

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 31 Classics, Ancient History, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
<b>Title of case study:</b> Using the Roman Family to Enhance the Value of Roman Culture in the Present
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Drawing on his research on Roman history, in particular on the Roman family, Ray Laurence has had a major impact on museum policy in Canterbury as well as raising public awareness of Roman culture and society for an international audience. Following a proposal by Canterbury City Council in February 2010 to close the <a href="#">Canterbury Roman Museum</a>, Laurence initiated a response based on research within the Department which demonstrated the potential for the Roman Museum to engage with visitors in new ways. This led to the Council not only reversing its decision to close the Museum, but also making it one of the priority sites for its future museums policy. Working with other staff in his Department, Laurence has since developed new digital content for the museum as part of this strategy. In addition, Laurence has worked with <a href="#">Cognitive Media</a> to produce two short animated films on the Roman family which received around 260,000 viewings in a 9-month period from the launch of the first film on 29 October 2012 until 31 July 2013. This has led to the leading website TED-Ed.com commissioning Laurence to produce further films on Roman life, and to the extensive circulation of his current films through TED-Ed.com as a classroom resource by teachers.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Laurence has developed (from appointment on 01/04/10) a strong research strand on the role of the child in public space. This is underpinned by the database of 23,000 epitaphs developed as part of his Leverhulme-funded project on 'Age and Imperialism' that was completed in the second half of 2010. The subsequent analysis is being written up for publication, including a chapter on the family. The preliminary findings were published at the end of 2012, providing new statistical insights into how children of certain ages (e.g. three-year-olds) were more likely to be commemorated (see below, 3.4). This new project led Laurence to examine how museums with epigraphic collections presented them to the public. In particular, he examined how the Roman Museum in Canterbury included and excluded people from the past. A major finding of the case study of the Canterbury Roman Museum was that there was an exclusion of positive roles for women and children, and that when they did appear in museum presentations they were disconnected from a concept of the family – a target audience for the museum sector (published in Laurence output 4: <i>Roman Archaeology for Historians</i>, 2012, especially ch. 12).</p> <p>In developing this research and its impact, Laurence drew on work by Swift (developed whilst at Kent over the last decade), and specifically her most recent book on artefacts (<i>Style and Function in Roman Decoration</i> – Swift output 1) to re-interpret Dea Nutrix figurines. In addition, with Sears (Birmingham), Peter Keegan (Macquarie, Australia) and Garraffoni (Federal University of Parana, Brazil), from 2011 he set out to pull together work on <i>Written Space in the Latin West</i> (Bloomsbury, 2013), including his own understanding of children in public space in Pompeii, identified via a mapping of alphabets scratched into wall plaster. The completion of the editing of chapters of the book <i>Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space</i> (Laurence output 3) led him to develop his view of how movement and, in particular, stopping at monuments created a rhythm to the ancient city.</p> <p>As a result of his research on children in public space in the Roman city, Laurence has established both the need to develop a history of the city that includes children (40-50% of the population), and that modern museums should incorporate children and families, a group recognised in museum marketing, into their presentation of the Roman past.</p> <p>Laurence's post at Kent commenced on 1 April 2010; Swift has been at Kent since September 2000.</p>

### 3. References to the research

1. Swift, E.V. (2009) *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors*, Aldershot: Ashgate (REF output 1).
2. **Laurence**, R. and Newsome, D. (2011) *Rome, Ostia and Pompeii: Movement and Space*, Oxford: OUP, Endpiece, pp. 386-401 (REF output 3).
3. **Laurence**, R. (2012) *Roman Archaeology for Historians*, London: Routledge, chapters 8-11 (REF output 4).
4. **Laurence**, R. and Trifilò, F. (2012) 'Vixit Annis Plus Minus: Commemorating the Age of the Dead – Towards a Familial Roman Life Course?', in Harlow, M. and Larsson Lovén, L. (eds), *The Family in the Imperial and Late Antique Roman World*, London: Continuum (ISBN 978-14411374680), pp. 23-40.
5. Sears, G., Keegan, P. and **Laurence**, R. (2013) *Written Space in the Latin West*, London: Bloomsbury (ISBN 978-1441123046); includes the chapter by Garraffoni, R.S. and **Laurence**, R. (2013), 'Writing in Public Space from Child to Adult', pp. 123-34.
6. Leverhulme Trust Major Project Grant, £129,000, 'Age and Imperialism: Acculturation and Communications in the Western Mediterranean' (Ref. F/00 094/BB) – May 2009–May 2012.

### 4. Details of the impact

Laurence has sought to develop impact both from research on artefacts undertaken at Kent and, specifically, from his own research on Roman history and archaeology. This work has been undertaken both to enhance the depth of public engagement in Canterbury, via its museums, and to extend the reach of the research to a much wider public via animated, free-to-view films on the internet. The result is impact on museum policy and impact that has created a better public understanding of the experience of childhood in the city of Rome, as well as a greater engagement with Roman history.

#### The Significance of the Impact: The Roman Museum in Canterbury

The route to achieving this impact needs to be set out to understand how the impact was developed and the nature of the impact over the course of more than three years. It was initiated by Canterbury City Council (CCC) taking the decision on 18 February 2010 to propose the closure of the Canterbury Roman Museum on grounds of budget priorities from the start of the following financial year (April 2011 – see 5.1 below). The Vice-Chancellor, Dame Julia Goodfellow, had written to the Leader of the Council, John Gilbey, to establish meetings to be held in April 2010. At these meetings, the significance of the Roman past in Canterbury, and the relevance of research on artefacts undertaken at the University, was set out by Laurence and Swift. That significance had not been previously understood, as reported in the [Independent newspaper](#) (08/02/10, 5.2 below). This achieved a 12-month breathing space in which to explain the value and significance of the Roman Museum with reference to research, and to develop research based on the museum and its collection to demonstrate that value (3.3 above).

The first opportunity to present this research and to influence museum policy came in May 2010. A Light Touch Peer Review was undertaken by the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council, at which Laurence explained the importance of involvement of University research in understanding the significance of the museum. These discussions and the report (5.3 below) led the council to ask Laurence to undertake a study of museum governance, and to chair the new stakeholder group: Canterbury Heritage Partnership (with representatives from the Cathedral, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, Canterbury Christ Church University, Kent County Council, CCC, and a number of Friends Groups of the 5 museums under CCC governance). By Autumn 2010 Laurence had established [The Heritage and Innovation Network at Kent \(THINK\)](#) to connect University research with museums in Kent and to establish a mechanism to engage all stakeholders. As of 31 July 2013, THINK had 122 members, 20% of whom are academics, 80% external to HE, with significant numbers of museum professionals (14%), local government officers (7%), researchers (11%), as well as entrepreneurs, consultants and creative artists.

The Heritage Partnership provided a new platform to discuss ideas for museum development and to influence the policy that all six museums in Canterbury and its district should remain open. That decision came in Spring 2011. Related to this, a new post of Director of Museums was created with Laurence included on the CCC appointment panel (May 2011). This demonstrates his impact on

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the council and, in particular, the value given to his views by the Head of Culture and Enterprise at CCC. After the appointment of the new Director, Laurence had regular six-weekly meetings to discuss the role of the Roman Museum, drawing on his research (including 3.3). Through his research findings he created a better understanding of the value of the collection and initiated a discussion of ways to promote it that resulted in a significant increase in visitor numbers between 2009 and 2013 (see 5.7 below). It was through this dialogue that Laurence contributed to the development of a clear vision for the Roman Museum and to the decision to begin its [refurbishment in spring 2013](#) (5.7 below).

To ensure that his research in relation to the Roman Museum (3.3 above) has an impact on the public, Laurence has delivered lectures and [a gallery talk with a podcast](#) (5.4 below), and has written a newspaper article in the [Canterbury Times](#) (24/05/13; circulation 55,000 residents – 5.5). The link with his research on graffiti and children in Pompeii (3.5 above) was highlighted to the Friends of Canterbury Museums (30 people) with hands-on discussion of inscriptions from the museum collection in the light of his research on epitaphs (3.4 and 3.6 above). He has organised, in 2013, for key objects from the museum to be recorded with the Department's 3D laser scanner and to be presented on a [digital screen](#) in the Roman Museum to highlight the research being undertaken at the University. These activities have placed his research on childhood in the public domain: it has been delivered by the local newspaper to every household (55,000); it has been made available on the internet; and it has been embedded in a local museum.

The shift in museum policy from one of museum closures, including the Roman Museum, to one of commitment can be demonstrated in [CCC's corporate plan 2011-16](#), as well as with reference to the July 2013 discussion of budget cuts. The Roman Museum is now (July 2013) seen as being of significant value and will not have its opening hours reduced, unlike [3 other museums](#) managed by CCC. Since 2010, when the Roman Museum was seen as having little significance, less than Christmas lights (as reported in the [Independent 08/02/10](#) – see 5.2 below), and as a result of Laurence's activities, this view has been reversed ([Canterbury Times 17/07/13](#)). Reasons given for this have been that the Roman Museum now has a clearer focus or 'offer for visitors' and a strong education programme. Laurence's research has made a significant contribution to establishing a better understanding of the cultural value of the collection on display to the public in the Roman Museum, and this has informed the policy decision in July 2013 to retain the Roman Museum (5.7 below).

### **Extending the Reach of the Impact: Digital Content for the Internet**

As a result of the discussion concerning the Roman Museum, Laurence was invited to join Canterbury for Culture (a stakeholder group that established Canterbury's Culture Awards). Through its Chair (Tim Le Lean) knowledge of his research spread to [Cognitive Media](#), a Small-Medium Enterprise (SME), including the production of animations with educational content for the US free-to-view network [TED-Ed](#) (5.8 below). In 2012, a meeting was held between Andrew Park (founder of Cognitive Media) and Ray Laurence to establish a short, content-led, animated film for TED-Ed (5.8 below). Laurence created the script based on his research for a 6-minute animated film '[A Glimpse of Teenage Life in Ancient Rome](#)' and advised on the visual content developed by Cognitive Media (based particularly on research in 3.2, 3.4, 3.6 above). The film was released on 29 October 2012. The impact of the film can be measured via YouTube statistics to 31 July 2013 (5.9 below). It has reached 222,415 people, and there has been a very positive engagement with the film (2,092 likes and 68 dislikes) and more than 360 comments discussing the content. It has been shared with others 248 times (5.9 below). The comments on YouTube highlight how the content was found to be 'really informative and relatable', and to create a demand for a second film or, as the comments stated, 'part 2' (5.9 and 5.10 below). Importantly, the film has been incorporated into 239 webpages to create customised lessons for schools, through a process known as [flipping](#) from the TED-Ed site (5.8 and 5.9 below). The film was shortlisted for the 2013 [Canterbury Culture Award for Commercial Collaboration](#). The success of the first film led TED-Ed to commission Laurence to write scripts for a Rome series, as they say 'we're thrilled with these exceptional lessons, and we think they add something unique and useful to the library of lessons we offer teachers around the world' (5.8 below). As a result, and again working with Cognitive Media, a second film, '[Four Sisters in Ancient Rome](#)', was released on 14 May 2013 (based on research in 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6). Within 24 hours of its release [10,000 people viewed it](#) and by the end of the first week 26,000 people had seen the film (886 likes and 44 dislikes). In 11 weeks from

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release (to 31 July 2013), 39,204 people had watched 'Four Sisters in Ancient Rome', and the film had been shared with others 130 times. To quote some of the 98 comments to highlight the impact: 'This was really informative and relatable. I want to see part 2'; 'this is the best way of learning'; 'so entertaining and informative'; 'I love that they go into detail of the girls' lives. Textbooks rarely do that'; and 'I love these animations. It makes history even more interesting!' (5.10 below). Comments also raised queries that were answered with reference to the films; for example: 'I think you will find your answer at 5:28' (i.e. 5 minutes and 28 seconds into the film). Further films will be produced for release in 2014 and 2015 in this series and result from the uptake by 220,000 users of the internet, sharing by internet users (376 times), use by school teachers via [flipping](#) (276 times) and numerous comments asking for additional programmes – for example: 'this was incredible, please make more like this' (5.10 below). As TED-Ed comment, these are 'compelling lessons of an incredible caliber', and, as Andrew Park of Cognitive Media comments (5.8 below), this activity 'fulfils TED-Ed's philosophy of a set of ideas that have changed viewers' attitudes to how they see Rome'.

**Reach and Significance**

Laurence has ensured that his research on Roman history has reached over 260,000 viewings in the course of the 9 months from October 2012 to 31 July 2013. Since his arrival at Kent, he has ensured that the value of research relevant to the Canterbury Roman Museum has been explained within a process of advocacy that has contributed to a policy that has retained this museum, and contributed to the decision to begin its refurbishment and renewal.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**

- 1) Wikipedia: sets out change in policy from proposed closure of the Roman Museum in 2010: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Museum).
- 2) The *Independent* newspaper: provides information on the Canterbury City Council's view of the significance of the Roman Museum in February 2010: <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/history/canterburys-roman-museum-could-fall-victim-to-the-credit-crunch-1892883.html>
- 3) *Light Touch Peer Review Canterbury City Council: Museums and Galleries Service, Museums, Libraries and Archives*, 10 September 2010. Sets out the review of museums in 2010, including the absence of partnership with the University.
- 4) Podcast of a gallery talk demonstrates Laurence's engagement with museum content via his research: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/communications/bitesizebeaney/goddess.html>
- 5) Newspaper article in the *Canterbury Times* demonstrates dissemination of research to 55,000 residents of Canterbury: <http://www.thisiskent.co.uk/Ray-Laurence-Tale-Canterbury-s-breastfeeding/story-19078767-detail/story.html#axzz2UuFxnely>
- 6) Canterbury City Council press releases and Corporate Plan demonstrate new focus on museums and young people (2012) and investment in the Roman Museum (2013): <http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/TK-Cant/cms/pdf/Canterbury-Roman-Museum.pdf> <http://ourpledges.canterbury.gov.uk/assets/corporate-plan-2012.pdf>
- 7) Confidential letter from Joanna Jones (Director of Canterbury Museums and Galleries) setting out the role played by Laurence with respect to the Canterbury Roman Museum.
- 8) Letters from Andrew Park (Director of Cognitive Media) and TED-Ed detailing the nature of the impact of the animated films.
- 9) Animated film: 'A Glimpse of Teenage Life in Ancient Rome'. YouTube provides statistics on viewers, comments and demographic data, whilst TED-Ed provides information on the number of times the film was incorporated into other websites: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juWYhMoDTN0>; <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/a-glimpse-of-teenage-life-in-ancient-rome-ray-laurence>
- 10) Animated film: 'Four Sisters in Ancient Rome'. YouTube provides statistics on viewers, comments and demographic data, whilst TED-Ed provides information on the number of times the film was incorporated into other websites: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQMgLvXsrw> <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/four-sisters-in-ancient-rome-ray-laurence>