virgin with St John (1884.67.113).

12.3.4 *The Development of the Post-Roman Collections after 1884*

A very small number of the large numbers of post-Roman objects which joined the PRM collections after 1884 are currently defined as 'archaeological'. At present the Museum database indicates that post-Roman archaeological material which came to the Museum after 1884 comprises only *c.* 157 from the UK and Ireland, and only *c.* 30 objects from mainland Europe. This figure – 187 objects – is clearly a product not only of collecting and curatorial practice – in which medieval material would be more likely to pass to the Ashmolean Museum or to county museums, for example – but also an artefact of classification (see 12.2 above). Overall, it is clear that Henry Balfour's curatorship (until 1939) saw a focus on prehistoric rather than post-Roman archaeology. However, material did come through transfers from the OUMNH and the Ashmolean Museum, through occasional donations by individuals, societies or institutions, and through occasional purchases from auction rooms and individuals. None of the medieval archaeological objects from the UK were acquired after 1987 and none from mainland Europe after 1971.

The 'visible' archaeological material accessioned after 1884 includes a range of early medieval material from England: a copper alloy pin from a burial at Bampton, Oxfordshire, donated by one Jasper Taylor (1888.32.1); a skull from an Anglo-Saxon crypt at Thorpe Mallow, Northampton (1887.33.36); a glass bead (1903.6.22) and 2 iron spear heads (1904.5.10–11) from Lakenheath, Suffolk; an assemblage of ceramics from Wallingford, Oxfordshire (1941.12.1); a glass bead from Sandwich Bay, Kent (1932.53.106); copper alloy brooches from Mildenhall, Suffolk (1905.74.2–3); and copper alloy brooches, glass and amber beads and a human skull donated by Oscar Charles Raphael from sites in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk (1919.33.53, 1919.33.101–106). There are also unstudied assemblages of 17th-century clay tobacco pipes excavated in Oxford (1918.42.1–24) and post-Roman ceramics from Sandwich, Kent (2009.162.1).

Only 2 coins from the PRM founding collection are currently defined as archaeological: one late Anglo-Saxon coin from a hoard at Sedlescombe, East Sussex, discovered in 1876 (1884.99.24; Metcalf 1998: 170–71), and one undated coin from East Wear Bay, Kent (1884.99.25). After 1884, a small number of coins joined the collection. Subsequent acquisitions include a collection of 12 Byzantine coins donated in 1971



Figure 12.8 Post-medieval glass bottle collected by William Moseley from excavations at 5–6 Threadbare Street, London (PRM Accession Number 1887.1.371).

by Anthony John Arkell (1971.15.1555–1557, 1971.15.1649–1657), which represents one of the largest single donations of ‘archaeological’ medieval coins. It is not known exactly why an artefact category collected frequently by contemporary antiquarians formed such a diminutive element of the PRM founding collection. It is likely that Pitt-Rivers had many opportunities to purchase coins from dealers, but it appears he chose not to do so. It is notable that he recovered very few from his wide-ranging surface-collecting and excavation activities, and it is probable that this reflects decisions about retention as much as the prehistoric character of many of the sites at which he worked before 1882. As with all artefact classes, the PRM holds a wide range of currency types from the past 1500 years, from around the world (see 1.2 above).

Just c. 122 ceramic sherds and whole vessels joined the collections after 1884, the majority of which were transferred from the OUMNH in 1886. These include an assemblage of 88 sherds collected by William Moseley from the former City Bank at 5–6 Threadneedle Street,

London (1887.1.280–367), which contains sherds of an 18th-century redware teapot with applied decoration (possibly mistaken for Roman Samian ware) and a piece of 17th-century London delft Adam and Eve charger, along with 22 crucibles of medieval or post-medieval date. The Romano-British material from this assemblage is discussed in 11.5.3 above, and other post-medieval material is included, including glass (e.g. Figure 12.8).

As noted above, the European collections defined as ‘ethnographic’ include some objects that are clearly more accurately recorded as archaeological, since they described in the Museum documentation as having been excavated. One further interesting example can be given: a horn spoon (1900.13.52) reportedly ‘dug up’ on the Vestmannaeyjar Islands, Iceland in the late 19th century, and donated by Thomas Nelson Annandale (of Balliol College / 34 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh) in 1900. The handle is incised with a leaf pattern and the letters ‘MDIIXXXV’, which was on the Museum database interpreted as a possible rendering of the date 1585. In a discussion with colleagues based in Iceland, it was suggested that a 19th-century date was more likely for the spoon: although there is documentary evidence for horn spoons in the medieval period, none of that date are known in Iceland due to poor preservation (Lilja Árnadóttir, Thor Magnússon, Mjöll Snæsdóttir and Gavin Lucas pers. comm., March 2012). For objects of this kind – many more examples could be given – a programme of scientific dating would greatly assist in their interpretation.

12.4 Research Value

There is a striking difference in character between the post-Roman material culture in the PRM founding collection and the subsequent development of the PRM collections. The PRM founding collection contained c. 3,118 artefacts from post-Roman Europe, of which 1,967 objects (63%) are defined as archaeological. The c. 1,151 ‘ethnographic’ objects include weaponry, armour, musical instruments, keys,

horse gear, lamps, and human remains, and a wide range of models. In contrast, of the c. 33,680 post-Roman objects from Europe which joined the Museum collections after 1884, just 187 (c. 0.05%) are recorded as 'archaeological'. As explained in 12.3.4 above, this difference is a product of classification as well as a genuine difference in collecting practices. Within these c. 33,493 post-Roman European 'ethnographic' objects are many that can be studied by historical archaeology.

Taken together, almost all of the PRM's vast collections of post-Roman material culture – more than 36,611 objects – have little or no information about their archaeological contexts, have not been defined as archaeological or came to the Museum through collecting practices that have not been defined as archaeological. Perhaps, then, our focus should be restricted to the c. 2,534 objects, mostly from the PRM founding collection, which are currently classed as 'archaeological'. But while a lack of excavated context may initially appear to hamper any further investigation, their synthesis with other material culture and understanding the social context in which they were used *can* develop our knowledge about the objects and the people who used them in the past. As with Portable Antiquities Scheme data (e.g. Egan 2005; Standley 2010), the lack of excavated contexts should not overshadow the value of the objects in providing further understanding of the medieval and post-medieval periods: locational data for the Museum's European objects is usually reasonably strong, and can often be enhanced through historical research. And while Pitt-Rivers' developing interest in post-Roman archaeology is certainly an important theme, a major priority for future research at the PRM must be an assessment of the research value of these wider, post-1884 assemblages, building on the work on the English ethnographic collections achieved through the *Other Within* project (Gosden and Wingfield in prep.). The PRM represents a unique location at which the diverse forms of collection of post-Roman material culture during the early 20th century – often overlooked as an unscientific or even embarrassing episode in folklore/folklife studies – can be reconsidered as part of the early history of post-Roman archaeology and material culture studies.

The research value of the early medieval and later medieval material is significant, even where excavated contexts are not recorded. For example, despite being virtually unstudied for a century or more, the various medieval tiles and tile fragments are – in the light of more recent developments in tile studies (e.g. Eames 1980, 1985, 1992; Stopford 2005) – undoubtedly worthy of assessment even though information on their provenance is variable. Although the PRM is not renowned for its medieval collections, especially its early medieval material, the collection of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian brooches, weapons and glass beads should be acknowledged as a small, but valuable assemblage of early medieval finds from the UK and mainland Europe which can facilitate future research. Donations by particular collectors are often of research interest in themselves. For example, in 1919 Oscar Charles Raphael, founding member of the Oriental Ceramic Society and antiquities dealer, donated 13 Anglo-Saxon objects to the PRM. These came from Foxton, Cambridgeshire (1919.33.101–102) and Herringwell, Suffolk (1919.33.103–107). Those from the latter included a fragment of human skull (1919.33.107) and a circular bossed plaque (1919.33.106) and appear to have been part of an inhumation excavated sometime before 1915. This added to the 36 early medieval finds from Mâcon in Saône-et-Loire (Bourgogne, France), which Pitt-Rivers had collected (1884.79.37–77, 1884.80.45–49, 1884.119.316–321, 1884.140.414–415). Meanwhile, as some early medieval objects are misidentified in the records, such as a cruciform brooch which originally appeared in the records as 'Bronze Age' (1919.33.53), a reassessment should be undertaken to correctly identify the objects and ensure they are classified as archaeological in the PRM records.

For the post-medieval period, this chapter has repeatedly underlined the problem of the ethnographic or archaeological classification, for example with the discussion

of Percy Manning's collection. But even for the medieval period, this problem is emphasised by the fact that Walter Leo Hildburgh's large collection of European amulets (on loan from the Wellcome Museum) does not currently appear in the medieval or post-medieval records. Only 4 are listed in the European records, nevertheless many others are known to exist in the collection. These important amulets were discussed by Hildburgh in the early 20th century (Hildburgh 1906, 1908a, 1908b, 1913, 1914, 1951), but merit further investigation in light of the current interest in the theme of magic in the medieval and post-medieval periods (Gilchrist 2008; Standley 2010).

There are other post-Roman objects that warrant further analysis and inclusion in synthetic studies. Although Henry Balfour took an early interest in bone skates (Balfour 1898) and studies were undertaken on them in the 1970s and 1980s (MacGregor 1974, 1976; Done 1980; West 1982), they have received little attention since. The 20 in the collection from London (1884.49.4–5, 1884.118.256, 1897.83.6–11, 1899.69.1–7, 1908.64.2, 1926.13.33–35) should therefore be highlighted in any future study of bone skates. The c. 56 leather shoes and shoe fragments (1884.92.26–44, 1884.140.887) from London Wall collected by Pitt-Rivers, mainly during works between October and December in 1866 at the site of a new wool warehouse by London Wall, are of interest. On some of the examples (e.g. 1884.92.28) slashes on vamps are identified as being ornamental. This was a fashion seen on shoes during the Tudor period, but cuts were also made to release the pressure on toes when walking (Swallow 1973: 30; Swann 1973: 24; Thornton 1973: 12). Swann (cited in Allin 1981: 155) has suggested for other shoe fragments found with purposeful cuts that they were ritually inflicted on the leather as a form of protection and then purposefully deposited. However, as some of these finds from the London Wall were fragmentary, it is possible that they are the remains of shoes which were being translated (shoes being cut up and reused to repair other shoes) and some of the cut fragments were no longer usable and were thrown away.

A fragment of an end-blown bone flute or whistle (*Figure 12.9*) excavated from Castle Hill, Folkestone, Kent (1884.111.24) adds to the few known examples from archaeological contexts in Britain: much of our current knowledge about medieval bone flutes comes from contemporary textual references and illustrations. This fragment and two others from the PRM, which were not originally classified as archaeological (1938.34.273 and 1938.34.274) add to the limited number known, such as the example from White Castle in Monmouthshire (Megaw 1961). Although not highly decorative, the Castle Hill flute is one of the significant medieval finds of daily life found at the reused site excavated by Pitt-Rivers.

Other worked bone implements of a later date in the PRM are of particular interest. Two apple-corers (*Figure 12.10*) of 17th-, 18th- or 19th-century date from London are classified as archaeological in the PRM records (1907.1.23–24), but there are more on display (1884.118.265–266). Many post-medieval examples survive, for example in the National Museum of Scotland, the Pinto collection in the Birmingham galleries, and excavated examples from Oxford, Chester, Norwich and Gloucester (Hunter and Jope 1951; PSAS 1956–7: 260; Heighway *et al.* 1979: 201, number 30; MacGregor 1985: 180; Margeson 1993: 120, 191; Pinto Collection accession number 1965T2341). They are carved from the metapodials of sheep and often decorated, some with dates and initials and are sometimes identified as cheese-scoops (MacGregor 1985: 180). They could have been given as love tokens as a heart motif on the corers was a common decorative feature. Indeed apples were sometimes given as courtship tokens along with other foodstuffs, coins, items of clothing, livestock, household goods, and dress accessories gifted in the post-medieval and early modern periods (O'Hara 2000). These objects in the PRM would provide a significant collection in a wider



Figure 12.9 Medieval bird bone flute with two finger stops from Pitt-Rivers' 1878 excavations at Castle Hill (Caesar's Camp), Kent (PRM Accession Number 1884.111.24).



Figure 12.10 Two post-medieval sheep bone apple-corers, excavated at Fenchurch Street, London (PRM Accession Numbers 1907.1.23–24).

project about daily life in the post-medieval period, or a project which focuses on the objects given as love tokens and their wider social meaning, linking them with the concept of gift-giving. The decoration alone shows that these objects had more significance than simply being functional.

An object from a similar time period as some of these apple corers is a decorated hair pin (1938.1.2).² The pin was sourced by Percy Manning in 1911 from Oxfordshire. It is dated to the early 17th century and is comparable to those which were used with hair caps by women in Amsterdam; some of them were jewelled or had pearl pendants hanging from the openwork decoration at the head of the pin (Caldwell and Lewis 1996: 858). Numerous examples have been recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (42 in August 2010) and are known as 'bodkin type' hair pins. A number of these terminate in small scoops like the Oxfordshire example. An understanding of how these pins were used and where they have been found in Britain may reveal information about the development of their fashion and transmission into Britain from the Low Countries.

Another dress accessory in the PRM which may also have been given as a love token is a brooch from Northern Ireland (1884.79.20). The accessory is an annular brooch, designed with two hands clasping a gemstone. Brooches of this type are not rare in the later medieval period, but this is a very small delicate example. It is made of gold, decorated with rosettes and a chevron design, and the well defined hands are clasping a cabochon gem, possibly a ruby. It dates to the 14th- or 15th-century. Another brooch which is not classified as archaeological is of a very similar design but is much cruder and the gem is cut (1884.79.21). This latter example is decorated with an inscription which is unintelligible, but it is probable that it was an imitation of the religious words often inscribed on brooches, such as the Holy Name or the Ave Maria (Evans 1922: 128;

² This was misidentified in the PRM records as an ear scoop.

Hinton 2005: 190; Standley 2010). It is possible that this was made by someone of less skill who had reused a cut gem or glass stone. It may also be that this is a reproduction or at least a very late example of the design as cut gems were not common in later medieval jewellery in England until the 16th century (Lightbown 1992: 17). Giving a brooch of this design would have provided the receiver, probably a woman, a physical representation of the giver's love and faith. The record states that this type of brooch is found in many collections of material from Northern Ireland and Ireland and therefore is most likely Irish. However, this is a design which was common throughout later medieval Europe (Lightbown 1992) and it is not possible to definitely identify a place of manufacture. However, the stone of 1884.79.20 may have come from Sri Lanka.

These are only a few of the post-Roman objects worthy of further investigation that are held in the PRM. Their synthesis into regional or national studies would be beneficial. Notably, the archaeological research agenda for the Solent Thames area highlights the need for more attention to be given to the study of material culture, particularly for the post-medieval and modern periods (Rhodes 2006). The concentration of development in London and the resulting archaeological work over the last forty years may provide opportunities for placing the objects recovered by General Pitt-Rivers within a broader research framework. As has recently been shown with prehistoric remains (Holder and Jamieson 2003) the archive is not exhausted and much valuable work remains to be done in synthesizing recent excavations with antiquarian investigations. The assemblages made by Pitt-Rivers at Caesar's Camp, and the early medieval material from his excavations at Mount Caburn, represent particularly significant bodies of material for future study.

12.5 Conclusions

The PRM contains significant unstudied and unquantified post-Roman material from the PRM founding collection, including excavated assemblages from Pitt-Rivers' own excavations in the UK, Ireland and France before 1884, and a unique and very large body of virtually unstudied post-Roman material accessioned after 1884 from across Europe. With both the PRM founding collection and later material, basic tasks of locating, identifying, quantifying, numbering, dating, and interpreting the metalwork, jewellery, ceramics, etc., are pressing. Scientific analysis, and especially a programme of radiocarbon dating, would shed a great deal of light on the collections. The focus in early 20th-century folklife/folklore studies on everyday life means that the collections that came from such activity hold great potential. Individual artefacts or groups have been highlighted here, and suggestions made as to their value in future research: but these are purely illustrative.

The principal conclusion of this chapter is that, while it appears at present from the database that the post-Roman European 'archaeological' collections of the PRM are relatively small, in fact there are more than *c.* 36,611 post-Roman objects – *c.* 12% of the total *c.* 304,055 objects in the PRM collections, both ethnographic and archaeological – which can be studied as resources for historical and archaeological material culture studies: a potential that their description as 'ethnographic', and the limited past interest in their date, has until now served to obscure.

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