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Dr Jon Coulston with archetypal shades and compact camera at the site of the Iron Age Battle of Lake Mossø in Denmark during ROMEC XVIII in 2013. Image: M. C. Bishop (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Jonathan Charles Nelson Coulston

(5.7.1957–6.7.2024)

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M. C. Bishop

Dr Jon Coulston was educated at St Josephs in Poole (UK) and St Peter's schools in Bournemouth prior to attending the University of Leicester where he read History. His postgraduate studies took him to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne for first an MPhil in the Archaeology of the Roman Empire and then a PhD on the subject of *Trajan's Column: the Sculpting and Relief Content of a Roman Propaganda Monument*. His research into the technical aspects of the design and execution of the Column were closely related to his interests in Roman (and Dacian) military equipment and its depiction on the helical frieze and pedestal reliefs of the Column.

Jon became a tutor in the Centre for Continuing Education and a Guest Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at Newcastle. In 1995, he was appointed as Lecturer in Ancient History in the University of St Andrews and from 2005 was a Visiting Scholar at Trinity College, Dublin. In 2019 he was promoted to Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at St Andrews, whilst in 2016 he received a University Teaching Excellence Award. There are numerous attestations from former students who both enjoyed and benefitted from being taught by him.

In 1983, Jon attended the first Roman Military Equipment Research Seminar (ROMERS) in Sheffield (UK), his contribution subsequently being published in the proceedings of the seminar. He then participated in the second and third seminars (Sheffield, Nottingham) before hosting the fourth meeting in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1986, which he renamed the Roman Military Equipment Conference (ROMECC). He subsequently edited the conference proceedings, published as BAR S394 *Military Equipment and the Identity of Roman Soldiers*. He was to host a ROMECC for a

second time (the nineteenth) at the School of Classics in the University of St Andrews in 2016, the proceedings of which were published as *JRMES* 19 the following year. Over the years, he contributed numerous papers and reviews on military history, ancient warfare, and ancient art (specifically studying military iconography) to both periodicals and multi-author volumes, including *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army* (ed. Y. Le Bohec).

Jon was a member of the editorial committees of the *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* and *Gladius*, as well as a member of the administrative committee for the Roman Military Equipment Conferences (ROMECC). He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1995 and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 2003. He contributed as an advisor and 'talking head' to numerous radio and television programmes (*Time Watch*, Terry Jones' *Barbarians*, *Curse of Oak Island* Season 6 and many others), and consulted on archaeological reconstructions for *National Geographic Magazine*.

He was working on a number of projects at the time of his untimely demise, including his monograph *All the Emperor's Men. Roman Soldiers and Barbarians on Trajan's Column*, which was almost complete; a report on the Niederbieber *draco* standard as part of a collaborative work; and a third edition of *Roman Military Equipment*. It is intended that all of these projects will be brought to completion in due course.

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