

FOUR DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

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Tuesday, June 26

I have recently proposed an online course for the [Institute of Continuing Education](#) at the University of Cambridge. My day started with a meeting at Madingley Hall to discuss this idea with the manager of the courses. The online provision is a novelty at Cambridge and the manager has been surprised how many of the customers are apparently totally new to the ICE and create a truly global audience. Thus, my idea needs a rethink in order to fulfil their remit to be able to run the course at least three times and reach a wider audience with a less area-specific title. The course seems to stay in development. Luckily, the manager has to put on his second hat as the manager of the International Summer School so I will have until late August or September to brainstorm.

After the meeting I headed to the [University Library](#) to check the dates suggested for the calibrated chronology of the late central Italian prehistory. The book in question seemed to be in the open collection so I decided to go the [Department of Archaeology](#) first. I had a series of illustrations to do for an article; thus, I needed to scan some slides with a slide scanner and to check old GIS coverages in order to edit the figures needed for the wetlands volume [Water: Movement](#) – *The importance of rivers, lakes and wetlands in prehistoric societies* edited by Andrea Vianello. It turned out that the slide scanner had not been connected to the network since the last network update and I had to get the departmental computing officer David Redhouse, the network administrator required to add an USB appliance, to come and get the scanner online. In

addition, for some reason scanning slides is always prone to random difficulties. This time one slide turned all black and one bright red; if only one had foreseen how redundant the old photographic forms were to come and how quickly slide scanners became obsolete. I shiver with the thought of upgrading from the current modes of storing them.

I scanned the slides for the illustrations and saved them in order to edit them later and proceeded into creating a series of new ArcMap coverages in order to have the correct features in my figures. Since I can edit all new CorelDraw files further at home later during the week, I just created the content I needed and imported it to the CorelDraw for later editing and use. The day finished with fetching the book I had looked for in the online catalogue earlier from the stack in the UL and updating the dates taken from my PhD.



University Library at Cambridge

Wednesday, June 27

This morning saw me giving a lecture in the *Exploring Art* course (*Makers and Materials II*) in the [Embrace Arts](#). This course is part of the Art History lecture series in the Richard Attenborough Centre at the University of Leicester. These courses are organized by the [Institute for Lifelong Learning at Leicester](#). The course director was sitting in this time in order to assess me and start the process of including me officially in the tutor panel. Considering that W. G. Hoskins taught at the Vaughan College and for the [Workers' Educational Association](#), I am not in bad company.



My lecture is about to start

The lecture on Phaidias at Olympia, a topical subject due to the arrival of Olympic flame relay to Leicester on Monday, went well and the learners seemed interested and enthusiastic.

In the afternoon I started to edit the illustrations but managed to make very slow process, since I had to crosscheck different place names mentioned in the text and their locations.

Thursday, June 28

In the morning I uploaded my archaeological blog 'Landscape Perceptions', where I did blog about [this Archaeology Day](#) last week. This week's topic was '[Summer Season of Archaeological News](#)' in which I discussed some Roman glass beads from Japan. I try to be topical; thus, I have reviewed both [Pub Archaeology](#) and Mary Beard's excellent '[Meet the Romans](#)', while discussing important archaeological topics. As a busy working mother, I am lucky to be able to keep a weekly blog!

On this particular day I had to make some preparations for my coming short work trip to Rome. I have to keep my Italian mobile number alive by crediting it at least once a year. This I could have sorted otherwise – online or bothering colleagues – but for drawing a few diagnostic pieces of pottery for an article I am preparing and meeting the new inspector for [Crustumerium](#) where I excavated between 2004 and 2008 you have to travel to Italy. In order to make swifter moves from the airport to the centre, from the centre to the [Institutum Romanum Finlandiae](#), where I store some utensils, and from Rome to Civita Castellana, I have hired a car. I try to make this trip on a shoestring so avoiding the extra insurances in the car rental place is paramount. Thus, I had to buy a car hire excess insurance online that was much cheaper than any tie-ins.

Secondly, I needed a new cabin trolley. My husband will be leaving almost immediately for Turkey for work on my arrival so he could not lend his but I had to go to the city centre to buy a new one. I managed to spend almost two hours while comparing models, weights and volumes in different department stores and to lose my toddler son in the process. It is good to know that the security in the shops can be used to spot runaway children with extra energy...

I also had to send a recent article, out about a month ago, to the inspectors in different Superintendencies whose areas I was discussing in my article 'Political landscapes and local identities in Archaic central Italy – Interpreting the material from Nepi (VT, Lazio) and Cisterna Grande (Crustumerium, RM, Lazio)'. In addition, there were e-mails from the first hostel I am staying in Rome and a follow-up message from the lecturer responsible for the Landscape History courses in the Institute of Continuing Education at Cambridge to deal with. I also finally received a photo register file from my assistant.

Friday, June 29

As I suspected, my Friday looks like it will be less than exciting. I have to do a job application, continue editing and compiling illustrations for the article I now have the material for and look at briefly some other texts in order to make progress on them. I will look at the summary of the activities before turning off my laptop in the early evening.



Editing illustrations

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Not unsurprisingly the time flew and I barely got the illustrations ready – all 15 of them. I also wrote the list of captions and inserted the references into the text. There is one illustration I am

not happy with but I have to do it later; its colour scheme does not take the change to the greyscale well. I may also have to include a 16th figure in order to show more of the real landscape in a photo. The other texts have to wait until next week. One is always optimistic what one manages to do in one day...