**University of Leicester**

**Future 50 PhD Scholarship**

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| **Project Reference** | ARCH Inskip |

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**Section 2 – *Project Information***

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| **Project Title** | Transitional foodways: Investigating the Anglo-Saxon transition through a multidisciplinary study of consumption practices in 3rd-8th century Northamptonshire.  |
| **Project Highlights:** | 1. | Transitional study on subsistence strategies in a neglected Roman settlement type. |
| 2. | Working to maximise archaeological materials excavated by the School.  |
| 3. | Strengthening relationships with ULAS and Northampton ARC which provides outreach and engagement opportunities. |
| **Project Summary (350 words)** |
| This project aims to assess how subsistence patterns changed in the region of Northamptonshire during the end of Roman rule and the advent of the Anglo-Saxon migration. Scholarship on late Roman Britain has long debated the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons and the subsequent social transformation that ultimately gave rise to medieval England. However, the prevailing analytical models have been constructed upon a small pool of historical sources (Bede, Gildas, Nennius, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) replete with interpretive challenges and an archaeological dataset biased toward a few prominent and large settlements (Colchester, London and St Albans) that are uncharacteristic of wider society. Little research exploring changes in the daily lives of people in smaller towns and settlements, the contexts in which most people actually resided, exists. As diet is such an important factor in the daily lives of people – inextricably linked to economy, society and identity – its analysis provides a valuable mechanism to explore change within past societies. In particular, the analysis of stable isotopes (carbon, nitrogen and sulphur) from human and animal bones and teeth offers an opportunity to understand whether there were significant temporal changes in animal management and consumption practices. Furthermore, consideration of changes in pathologies identifiable in the skeleton can indicate whether living conditions varied (e.g. stature, infectious and nutritional diseases). This project will assess 400 animal and human remains from the small town of Roman Irchester, which comprise multiple Roman cemeteries dating from 3rd to late 4th centuries. These can be compared skeletally and isotopically to 200 5th to 8th century Anglo-Saxon remains from Harringworth, Oundle and other local sites. This information will be contextualised with published data from other contemporary sites to identify how small Roman sites like Irchester compare to larger settlements and assess prevailing models this period (e.g. mass migration versus elite replacement) and highlight potential variation across Britain. This project supports existing research at Irchester and strengthens the University’s partnership with ULAS, The Chester House Estate and the ARC, a key part of SAAH’s research strategy. This partnership enables significant public outreach and engagement opportunities through the Museum, volunteering and learning programmes. |