Hugh Last Fund Research Trip Report

Henry Clarke, PhD Candidate, University of Leeds

In September 2015 I conducted a research trip to Central Spain and Northern Portugal to study archaeological excavation reports and related research materials from various libraries and institutions, and to visit and photograph ancient sites in the Duero/Douro valley. Without the support of the Roman Society and the Hugh Last Fund I would have been unable to complete these research activities, which are essential to the success of my PhD. My thesis explores local identity and cultural change in three case-study areas along the upper, middle and lower Durius valley (the modern Duero/Douro) in Spain and Portugal from the 3rd/2nd centuries BC to the 2nd century AD, with a focus on the relationship between local inhabitants and their environment. I aim to exemplify the effects of the Roman Empire on expressions of cultural identity and on relationships with the landscape within the Durius valley. Archaeological evidence is particularly important to the success of the project, since I am endeavouring to examine the identities of fundamentally voiceless historical groups.

The support of the Roman Society enabled me to conduct essential research using materials from university libraries and archives in Madrid, Valladolid and Porto which will have an invaluable impact on the central chapters of my thesis. Excavation reports and scholarship from the University of Valladolid in particular revealed clear areas for comparison between the material culture of the ancient inhabitants of the Durius basin and the upper valley. The Roman Society’s support also allowed me to visit several museums housing artefacts pertinent to my research which I was able to analyse closely and photograph for inclusion in my thesis, which will enrich my analysis. These included the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid; the Roman Villas Museum near Valladolid, the only one of its kind in the Iberian Peninsula; regional museums in Zamora, Valladolid and Soria; and site museums at Clunia and Termes. I similarly visited several archaeological sites.
along the Durius river which are central to the main chapters of my thesis, including Numantia, Uxama, Termes, Clunia and the archaeological zone at Pintia.

Visiting sites fundamental to my research and exploring the valley in person has had a profound impact on my understanding of the geography and topography of my research area. I now feel a far deeper connection to the landscape and the heritage of the valley. The trip has likewise enabled me to develop important research links with academics and institutions in Central Spain in particular, which should prove beneficial for my ongoing research activities. I am extremely grateful to the Roman Society and the Hugh Last Fund for their support, without which this research trip and the significant impact it has had and will continue to have on my PhD would not have been possible.