

The traditional perception of Roman military bases, particularly those from the early empire, is that they were predominantly segregated male spaces from which soldiers could carry out the business of war, unhindered by domestic lives involving women and families. It has long been acknowledged that the households in the often elaborate residences of senior officers, inside the fort walls, included women and children, but it is widely assumed that few other women would have entered, still less have been domiciled, within the forts and fortresses of the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

Sara Phang (*The Marriage of Roman Soldiers {13 BC- AD 235}*, 2001), has convincingly argued that despite a ban on the marriage of ordinary soldiers prior to Septimius Severus' reforms in 197 CE, ordinary soldiers did have 'wives', in the *defacto* sense, who accompanied them while on campaign. Nevertheless Phang has assumed (2001: 35, 127-129), like other military scholars, that any such families were not part of the community that lived inside the fort walls. Conversely, Carol van Driel Murray (in P. Rush, ed., *Theoretical Roman Archaeology: Second Conference Proceedings*, 1995, 3-21) has analysed the remains of leather shoes from a number of forts in the northwest provinces and argued that these provide evidence for women and children living inside early imperial forts. Van Driel Murray stressed (*Jahresber. Ges. Pro Vindonissa*, 1997, 55) that 'It is to whole packages of attributes that we must look' to understand the statuses and roles of the women and children in these, long-considered, male domains.

The Engendering Roman Spaces Project is investigating these 'whole packages' of artefacts and using GIS (Geographical Information Systems) to carry out spatial analyses of the distribution patterns of artefacts found at a number of military sites in Germany. The distribution patterns of 'gendered' artefacts is proving that the traditional view of the socio-spatial arrangements for Roman military life in the early Roman Empire is fallacious and that women were indeed present within the barracks and service buildings inside the walls of these forts and fortresses.

This paper briefly introduces the sites and spatial analyses used in this project, and then discusses approaches that underpin the 'gendering' of artefacts and artefact types. Lyndsay Allason-Jones (in P. Rush, ed., *Theoretical Roman Archaeology: Second Conference Proceedings*, 2005, 22-32) cautioned of the many dangers involved in the "'Sexing" of Small Finds'. This paper discusses the processes for overcoming such problems. These processes involve assessment of past artefact 'gendering'; critical approaches both to relationships between the material cultural and textual evidence for, and to analogical inferences about, what men and women did and wore in the early Roman Empire; and assessment of how these activities are documented in the archaeological record. This paper also discusses the fuzziness that surrounds our abilities to identify the activities of men and women in the past, and methods to deal with this.