



Roman Britain in 2003

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Britannia*, Vol. 35 (2004), pp. 253-349

Published by: [Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4128635>

Accessed: 28/11/2012 11:25

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III. Inscriptions¹

By R.S.O. TOMLIN and M.W.C. HASSALL

A. MONUMENTAL

1. **Shadwell** (TQ 34836 80702), 172–176 The Highway, East London. Top right-hand corner of a thin white marble slab, now discoloured grey and buff, 77 by 95 mm, 18 mm thick, found² in 2002 at the Roman bath-house. The letters are well-drawn but coarsely incised: [...]VS | [...]ET | [...].³

2. **Farley Heath** (TQ 050 449) Roman temple, Surrey (FIG. 1). Irregular strip of lead, c. 125 mm by 17 mm, c. 2 mm thick, found⁴ in 1995 near the southern edge of the *temenos*. After each face had been scratched with three lines of clumsy cursive writing, it was folded upon itself twice.⁵ Some of this text survives in the corrosion layer, especially at either end, but it is broken by three bands of damage due to the folding and unfolding. Most of the surviving letters are faint and ambiguous, and only an incomplete transcript is possible (see FIG. 1 below).⁶ (a) inner face: ‘To the god ... Senilis (?son) of Sennus ...’ (b) outer face: ‘At four thousand *denarii* ... Aurelius Se[...]’⁷

(for figure and text see following page)

¹ Inscriptions on STONE and the two lead ‘curse tablets’ have been arranged as in the order followed by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright in *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* Vol. i (Oxford, 1965), henceforth cited as *RIB*. Citation is by item and not page number. Inscriptions on PERSONAL BELONGINGS and the like (*instrumentum domesticum*) have been arranged alphabetically by site under their counties. For each site they have been ordered as in *RIB*, pp. xiii–xiv. The items of *instrumentum domesticum* published in the eight fascicules of *RIB* II (1990–95), edited by S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin, are cited by fascicule, by the number of their category (*RIB* 2401–2505) and by their sub-number within it (e.g. *RIB* II.2, 2415. 53). When measurements are quoted, the width precedes the height.

Dr Tomlin (RSOT) is responsible for entries Nos 1–3, 5–14, 18, 20–25, 27, Mr Hassall (MWCH) for entries Nos 4, 15–17, 19, 26, the Addendum et Corrigendum, and the Change of Location. Overall editing is by RSOT.

² During excavation by Pre-Construct Archaeology for Wimpey Homes, directed by Alistair Douglas; for the site see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 347. Jenny Hall made it available at the Museum of London.

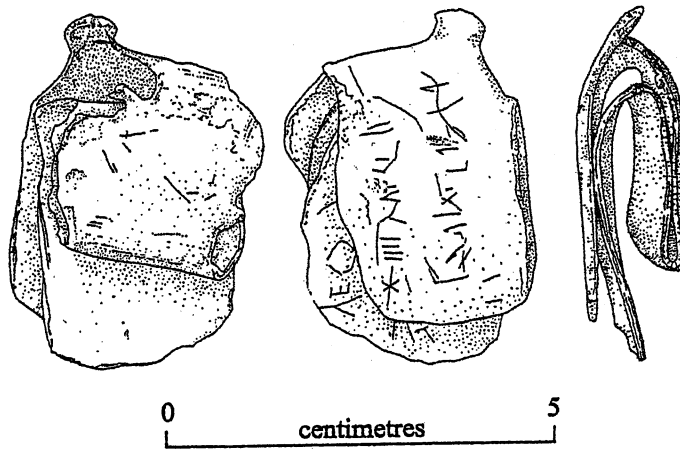
³ Only the top-right serif survives of the first letter in line 2, but it does not belong to S, and the sequence FT can be excluded.

⁴ During machine clearance of an area damaged by metal detectorists, before excavation by Surrey County Archaeological Unit. Kathryn Ayres, the Finds/Archives Officer, made it available.

⁵ The script, an Old Roman Cursive (and thus earlier than the fourth century), is too crude to be dated. II for E is unusual, and suggestive of an earlier date, but 4,000 *denarii* would be a large sum of money before the late third century.

⁶ Uncertain letters have been dotted, and undeciphered traces of text represented as The bands of damage are represented as |. In (i) the E of *deo* is capital-letter, but elsewhere E is written as II. The scribe wrote *Senis* and corrected it to *Senilis* without deleting S. In (ii) the *denariis* sign consists of only two intersecting lines and possibly part of a third, but this reading is confirmed by the numeral which follows.

⁷ The text is too fragmentary for interpretation, but it may be a ‘curse tablet’ addressed to the (unnamed) local god, with reference to 4,000 *denarii*. There is no evidence of a connected text, only the two personal names, *Senilis Senni*, and *Aurelius Se[...]*, and possible trace of others.



(a) inner face:

deodauis̄ || ... || ... || .. siinislis
 šiinni ..m̄du || ... || ... || ...a||liars̄is̄
 atcan... || ... || ... || ...

(a) reconstructed text:

deo DAVIIS ... Seni<s>lis | Senni ... | ...

(b) outer face:

(denariis) IIII milibus || ... || ... || iilius sii...
 ... || ... || ... ||...us ...
 ...

(b) reconstructed text:

(denariis) III milibus ... [Aur]elius Se[...] |
 [...]us ... | ...

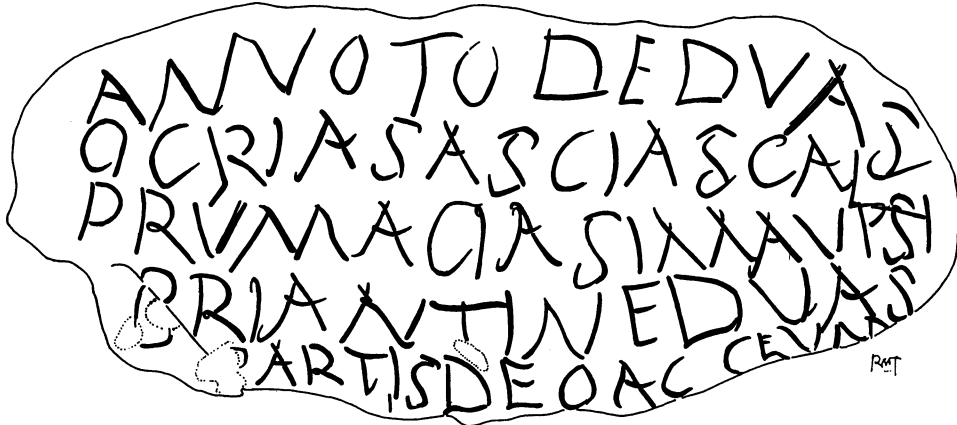
FIG. 1. Farley Heath, inscribed lead strip (still folded) (No. 2). Scale 1:1.
 (Drawing: Surrey County Archaeological Unit)

3. **Ratcliffe-on-Soar** (SK 494 304), Red Hill, Nottinghamshire (FIG. 2). Oval lead tablet, 82 mm by 38 mm, found in 1963 on the site of the Roman temple.⁸ It has been neatly inscribed on one face with five lines of capital letters, probably fourth-century in date.⁹ The first four lines are well spaced,

⁸ It is now in the Broomhouse Yard Museum, Nottingham Castle (inv. no. 1974.337), where Anne Insker made it available to RSOT, who will publish it with full commentary as 'A Roman inscribed tablet from Red Hill, Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Notts.)', in *Antiquaries Journal* 84 (2004), forthcoming. It was first examined in 1964 by (Sir) Eric Turner, who published the first 'curse tablet' from the site in *JRS* 53 (1963), 122–4. Another tablet is published in *Britannia* 24 (1993), 310–13, No. 2. For the site see S. Ebbins and A. Palfreyman, 'Redhill Iron Age and Romano-British site, Nottinghamshire: a new assessment', *Transactions of the Thorton Society, Nottinghamshire* 107 (2004), 17–40.

⁹ The lettering cannot be dated, but the tablet was found just below the surface with twenty-two coins, one third-century, the others all of the period A.D. 367–92. This is not an absolute date, since the tablet may have been residual, but the use of the preposition *de* with the accusative also suggests a fourth-century date.

but without word-separation, and there is some crowding towards the end. The fifth line is squeezed onto the lower edge. (For transcription see FIG. 2 below.) 'I make a note of two gaiters, an axe, a knife, a pair of gloves, whether woman or if man ... two parts to the god ...'¹⁰

Transcript¹¹

ANNOTODEDVAS
OCRIASASCIALCAL
PRVMACIASIMAVPSI
BRIANTINEDVAS
PARTISDEOAC CEVM

Reconstructed text¹²

annoto de duas
ocrias ascia(m) scal-
pru(m) ma(n)ica(m) si m(ulier) au[t] si
b(aro) Riantine duas
partis deo AC CEVM

FIG. 2. Ratcliffe-on-Soar, inscribed lead tablet (No. 3). Scale 3:2.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

¹⁰ For a full commentary see the paper cited above (n. 8). This is the first instance of the verb *annotare* (better *adnotare*) in a British 'curse tablet', which is used here with the preposition *de* (exceptionally with the accusative case) to mark the objects of theft. These are *duas ocrias*, as in the Caistor St Edmund tablet (*Britannia* 13 (1982), 408, No. 9), which were leather gaiters worn by farm workers and huntsmen to protect their legs (Palladius 1.42); an axe and knife, tools appropriate to woodland management or land clearance; and MACIA for *ma(n)ica(m)*, leather glove(s), as in tablets from Bath (*Tab. Sulis* 5) and Uley (*Britannia* 27 (1996), 439, No. 1), which were likewise worn by farm workers and huntsmen (Palladius 1.42 again). In writing ASCIA, SCALPRV and MACIA, the scribe omitted the final -M, as often in sub-standard texts influenced by the spoken language, since there was a marked tendency not to pronounce the final -m of the accusative case, even in educated speech. The formula 'whether man or woman', in all its variants, is frequent in British 'curse tablets'. It is similarly abbreviated, as S B S M, *s(i) b(aro) s(i) m(ulier)*, in an unpublished Uley tablet. Another well-attested formula is the promise to the god of a proportion of the stolen goods.

¹¹ The letters NN in line 1 are ligatured. There is a space after C in line 5. The two dotted letters are uncertain.

¹² Words have now been separated, and those which can be interpreted are transcribed in lower-case letters. Letters omitted by abbreviation or oversight are supplied in round brackets. The letter for which another was written by mistake is restored in square brackets. The letters C and I in line 3 have been transposed.

4. **Chester** (*Deva*, SJ 4126 6645), Boughton, the former British Telecom Exchange building, Cheshire. Irregular fragment of a slate slab, 210 by 75 mm, 10 mm thick, found¹³ in 2002 with dumped material, including complete pottery vessels and over fifty coins, in an ancient stream bed in the Roman settlement outside the east gate of the Roman fortress. Part survives of two lines of text: in the first, only the lower part of widely-spaced letters aligned above a scored setting-out line; in the second, the upper part of letters crowded together.¹⁴ [...] | [...]§ L L M[...] | [...] PĒTR[...]| [...]. The first line contains the formula [V] S L L M, [... *v(otum)*] *s(olvit) l(aetus) l(ibens) m(erito)* or [... *v(otum)*] *s(oluerunt) l(aeti) l(ibentes) m(erito)*, '... willingly and deservedly fulfilled his/her/their vow ...'¹⁵

5. **Carlisle** (*Luguvalium*, NY 404 553), Scotch Street, Cumbria (FIG. 3). Fragment of a red sandstone slab, 0.30 by 0.27 m, 0.12 m thick, found¹⁶ in 2003. Part of the right-hand edge survives, with a plain moulding. Inscribed within the recessed panel, which is evidently that of a tombstone: [...]RM | [...]VLIA | [...]VXĒT | [...]AĒT | [...], probably [*D(is) M(anibus) Ge*]rm[*ano I*]ulia | [*coni*]ux et | [...]*ja* et | [...]. 'To the Spirits of the Dead (and) to Germanus. His wife Julia and [...]a and [...].'¹⁷

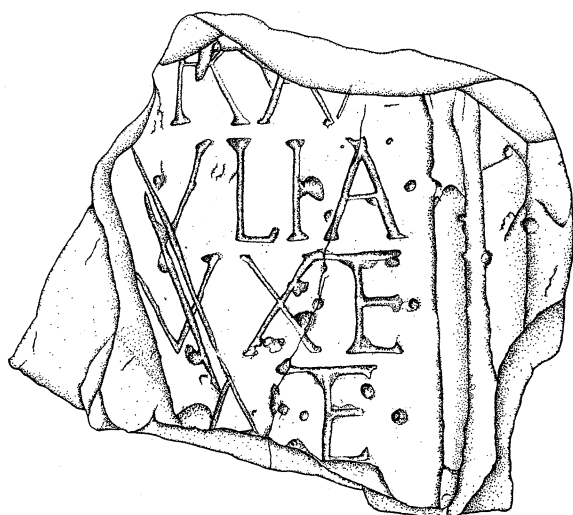


FIG. 3. Carlisle, fragment of a tombstone (No. 5). Scale 1:4.
(Drawing: North Pennines Archaeology)

¹³ During excavations for Barratt, Chester, directed by Vanessa Clarke of Earthworks Archaeological Services. Will Walker of Earthworks Archaeology and Dan Robinson, Keeper of Archaeology at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, provided details including a photograph, and discussed the reading with us. For preliminary notices, see Vanessa Clarke and Dan Robinson in *The Past Uncovered* (Chester City Council, October 2002), 3.

¹⁴ The difference in letter-spacing is probably because the first line contains a formula abbreviated to single letters, the second line a single word. They share the same style of lettering.

¹⁵ In the second line, the initial space shows that this is the beginning of a word. The first and fourth letters, of which only the upper loop survives, are either B, P or R; probably the beginning of the name *Petronius* (or perhaps *Petronianus*). The formula VSL(L)M, which usually concludes a dedication, is occasionally followed by a consular date; however, this does not seem to be so here. Perhaps PĒTR[...] is the name of a dedicant or official person.

¹⁶ During excavation by North Pennines Archaeology funded by Leader Construction, directed by Frank Giocco, who sent a drawing and photographs.

¹⁷ There may be medial points after [I]VLIA and before and after ET and ET, but this is not clear from the photographs; nor do they confirm whether the tail of E survives before RM, or the top of F/E at the end of the line below [...]A ET. *Germanus* is the most likely name (it occurs at Old Penrith, *RIB* 934), but *Firminus* remains possible. *Iulia* is found as a cognomen in *RIB* 1483, a usage which is well attested for *Iulius*. After she is identified as [*coni*]ux, the conjunction *et* introduces another female name, that of a daughter presumably. A second *et* introduces a third name, most likely that of a second daughter.

B. INSTRUMENTUM DOMESTICUM

CUMBRIA

6. **Carlisle** (*Luguvalium*, NY 3974 5614), north of Castle Way, in the *praetentura* of the Roman fort. Two conjoining base sherds of a samian dish (CG, Drag. 18/31, c. A.D. 120–145/50), found¹⁸ in 2000. Two converging lines have been scratched underneath, probably the left-hand portion of a large A.¹⁹

7. *Ibid.* Base sherd of a samian cup (SG, Drag. 27, probably Flavian). Incised neatly underneath within the foot-ring: A.

8. *Ibid.* (FIG. 4). Sherd from the lower wall of a samian cup (SG, Drag. 27 or 35, Flavian). Scratched on the outside: AP.²⁰

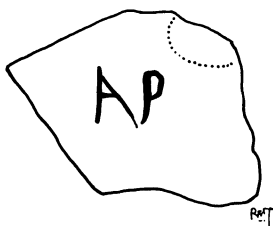


FIG. 4. Carlisle, samian graffito (No. 8). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

9. *Ibid.* (FIG. 5). Base sherd of a samian dish (SG, Drag. 15/17 or 18, Flavian). Scratched underneath around the circumference, a graffito of which only the tops survive of three or four letters. Probably [...]CLII[...], *Cle[mens]* or a derived name.

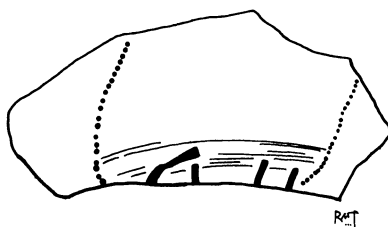


FIG. 5. Carlisle, samian graffito (No. 9). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

¹⁸ With the next eight items during excavation by Carlisle Archaeology Ltd for Carlisle City Council's Gateway City Millennium Project (*Britannia* 32 (2001), 337); for inscribed coarseware from this excavation see *Britannia* 33 (2002), 360–3, Nos 7–11. The vessels were identified by Margaret Ward for Oxford Archaeology (North), which made them available. The graffiti were all made after firing, and will be published by RSOT in the final report with some minor graffiti omitted here, including 'marks of identification' and two graffiti deliberately erased.

¹⁹ The 'cross-bar' is vertical. To judge by its size, the graffito consisted of only this letter, the initial letter of the owner's name.

²⁰ The first two letters of the owner's name. Possibilities include *Aper*, *Apollinaris*, *Aprilis*.

10. Ibid. (FIG. 6). Five conjoining sherds of a samian dish (SG, Drag. 18, Flavian) including about one-quarter of the foot-ring. Scratched underneath around the circumference, in large neat letters: MAGL[...], *Maglus* or one of its derivatives.²¹

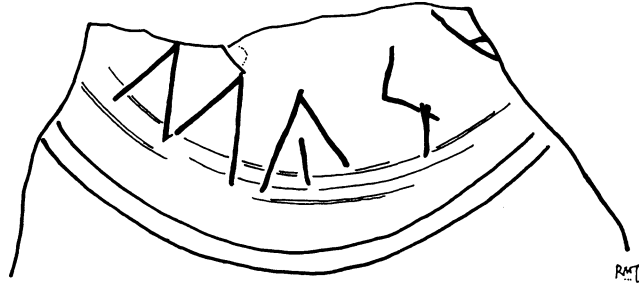


FIG. 6. Carlisle, samian graffito (No. 10). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

11. Ibid. (FIG. 7). Base sherd of a samian dish (CG, Drag. 18/31, probably Trajanic/Hadrianic from Les Martres-de-Veyre). Scratched underneath around the circumference, a graffito of which part survives of four letters. Probably PRIM[...], *Prim[us]* or a name derived from it (e.g. *Primitivus*).²²

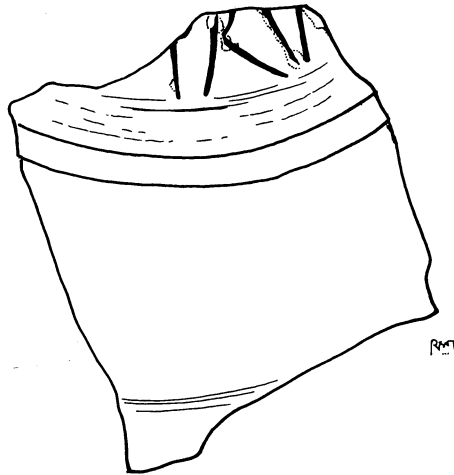


FIG. 7. Carlisle, samian graffito (No. 11). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

²¹ There is just enough space before M to make this the first letter. The third letter resembles S, but was made differently: first the angular 'C' and then a downstroke. In the fourth letter, the beginning of a diagonal second stroke is just visible three-quarters down the vertical stroke. The Celtic name-element **maglos* ('chieftain', 'prince') is found in many personal names in Gaul and Britain, most of the examples being sub-Roman (e.g. *Brigomaglos* at Vindolanda, *RIB* 1722), but for the Roman period in Britain, compare *Brigomalla* at Bath (*Tab. Sulis* 30, 1) and *Maglorius* at Leintwardine (*RIB* II.8, 2504.20, mis-read as *Maslorius*). In Gaul compare the derived nomen *Maglius* (*CIL* xiii.1701).

²² There is just enough space to the left of the first letter, and a hint of the loop, to make it probably initial P.

12. Ibid. Rim sherd of a samian dish (CG, Drag. 18/31). Scratched below the rim:[...]V.²³

13. Ibid. (FIG. 8). Two conjoining sherds of a samian dish (SG, Drag. 18) stamped OFCOTTO (Cotto ii of La Graufesenque, Flavian), preserving the profile and almost the entire foot-ring. Incised underneath within the foot-ring: X and V.²⁴

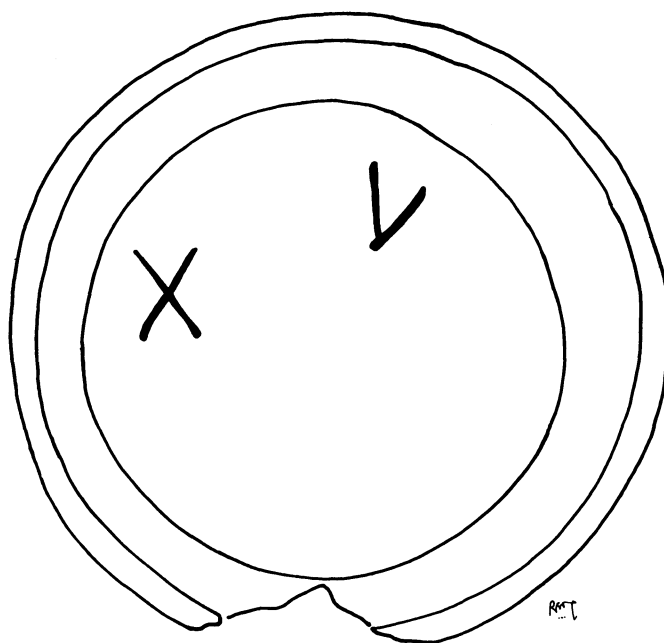


FIG. 8. Carlisle, samian graffito (No. 13). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

14. Ibid. Base sherd of a samian dish (SG, Drag. 18) stamped SECVND (Secundus ii of La Graufesenque, Flavian). Scratched underneath within the foot-ring: V.²⁵

HERTFORDSHIRE

15. **Welwyn** (TL 269 160), School Lane. Two conjoining sherds of a samian bowl (Drag. 38) found²⁶ in c. 1960. A graffito has been cut after firing on the wall below the flange : [...]IINVI[...], perhaps [*Ing*]enui, '(property) of Ingenuus'.²⁷

²³ The graffito may be complete. Perhaps the initial letter of the owner's name rather than a numeral ('5').

²⁴ Compare *Britannia* 28 (1997), 461, No. 20 (also Carlisle), another samian dish inscribed with X and V.

²⁵ The graffito is complete, but to judge by the previous item (No. 13), V may have been accompanied by X.

²⁶ By a builder, 'in a pit'. Given by the finder to Mr H.J. Mclusky, who subsequently presented it to Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service, Mill Green, Hatfield. Details from Mr A.G. Rook, who made the sherds available.

²⁷ The first (incomplete) letter is a short vertical stroke, conceivably part of G. But if the bowl was inverted when the graffito was made, it would be possible to read: [...]IANIII[...], possibly [*Iani(a)e*], '(property) of [...]*iania*'; or (but less likely): [...]IAMII[...].

KENT

16. **Sandwich** (TR 33 58). Samian dish (SG, Drag. 18) stamped OFS·EVERI, found before 1880/1909 and now in Salisbury Museum.²⁸ A graffito has been cut after firing on the underside within the foot-ring, now partly obscured by a label: RABIRINIV, perhaps *Rabiriniu(s)*.²⁹

LONDON

17. **The City** (*Londinium*, TQ 531250 181400), on a site bounded by 19–31 Moorgate and 59–62 Coleman Street. Oblong lead label, 58.7 by 19 mm, 2.5 mm thick, with a hole for suspension at one end, found³⁰ in 2001 in the filling of a medieval pit. The label was made in a mould, and on one side carries letters cast in relief: VICTORI, presumably *Victori(s)*, '(property) of Victor'.³¹

18. **Shadwell** (TQ 34836 80702), 172–176 The Highway, East London (FIG. 9). Fragment of tile, 285 by 288 mm, tapering in thickness from 50 mm (left) to 40 mm (right), found³² in 2002 at the Roman bath-house. The top right-hand corner is original, and so are both sides; it is broken top and bottom, but the text is not affected. This was inscribed before firing, with a sharp point, in cursive letters unlikely to be much later than the mid-second century. They are reasonably well-formed and legible, but with some ambiguities because the graffito cannot be recognized as Latin: NACEBEMDRA | TERPALORIBVSIREPER | QVTIRA.³³

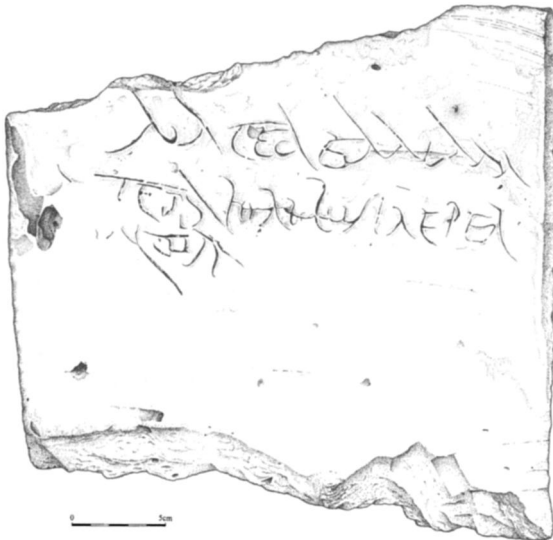


FIG. 9. Shadwell, tile graffito (No. 18). Scale 1:4. (Drawing: Pre-Construct Archaeology)

²⁸ Full details, photograph and rubbings from Robert Hopkins, who will publish it in the *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies* 12 (Papers presented to Kay Hartley, ed. Pamela Irving), forthcoming. Brenda Dickinson has identified the potter as Severus iii of La Graufesenque (Die 7c, A.D. 75–100). The dish was purchased by General Pitt Rivers between 1880 and 1900. The label, of which half survives, records the provenance, and states that it was 'b(ough)t Webster'. This was probably the Bicester antiquities dealer of that name, according to Mr Hopkins, who notes that the purchase was not entered into the General's private catalogue, which is now in Cambridge University.

²⁹ This name is not attested, but it is a possible nomen derived from a cognomen **Rabirinus*, which would itself derive from the nomen *Rabirius*.

³⁰ During excavations by the Museum of London Archaeological Service directed by John Sygrave for the Moorgate Investment Partnership. Information from Jackie Keily and Dr Angela Wardle of the Museum of London Specialist Services.

³¹ Other possibilities are the genitive of *Victorius*, or the abbreviated genitive *Victori(ni)*, or a dative, 'for Victor'.

³² During excavation by Pre-Construct Archaeology for Wimpey Homes, directed by Alistair Douglas; for the site see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 347. PCA provided a drawing and photograph, and Jenny Hall made the tile available at the Museum of London.

³³ There is no visible word-separation. In line 1, letter 3 is C or T (but compare line 2, letter 1); letters 5 and 8 are either B or D, but they are evidently different and, although the sequence DEMBRA reads more easily, letter 5 looks more like B in line 2; letters 9 and 10 might also be AR, and are evidently repeated at the end of line 3.

NORFOLK

19. **Caister-on-Sea** (TG 5209 1214), Norwich Road. Amphora sherd found³⁴ in 2003. A graffito has been cut after firing: [...]VIHS VI, presumably [*modii*] VII *s(extarii)* VI, '7 *modii*, 6 *sextarii*'.³⁵

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

20. **Aldwinckle** (TL 00 81). Copper-alloy fragment, 22 by 29 mm, from the first leaf of a military diploma, found³⁶ in 1999. It comes from just above the middle of the left-hand side, with two parallel framing lines about 4 mm apart on the outer face. The inner face reads: [...]R DIVI TRAI[...] | [...]NVS HA[...] | [...]NICIA PO[...]. The outer face: LOR PE[...] | GRIPPIA[...] | NERVI[...] | LINGO[...] | ∞ ET I [...] | IA[...].³⁷

Inner face: [*imp(erator) Caesa]r divi Trai[ani Parthici f(ilius) divi Nervae nepos]* | [*Traia]nus Ha[drianus Augustus pontifex maximus]* | [*tribu]nicia po[]testate .. co(n)s(ul) iii proco(n)s(ul)].* Outer face: [... *et Gal]*|*lor(um) Pe[triana (milliaria) c(ivium) R(omanorum) ... et A]*|*grippia[na miniata ... et I]*|*Nervi[a German(orum) (milliaria) ... et I]* | *Lingo[n(um) et ...]* | (*milliaria*) *et I [Hamior(um) sagitt(ariorum) ... et I Ulpia Tra]ia[na Cugern(orum) c(ivium) R(omanorum) ...]*.

The emperor is explicitly Hadrian (A.D. 117–38), but by formulation the diploma is earlier than A.D. 124, and almost certainly belongs to the same issue as the Brigetio diploma (17 July A.D. 122). This lists 13 *alae* and 37 cohorts in the British army whose veterans were discharged by the governor, Platorius Nepos, while Hadrian was actually in Britain.³⁸

NORTHUMBERLAND

21. **High Rochester** (*Bremenium*, NY 83 98). Oblong lead sealing, 23 by 11mm, found³⁹ in 2002. Within an oval impression: QLQLLĪ, perhaps *Q(uinti) Lolli*.⁴⁰

22. *Ibid.* Oval lead sealing, 19 by 14mm, found later in 2002. Obverse: CĪL, *c(ohors) I L(ingonum)*. Reverse: mark of identification.⁴¹

³⁴ During excavations for M. Gilbert by Archaeological Project Services directed by James Albone, who provided a drawing and full details. For the site, see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 333.

³⁵ This is acceptable as a note of capacity for a Dressel 20: see *RIB* II.6, p. 33.

³⁶ By Mr J.C. Green, and reported to the British Museum. Its current location is uncertain, but it was examined by Paul Holder in April 2000, who sent full details. He will publish it in *Roman Military Diplomas* V.

³⁷ Surviving letters only, without specifying how many have been lost in each line. Letter-heights are 3 mm (outer face) and 2.5–3 mm (inner face).

³⁸ *CIL* xvi.69 (now in the British Museum), which is the only other document to locate the *ala Agrippiana miniata* in Britain. The Aldwinckle fragment (inner face) writes *tribunicia* in full, which only happens in the early part of Hadrian's reign; by A.D. 124 it is abbreviated. The outer face, with its list of units, replicates that of *CIL* xvi.69 almost exactly. Dr Holder thinks, with the late Dr Margaret Roxan concurring, that there would not have been a similar diploma issued in either A.D. 121 or 123.

³⁹ Like the next item (No. 22), with a metal detector. Lindsay Allason-Jones, Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne, sent photographs of them both. No. 21 (accession number 2002.14) has been donated to the Museum, and No. 22 (accession number 2003.5) is likely to be.

⁴⁰ The reading is uncertain except for the enlarged initial Q, which is apparently not followed by V, so it must be an abbreviated praenomen or nomen. The next letter looks like L, perhaps followed by a very small O, then by LL narrower than the first L. So it is tempting to recognize the governor Q. Lollius Urbicus, who recommissioned High Rochester in c. A.D. 139 (compare *RIB* 1276), but lead sealings usually name centurions or decurions.

⁴¹ This is the unit's first sealing to be found; it was based at High Rochester in the early Antonine period (*RIB* 1276), and at Lanchester from at least A.D. 218/22 (*Britannia* 19 (1988), 492, No. 10). The reverse is apparently not lettered, but is perhaps a comb-like device within an oval border.

OXFORDSHIRE

23. **Alchester** (SP 570 203). Bone roundel, 20.5 mm in diameter, found⁴² in 2002. Obverse: concentric design. Scratched on the reverse: QVINTI|ANI, '(property) of Quintianus'.

STAFFORDSHIRE

24. **Ilam** (SK 13 50) (Frontispiece). Copper-alloy pan, 89.5 mm in diameter across the rim, 54 mm at the foot-ring, and 47 mm high, 132.5 gm in weight, found⁴³ in 2003 (see above p. 326). It is the main part of a skillet (*trulla*), now missing the handle and the disc forming the base, which were cast separately. The rim is bent inward at one place, there are three small holes, and some of the coloured inlay is now missing, but overall the pan is in good condition. The outer wall is decorated with eight evenly-spaced, incised roundels containing 'dragonesque' triskeles filled with a coloured-glass inlay, variously turquoise, dark blue, purple, red, and yellow. Above this band of decoration is an incised setting-out line used to locate the letter-tops of the text, which consists of plain but neatly-incised capitals 3.50 to 4.00 mm high, filled with the same turquoise inlay.⁴⁴ This incised text is continuous, with minimal word-separation and no explicit indication of where it began and ended, but it may have been cut in this sequence: RIGOREVALIAELIDRACONIS MAIS COGGABATA VXELODVNVM CAMMOGIANNA.⁴⁵ This is the letter-by-letter reading, which may be reconstructed thus: *rigore val(l)i Aeli Draconis Mais Co(n)gabata Uxelodunum Cam(b)og(l)anna*.⁴⁶ 'On the line of the Wall [or the Aelian Wall], (the product or property) of Aelius Draco [or of Draco] ...' Then the names of four forts at the western end of Hadrian's Wall, from west to east, identifiable as Bowness-on-Solway, Drumburgh, Stanwix, and Castlesteads.⁴⁷

⁴² During excavation by the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University, and the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, Leicester University, directed by E. Sauer. For the site see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 330–33, and *South Midlands Archaeology* 33 (2003), 92–105, where the roundel is published at 102–3 with fig. 25.

⁴³ By metal-detector; see *British Archaeology* 73 (November 2003), 22–7, with excellent photographs; also *Current Archaeology* 188 (October 2003), 324–5. It is described independently by Sally Worrell in Section II above, p. 326. That the pan is 'too good to be true' is argued by Ian Smith in *Current Archaeology* 190 (February 2004), 190, but without having seen the original; there is a rejoinder by Guy de la Bédoyère (ibid.). Jane Stewart, Finds Liaison Officer, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, made it available to RSOT, who has also spoken to the finder, and discussed it with MWCH and Guy de la Bédoyère.

⁴⁴ The letters are not much serifed, but R in DRACONIS and the second (but not the first) R in RIGORE carry a bottom-serif. I in RIGORE has a wide upper serif, and almost resembles 'T'. A is 'open' (without cross-bar); the first two strokes of N (which has a marked forward slope) and of M both resemble this A.

⁴⁵ Logically, perhaps, and by analogy with the Rudge Cup and Amiens Skillet (see below, n. 47), the text should begin with MAIS, but there is a space before MAIS, whereas CAMMOGIANNA crowds against RIGORE, which suggests that DRACONIS was already there when MAIS was cut, but that RIGORE preceded CAMMOGIANNA. CAMMOG is quite generously drawn, whereas IANNA is noticeably lower in height, as if to save space before RIGORE, which it almost touches. There is apparently no separation between RIGORE and VALI, except that VALI is lower in height, something which was forced on the graver by the encroaching band of decoration below; nor did he leave a gap before AELI, or between it and DRACONIS; after that, however, there is the space already mentioned before MAIS, and minimal separation of the place-names which follow, at its slightest between VXELODVNVM and CAMMOGIANNA. The generous spacing given to L in VXELODVNVM, which resembles a separation, is only due to miscalculation.

⁴⁶ By separating all the words (see n. 45), and 'correcting' the spelling (see n. 47).

⁴⁷ The pan joins three groups of related vessels which, to judge by their distribution, were made in Britain: see C.N. Moore, 'An enamelled skillet-handle from Brough-on-Fosse and the distribution of similar vessels', *Britannia* 9 (1978), 319–27. Its style of decoration sets it apart from the others, including the Rudge Cup and Amiens Skillet with their schematic rendering of Hadrian's Wall (*RIB* II.2, 2415.53; A.L.F. Rivet and C. Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (1979), 232–3), but all three vessels, as 'souvenirs' apparently of the western end of Hadrian's Wall, carry similar but not identical texts.

The Rudge Cup reads: *a Mais Aballava Uxelod(un)um Camboglan(na)<s> Banna*. The Amiens Skillet: *Mais Aballava Uxelodunum Cambogla[ni]s Banna (A)esica*. Also relevant are the corresponding sequences of Wall forts in the Ravenna Cosmography (107, 28–9; 107, 11) and the Notitia Dignitatum (*Occ.* 40. 44–9, but reversed and as emended by Hassall in R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew (eds), *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum* (1976), 112–14). Ravenna reads: *Maia Avalana Uxelludamo Gabaglanda*. The Notitia: [*Mais*] *Congavata Aballaba [Axeloduno] Amboglanna*.

There are discrepancies between these five texts, both in sequence and in spelling. In sequence, the pan joins the Notitia

in placing *Congavata* / *Coggabata* between *Mais* and *Axeloduno* / *Uxeloduno* ‘on the line of the Wall’, and thus reinforces the identification of it as Drumburgh. (For argument to the contrary, see I.G. Smith, ‘Some Roman place-names in Lancashire and Cumbria’, *Britannia* 28 (1997), 372–83.) But unlike the Notitia, the pan omits *Aballaba*, and also diverges from the Rudge Cup and the Amiens Skillet, for which the only fort between *Mais* and *Uxeloduno* is *Aballaba*. It also diverges from Ravenna in this respect, and there is no obvious reason for the omission.

Hitherto, the Notitia is the only authority for the place-name CONGAVATA, which Rivet and Smith emend to *Concavata* (Latin, ‘hollowed’). The manuscript confusion between G and C would be trivial, but not the anomaly which they also note, ‘[t]hat the name is Latin – wholly exceptional among the forts which make up the defensive system in this region.’ The pan might suggest a different emendation: **Congabata* for CONGAVATA, the B/V confusion being just as trivial in manuscript transmission. (The next item in the list, ABALLABA for *Aballava*, is an example.) **Congabata* would be formed from the substantive *gabata* (‘dish’) with a connective prefix, ‘dish-like’, a description of the ‘bold knoll’ of Drumburgh (C. Daniels (ed.), Collingwood Bruce *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (1978), 250). The word *gabata* was current in Roman Britain (it occurs in an unpublished Uley tablet), and Holder (in *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, s.v.) thought it might be Celtic, but there is no direct evidence of this: in Latin it is first used by Martial, but occurs earlier in Greek, which has seemed to be a more likely origin.

The other place-names are not problematic. *Mais* is apparently a locative or ablative form, and it may be that the pan, like the Rudge Cup, omits the initial preposition *a* (‘from Maia’) which is retained by the Amiens Skillet. CAMMOGIANNA is only a copying-error, with M repeated by mistake for B (the name-element **cambo-* guarantees the spelling), and with I written for L. These fort-names are preceded (or followed) by the sequence *rigore val(l)i Aeli Draconis*, which must be considered next.

First *rigore val(l)i*, ‘on the line of the Wall’. *Rigor* is a technical term frequent in the Roman land-surveyors, who define it as ‘whatever is seen to stretch straight between two points’ (*Balbi ad Celsum: expositio et ratio omnium formarum* iii.4 (Lang, *Corpus Agrimensorum* II, p. 98), translated by B. Campbell, *The Writings of the Roman Land Surveyors* (2000), 208). It is confirmed by epigraphic evidence, for example *CIL* iii.586 (Macedonia), where a surveyor uses land-marks to define tribal boundaries: *ri[g]lorem servari usque ad fontem*, etc. Compare *CIL* viii.2728 (Lambaesis), in which a military surveyor describes how two tunnels failed to meet: they had both deviated from the true line, *duae ergo partes relicto rigore errabant*. There is also a large group of inscriptions (*CIL* vi.31540–57) (Rome) which define the course of the Tiber *recto rigore*, variously abbreviated.

rigore val(l)i therefore corresponds to the less-technical term used by the Notitia (*Occ.* 40.32) for ‘the line of the Wall’, *per lineam valli*. (The land-surveyor Balbus, already quoted, actually uses the word *linea* to define *rigor*.) VALI for *valli*, with its confusion between L and LL, can easily be paralleled for Britain (see Smith in H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.19, 918), where it may also reflect confusion between the Celtic name-element **val-* / **valio-* (‘strong’), in *Luguvalium* for example, and the Latin word *vallum* (‘wall’). Thus in the Antonine Itinerary, ‘Carlisle’ is once transmitted as *Luguvallo* (467, 2), but twice correctly as *Luguvalio* (474, 1; 476, 6).

The Notitia shows that Hadrian’s Wall was called (the) *vallum*, a term which is amply confirmed by the Antonine Itinerary (464, 1, *a limite, id est a vallo*; compare 466, 5, and 474, 1–2) and by two inscriptions from the Wall itself: *RIB* 2034, dedicated *ob res trans vallum prospere gestas*, and *RIB* 1445. Compare *RIB* 2200 and 2205, where building the Antonine Wall is said to be *opus valli*.

But should AELI be taken with VA(L)LI, or with DRACONIS? Is it an adjective of the Wall itself, or only the (imperial) nomen gentilicium of Draco? The Latin is ambiguous. The absence of a praenomen (whether *P(ubli)* or *T(itii)*) is far from decisive, but it lends support to the idea of taking AELI with VAL(L)I. It would then follow that Hadrian’s Wall was literally so-called: *vallum Aelium* (not *vallum Aeli*). The obvious analogy is *pons Aelius*, Hadrian’s Bridge at Newcastle; compare his refounding of Jerusalem as *Aelia Capitolina*. But while cities and forts might be named for emperors, frontier-names do seem to have been geographical. (For example the *limes Tripolitanus* in the Antonine Itinerary 73, 4 and *ILS* 8923, and the various African *limites* named in the Notitia.) However, Hadrian’s Wall was almost the first – and certainly the most substantial – of the various frontier ‘walls’, and some linear structures took their names from emperors: roads above all, in a tradition dating from the Republic, for example the *via Domitiana*, the *via Traiana*, and a much later ‘frontier road’, the *strata Diocletiana*; but also aqueducts like the *aqua Claudia*, and the Rhine canal named after Claudius’ father, the *fossa Drusiana*. It is conceivable, therefore, that Hadrian’s Wall was initially called *vallum Aelium*, but also certain that the name did not maintain itself: witness the references already quoted to (the) *vallum* unqualified, and note also that the Augustan History, when it needs to distinguish the Antonine Wall from Hadrian’s Wall (for which see *Hadrian* 11.2.), refers only to ‘another wall, made of turf’ (*Antoninus Pius* 5.4, *alio muro caespiticio*). If the pan preserves the original name of Hadrian’s Wall, therefore, it must also be conjectured that it soon lapsed, presumably when it was abandoned for the Antonine Wall; this would date the pan to c. A.D. 125/40, after the forts were added to Hadrian’s Wall, but before it was superseded by the Antonine Wall.

Finally the name, whether it was *Draconis* or *Aeli Draconis*. (There is an imperial freedman called Titus Aelius Draco, but the identity is unlikely: see *CIL* vi.20505.) The cognomen is Greek by etymology (‘snake’). The genitive case is ambiguous; either the name of the manufacturer / craftsman, or that of the client for whom the pan was made. (A bronze statuette, the Foss Dyke Mars (*RIB* 274), carries the names of both maker and clients.) If these vessels were made as ‘souvenirs’ of the Wall, perhaps they could also be ‘personalized’ with the name of the purchaser; the manufacture of military diplomas, certified copies of the law affecting a named veteran, offers an analogy. If so, the owner’s name might have been Aelius Draco, with its implication that he was a recently-discharged auxiliary veteran who wanted a memento of his frontier-station.

SUFFOLK

25. **Shimpling** (TM 15 83) (FIG. 10). Lead tag or label, 42 by 31 mm, ranging from 1 to 2 mm in thickness, found⁴⁸ in 2003 folded in half and subsequently opened. One corner and part of the middle had already been lost. There is a hole for suspension centrally placed near one edge. The label has been inscribed with a sharp point on both faces, with the text on one face inverted in respect to that on the other, so that the hole is on the left.⁴⁹ (a) A... | A... (b) ..DĻRIPAS.. | XXXVI.⁵⁰

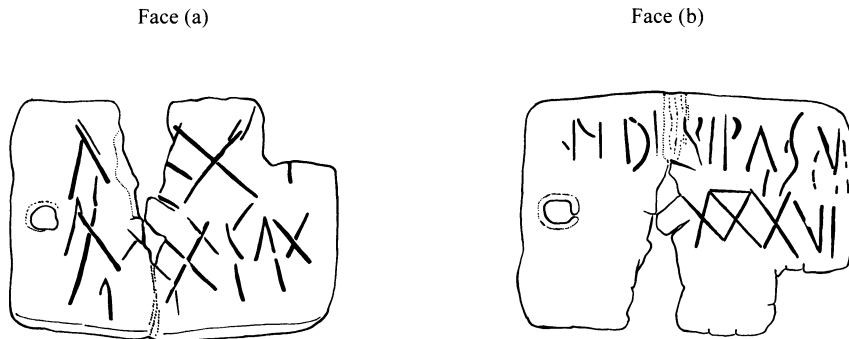


FIG. 10. Shimpling, inscribed lead tag (No. 25). Scale 1:1.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)⁵¹

SUSSEX (WEST SUSSEX)

26. **Fishbourne** (SU 8407 0475), Roman palace. Base of an Arretine cup found⁵² in 2003 in the filling of the pre-Conquest ditch. A graffito has been cut after firing underneath, within the foot-ring: TV.

⁴⁸ By Ms Sally Atkinson with a metal detector, in whose possession it remains. Information from Faye Minter, Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme for Suffolk, who made it available through Sally Worrell.

⁴⁹ For other such tags or labels, see *RIB* II.1, 2410, and *Britannia* 20 (1989), 334, No. 14 (Carlisle); 342, No. 60 (Caerleon).

⁵⁰ (a) Apparently numerals erased by diagonal strokes. (b) Perhaps a commodity ending in *-ipas* followed by the numeral '36'.

⁵¹ Drawn from the original with the help of drawings by Donna Wreathall for Suffolk County Archaeological Service.

⁵² During excavations for Sussex Archaeological Society directed by John Manley and David Rudling who sent details together with a photo and rubbings. For the site see *Britannia* 34 (2003), 352–3.

WALES

GWYNEDD (MERIONETHSHIRE)

27. **Trawsfynydd** (SH 7325 3525), Bodyfuddau farm (FIG. 11). Stilus writing-tablet, 147 by 99 mm, and 6 mm thick, found⁵³ in the nineteenth century, perhaps in c. 1840. When found, it was the outer leaf of a block (*codex*) consisting of ‘some 10 or 12 leaves’ secured with wire, but the others were soon lost. One face is plain, but the other is recessed to a depth of 2 mm, leaving a narrow raised border (5–7 mm wide) to enclose and protect a coating of black wax which survives in degraded form as a surface discoloration. Within this discoloration are traces of the inscribed text, which is the first page of a formal Roman will (*testamentum per aes et libram*). (For reconstructed text see FIG. 11 below.)⁵⁴

‘[*The name and status of the testator*] ... before I die, I order that [*name*] be my sole heir ...

Let all others for me be disinherited [...] on no other terms than that as much as I shall give, have given, shall have ordered to be given [...] and you [...] enter upon, accept my estate [...] *within*] the next hundred [*days*] after my death in which you know or can know that you are my legitimate heir, in the presence of witnesses [...] let the heirs be those who know that they are [...] of this property.

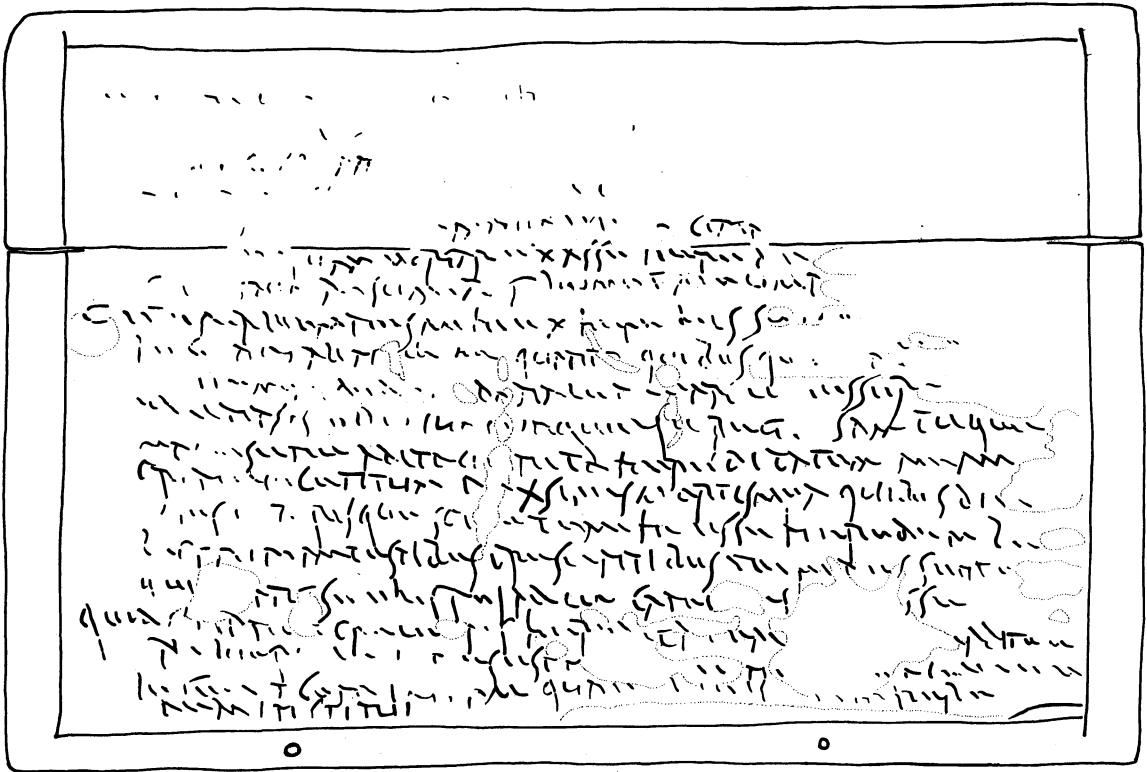
But if you do not thus accept my estate, if you refuse to enter upon it, be thou disinherited [...], whom I have instituted as my sole heir.’⁵⁵

(for figure and text see following page)

⁵³ By farm-workers digging peat, according to a contemporary letter preserved with the tablet, signed ‘M.L1’. This may be Morgan Lloyd (1820–93) of Cefngellgwm, 2 km WSW of Bodyfuddau, who in 1839 helped survey the parish of Trawsfynydd. The farm dug its peat at SH 732 338-9, which is near the early but undated settlement of Ffridd Bod y Fuddau (SH 731 343), with three huts and, despite the altitude (350 m), ‘an extensive field system, defined by low banks and stone walls covering some 3 hectares, which is almost completely filled with narrow cultivation ridges’ (Peter Crew). The nearest major Roman site is the fort of Tomen-y-Mur (SH 706 386), 5 km to the north-west. The provenance is discussed by RSOT, ‘A Roman Will from North Wales’, *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 150 (2001, forthcoming). Soon after it was found, the tablet was taken to London for examination, where it was casually preserved for many years and ultimately came by descent to Stafford Ellerman, who has presented it to the National Museum of Wales. Mr Ellerman and Ralph Jackson of the Department of Prehistory and Early Europe at the British Museum made it available, and it has been photographed by Ian Cartwright and Jake Matchett. Caroline Auger, archivist of Shrewsbury School, Peter Crew of Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog (the Snowdonia National Park Study Centre), Steffan ab Owain of the Gwynedd Archives Service, Ieuan Thomas of Trawsfynydd, and Lesley Whitelaw, archivist of the Middle Temple, all helped with the question of provenance.

⁵⁴ This is not a letter-by-letter transcription, for which see RSOT (cited in n. 53). Letters whose existence can be deduced are supplied in square brackets, and letters omitted by the scribe in round brackets. Hooked brackets enclose letters he wrote by mistake. Letters read with some confidence, but which cannot be explained, are in capitals.

⁵⁵ There are three sentences, each indicated by extending the first word to the left. The testamentary formulas can be matched in Gaius’ *Institutes* and surviving Roman wills, especially that of Antonius Silvanus (*FIRA* III, No. 47). There is a full commentary on the reading and text by RSOT (cited in n. 53). Details of the testator and heir have been lost with the first five lines; it can only be deduced from line 15 (compare 19) that the heir was a woman. Since the testator was a Roman citizen, despite the remoteness of the find-spot, he may have been an auxiliary veteran of the unit at Tomen-y-Mur who settled after discharge at Ffridd Bod y Fuddau. Remarkably, considering how many wills were written, this seems to be the only tablet of a Roman will to have been found outside Egypt.



Rout

[...]

[...]

[...]

[...]

5 ...
 [ante]quam moriar ex asse herede[m iubeo]
 ...
ceteri alii omnes mihi exheredes sunt[o ...]
leg[e] non alia [quam] quanta quibusqu[e ...]
10 ... ded[ero] donavi donari[q]u[e] iusser[o ...]
 ... tuque
 MA[2-3]SENE adito ce[r]nito hereditatem meam
 ... centum p[ro]xsimis morti<s> mea(e) quibus DIE
[s]ci[es] [po]t[er]isque sci[r]e te mihi esse heredem le-
15 <le>gitumam testibus pr(a)esentibus heredes sunt
 qui [sci]ant se eius rei ADVO CA[... e]sse
 quod si ita n[on] creveris hereditatem [meam s]i aditum
 noluer[is] exher[es] esto [...]
 ... C[...]AM quam [ex asse mihi] here-
20 dem institui

FIG. 11. Trawsfynydd, inscribed writing-tablet (No. 27). Scale 1:1.
 (Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

ADDENDVM ET CORRIGENDVM

Britannia 34 (2003), 375–6, No. 31 (Great Dunham). A second fragment, 36 by 28 mm, of this diploma (A.D. 98) has been found.⁵⁶ It preserves the top edge of one face (a), and the left-hand edge of the other, face (b). The combined text of both fragments is given below, with the new text in bold.⁵⁷

Face (a) _____

- 1 [IMP CAESAR DIVI NERVAE F NERV]A **TRAI**A[NVS]
 [AVG GERMANIC PO]NTIFEX []
 [MAXIMVS TRIBVNIC POTESTAT] CO[S II]
 [EQVITIBVS ET PEDITIBVS QVI MILI]TANT IN [ALIS ...]
 5 [ET COHORTIBVS ... QVAE APPELLA]NT[VR ...]
 [... ET I HISPANO]R CAMP]A[GON ...]
 [...]A ET I A[...]
 [... M]ILLIARI[A ...]
 [...].M[...]

Face (b)

- 1 | CAELIBES E[SSEN]T CVM [IIS QVAS POSTEA DVXISSENT]
 | **DVMTAXAT** SINGVLI SIN[GVLAS]
 | **IMP CAESAR** DIVI NER[VAE F NERVA TRAIANO AVG GER II]
 | **SEX** [IV]LIO F[RONTINO II COS]
 5 | **ALAE I PANNONIOR** [CVI PRAEEST]
 | AN[...]

CHANGE OF LOCATION

RIB II.1, 2404.5 (Bitterne). This lead pig was found in 1918 with *RIB* II.1, 2404.6, and drawn by R.G.C. in 1922, but it was sought in vain by R.P.W. in 1951 and presumed lost. It is now in the Museo Navale Romano at Albegna, Liguria, Italy.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ By Michael de Bootman, the finder of the first fragment, who has presented it to Norwich Castle Museum with the landowner's consent. Adrian Marsden, Finds Liaison Officer for Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, sent details.

⁵⁷ Since neither face includes the names of witnesses, the fragments belong to Tabella I. It is further likely that face (b) comes from the outer face of Tabella I because it probably had a complete text. Face (a) would therefore come from the inner face of Tabella I. In face (a), line 6, Dr Marsden has suggested that the C of CAMP, which is quite clear on the fragment, may be an orthographic error for T, and that the unit was actually the *ala* [I PANNONIO]R[VM] TAMPI[ANA]. He points out that on the Malpas diploma (*CIL* xvi. 48 = *RIB* II.1, 2401.1, of A.D. 103), this unit is the second one listed and occupies a similar position on the tablet. It would then be the unit of the recipient (see face (b), line 5). The *ala Pannoniorum Tampiana* is well attested in the army of Britain, notably on the Brigetio diploma of A.D. 122 (*CIL* xvi. 69), where the recipient was also a veteran of this unit. This restoration is perhaps supported by *RMD* 153 (A.D. 114, Pannonia Inferior), where *ala I Hispanorum Campagonum* occurs (probably) as the first unit, rather than the second as here and on the Malpas diploma. However, face (b), lines 7 and 8, are not readily restorable from the Malpas sequence of units.

⁵⁸ Where it was seen by MWCH in 2003. It is said to have been presented by Admiral Quaglia.