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## **SUMMARY OF THESIS**

**TITLE:       A study of inscribed material from Roman Britain:  
              an inquiry into some aspects of literacy in Romano-British society.**

The aim of this thesis is to test the theory that literacy in Roman Britain was largely an achievement of a wealthy, educated social élite. Inscribed material from Roman Britain has been examined in connection with four areas of human activity: religion, working life, funerary practice and personal, social and domestic life. In each of these areas there has been an attempt to identify the writers or instigators of the inscriptions, the reasons for their literate output, and the practical and literate skills involved in producing the written record. There is also an appreciation of the style of production and the quality of the written Latin. Spelling tables are provided, at the end of each chapter, listing words in which the spelling deviates from normal Classical Latin forms and some other irregularities.

It is clear that inscribed material which survives from Roman Britain can only be a tiny fraction of what was produced there. Furthermore, factors affecting survival mean that the archaeological record cannot be expected to be a representative sample of what was originally written. There are additional problems when examining literacy in a past society. Each written record is only evidence of the skill required to produce that piece of writing. It cannot reveal the full capabilities of the writer. The archaeological record can suggest literacy of a basic, moderate or high level, but it is important to bear in mind the limitations of the evidence: a simple, crudely carved inscription should not be regarded as indicative of poor literacy skills if no other evidence is available to confirm this.



A study of inscribed material from Roman Britain:  
an inquiry into some aspects of literacy in Romano-British society.

Marilynne E. Raybould  
SCARAB Research Centre, UWCN, Caerleon.

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Although I am indebted to those whom I have mentioned for advice on academic matters, and for reading the work and offering constructive criticism, I accept that responsibility for any remaining faults is entirely my own.

Marilynne E. Raybould  
UWCN October 1997.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archaeologia Aeliana</i> Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> H.Temporini, A.Haase, Berlin.
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> Heubner, Berlin.
<i>CSIR</i>	<i>Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani</i> OUP, 1985.
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> Dessau, Berolini 1916.
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology.
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies.
<i>LRW</i>	Literacy in the Roman World J.H. Humphrey ed. <i>JRA</i> Supp. 3, Ann Arbor 1991.
<i>ORC</i>	Old Roman Cursive
<i>NRC</i>	New Roman Cursive
<i>RIB</i>	Roman Inscriptions of Britain; Vol. 1 Inscriptions on stone; Vol. II <i>Instrumentum Domesticum</i> - Fascicules 1-8, R.G.Collingwood, R.P.Wright. New edition, S.S. Frere, R.S.O. Tomlin, edd. Alan Sutton 1995.
<i>TBGAS</i>	Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
<i>TSMB2</i>	The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, Vol 2, ed. Barry Cunliffe. Oxford University Committee for Archaeology 1988.
<i>TV II</i>	<i>Tabulae Vindolandenses II</i> A.K. Bowman, J.D. Thomas BM Press 1994.
<i>TCWAAS</i>	Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeologica Society.
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.</i>

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

**Background**

**Aims and objectives**

**Method**



# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The opportunities to study and try to understand cultural interaction between the Romans and the indigenous peoples of Britain are many and varied, claiming the attention of archaeologists and historians. My particular interest is in uses of literacy in the province of *Britannia*. The arrival of an invading force, which relied so heavily on literacy for its civil and military administration, must have had a significant impact on tribal societies, that previously had little or no knowledge of literacy. Fortunately a great variety of Latin inscriptions from the Roman period in Britain provide evidence of some uses of literacy at this time of cultural upheaval. These inscriptions are the source material for the present inquiry into some aspects of literacy in Romano-British society.

Literacy is generally taken to mean the ability to read and write. In the modern world literacy can be seen in action; in developed countries it is an every-day skill for most people. The handicap of being illiterate would soon become apparent. Studying literacy in a previous society has attendant problems. The activity is over and it is necessary to look for evidence in the surviving written material. For Roman Britain this means examining the inscriptions on stone, wood, metal, gems, pottery, mosaics and wallplaster. There is a limit to what this inert material, which results from literate activity, can reveal about literacy and literacy users. However, this inanimate material is all that remains and so it is by thorough and rigorous examination of this evidence that clues must be sought.

To begin it is necessary to decide what can be regarded as evidence of literacy. Ann Ellis-Hanson, in her paper on ancient illiteracy,<sup>1</sup> uses a definition of literacy taken from UNESCO :

“ A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group or community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and his community’s development”

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<sup>1</sup> In *Literacy in the Roman World*, J.H. Humphrey ed., *JRA* Supp. Ser. 3, Ann Arbor, 1991

This definition presents problems when looking for evidence of literacy in a past society because it is not possible to know all the literate activities in which any individual might be required to participate, let alone what might be needed for his community's development. The best that can be hoped is that there might be evidence, in the surviving material, of the sort of literate activities in which certain groups or individuals took part and some clues to the identity of some of the individuals. The notion of functional literacy is helpful. If applied to the evidence, it could be argued that there were varying degrees of functional literacy. The ability to inscribe one's name as an ownership mark on pottery has been accepted by Jeremy Evans as an indication of basic literacy in his study of the distribution of such graffiti throughout Roman Britain.<sup>2</sup> Although it is inappropriate to assume that someone who could write his or her name on property would be unable write anything else, the archaeological evidence is often incapable of revealing any more. It has therefore been decided, for the purposes of the present inquiry, to adopt the following definitions of literacy:

**Basic literacy** - knowledge of letters and the ability to write a name or spell simple words phonetically; very limited reading ability.

**Moderate literacy** - knowledge of simple formulae and the ability to compose a simple sentence in Latin; some reading skills and the ability to copy.

**High level of literacy** - the ability to read any form of written material in Latin and compose coherent or even elegant Latin at will.

The terms can only be applied to the archaeological evidence because that is what remains; it can only indicate the level of literacy required to produce that particular piece of writing and cannot reveal the full literate capability of the person who wrote it. Any subsequent discussion of literacy or the training of the people concerned has to be a matter of deduction. Basic literacy could be acquired informally, perhaps with the help of family or friends giving basic instruction in letters. Moderate literacy would need more formal training, perhaps in preparation for some kind of

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<sup>2</sup> *Archaeol. Journal*, 144, 1987, 191-204.

employment. A high level of literacy could only be achieved through several years of formal schooling with attention to grammatical forms, syntax, orthography and possibly the study of Classical authors.

There are references to schools in the north-western provinces in the works of Roman writers. Tacitus speaks of the education of young Gallic noblemen at *Augustodunum* (Autun), the capital of the *Aedui*, about A.D. 21.<sup>3</sup> In his account of the life of the Emperor Caligula, Suetonius mentions a military school on the Rhine where Germans were being taught the rudiments of Latin.<sup>4</sup> Plutarch also provides evidence that Sertorius brought masters to instruct the children of the Spanish nobility at Osca in Greek and Roman literature.<sup>5</sup> Concerning Roman Britain, Juvenal makes a passing reference to Gaulish professors teaching the lawyers of Britain,<sup>6</sup> but Tacitus makes the following claim in his treatise, *The Agricola*:

“Furthermore he (Agricola) trained the sons of chiefs in the liberal arts and expressed a preference for British natural ability over the trained skill of the Gauls. The result was that in place of distaste for the Latin language came a passion to command it”

(Tacitus, *Agricola* 21)

If this claim is accurate some of the British nobility might have learnt to write Latin as well as speak it and there could be some evidence in the archaeological record.

Tacitus’ testimony suggests the existence of an educated social élite. The impression is of a class privileged by wealth, power, and influence and educated in the Latin tongue. It is from this notion that the decision to investigate the nature of the literate class in Roman Britain and the nature of their output originated.

The study of course, can only be based on available evidence and it is important to bear in mind that what survives is only a tiny fraction of what was written. Many questions will remain unanswerable, but there is a sufficient range of written material from Roman Britain to offer some hope of learning a little about the uses of literacy and the nature and ability of its users.

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<sup>3</sup> *Annals* iii 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Caligula* 45, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Sertorius* 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Satires* xv 111-2 - conventional literary allusion.

### **The aims and objectives of the research programme.**

One aim of the research is to test the hypothesis that literacy was largely an accomplishment of an educated, literate, social élite in Roman Britain, by examining surviving written evidence, in the form of inscriptions. A second aim is to investigate the nature of this small sample of surviving written material, bearing in mind that the sample is unlikely to be representative of what was there originally. The content and style of the texts will be examined for clues about who participated in their production. It is a qualitative rather than a quantitative study.

The objectives involve the analysis of material from four broad categories of human activity:

- (i) religion
- (ii) working life
- (iii) funerary customs
- (iv) personal, social and domestic life.

The material is drawn from inscriptions published in Roman Inscriptions of Britain (R.I.B.) volumes I and II, the Vindolanda tablets, the British curse tablets, some recent finds reported in *Britannia* volumes xviii to xxv (1987-1994), and various excavation reports. Most of the inscriptions selected are believed to have been produced in Britain; in only a few cases are inscriptions on imported items used. Coins are not included in the study, partly because numismatics is such a specialised field, but also because their inclusion would extend the material beyond manageable proportions.

The analysis attempts to define specific applications of literacy within the four broad categories and to identify individuals and social groups participating in these literate activities. The evidence is then examined for any correlation between the nature of the written material and social groups. This involves investigating the reasons for the various applications of literacy, the content, the language, adherence to or departure from conventional forms, the skill and technology used in production and access to such skill and technology. There is also need to consider the status, rank or name of

the author of an inscription. Here it is sometimes important to distinguish between the instigator and the actual *scriptor*. The instigator of an inscription need not have actually written anything. A scribe could have prepared a written draft which a craftsman might then have copied onto stone, metal or wood. Only one literate individual need be involved but it is important to be aware of the possibility of input at various stages and to bear in mind the relationship between the various contributors. Occasionally this can be detected in the written evidence. The location of a find and the date, if known, can also be of significance.

### **Method**

It was decided that for each of the four categories of human activity identified inscriptions were to be selected which are capable of supplying, overtly or implicitly, information about who wrote or instigated them, why they were written, the techniques and skills employed and the quality of the writing. Ideal source material consists of complete inscriptions which can do all this. Unfortunately it is not in the nature of the evidence always to combine all these elements and sometimes reasoned deductions have had to be made, based on evidence such as location, material and comparison with similar finds from elsewhere. The selection of material was intentionally broad. Only very fragmentary texts and lost inscriptions whose interpretation is uncertain have been excluded from the inquiry. Tables listing the material selected for each section of the work, and texts of the inscriptions are recorded in the catalogue.<sup>7</sup> As far as was feasible, inscriptions have been dealt with on an individual basis but where examples are very numerous, for instance tile stamps and lead sealings, a system of grouping has been adopted. The intention has been to inspect personally as many as possible of the inscriptions used, and certainly those which have been chosen for more detailed discussion.

The same sort of information is required from the inscriptions associated with the four types of human activity, religion, working life, funerary customs and personal, social and domestic life:

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<sup>7</sup> Tables R1-4, W1, F1, P1.

- 
- (i) reference and type of inscription
  - (ii) the instigator or source
  - (iii) the reason for the writing
  - (iv) the style, i.e. specialised skill of the craftsmen or scribe and quality of the writing.

Thus a database has been built up from which information can be drawn about the range of literacy users, the range of applications, production skills and linguistic competence.

The instigator of the inscription is identified as closely as possible but if the source does not supply this information it may be necessary to accept that the instigator is unknown or to try to work out his probable status from the location and type of find. Similarly if the instigator is named, but with no indication of his or her status, reasoned deduction may have to replace certainty. The names themselves might appear helpful in suggesting, for example, Roman, Germanic, Gallic, Greek or British origin but there is need for caution. The movement of troops, civil administrators and traders between provinces and the tendency of incomers to settle and intermarry with natives caused provincial society to become racially mixed so that, in the absence of more explicit evidence, a name alone cannot be relied upon to indicate origin. The reason for the inscription is often implicit because of its type but sometimes additional information may be given. Again there are deficiencies in the evidence which only leave room for conjecture.

Particular attention is to be paid to production skills because they could indicate the work of professional masons, engravers, other craftsmen and scribes. Language is also important since it may give some indication of the education and training of the author or scribe. Reference is made to spelling irregularities, that is spellings which differ from the conventional orthography of Classical Latin. These occur for various reasons. Sometimes they reflect spoken Latin forms, often referred to as Vulgar Latin. The term "Vulgar Latin" is generally avoided in the discussion because it raises the question of whether the language was strictly that of the lower classes or

whether it was used at all levels of society.<sup>8</sup> For this reason the terms “spoken” or “substandard Latin” are generally preferred, except when referring to sources which use the term “Vulgar Latin”. The sort of data gathered includes:

- (i) quality of lettering / script
- (ii) obvious signs of a practised hand using a stylus or other writing implement
- (iii) any specialised knowledge such as formulae, technical language, format, abbreviations that would indicate shared knowledge or training
- (iv) originality of content
- (v) uniformity of content
- (vi) correct classical spelling and general correctness of grammar
- (vii) spelling irregularities reflecting spoken /colloquial forms, unusual words, phonetic mis-spellings, errors due to unfamiliarity, slips, copying errors.
- (viii) corrected errors.
- (ix) grammatical confusion.

Deciphering cursive script is a highly specialised skill and for comments on this I rely on the work of Alan Bowman, and J.D. Thomas who have published the Vindolanda tablets and of Roger Tomlin who has published the British curse tablets. For inscriptions on stone it is apparent that some sort of standard procedure is necessary if comparisons are going to be made on points of style. It has therefore been decided to classify stylistic features for the lettering on stone inscriptions into five types, A-E outlined below.<sup>9</sup> This classification is based to a large extent on information found in Giancarlo Susini’s work, “The Roman Stonecutter”<sup>10</sup> and in Joyce and Arthur Gordon’s work, “Contributions to the palaeography of Latin inscriptions.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For precise terms of reference see J.N. Adams, *The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets*, *JRS* lxxxv 1995 131-3.

<sup>9</sup> This information is recorded in the catalogue for inscriptions on stone.

<sup>10</sup> Basil Blackwell, 1973 (translation).

<sup>11</sup> University of California Press 1957.

### **Type A**

- die suitably polished
- draft prepared
- *ordinator* traces guidelines, usually paired to give even spaces between lines
- *ordinator* arranges text on stone to fit the die
- *sculptor* cuts the stone (one man could have served as both *ordinator* and *sculptor*)
- precise v-shaped cuts
- serifs
- ligatures carefully devised
- stops
- even letter size, possibly involving use of templates to mark the shapes or marked by a very skilled craftsmen using a brush.
- spelling generally schooled and correct
- monumental capitals
- very professional appearance

### **Type B**

- as for type A, but using taller, slimmer rustic capitals, serifs not always a strong feature

### **Type C**

- guidelines not strictly followed
- the text might have been cut using a single guideline instead of working between pairs so that the height of the letters is not carefully controlled
- letter size uneven (width and height)
- less professional appearance than types A and B although some professional qualities are apparent

### **Type D**

- die poorly polished
- text poorly arranged on die - perhaps lacking the skilled services of a good *ordinator*
- no apparent use of guidelines
- cuts not sharply defined
- letters squeezed in or inserted between lines
- usually has unprofessional appearance

### **Type E**

- could have any features listed under A - D
- irregular spellings due to mason's error
- irregular spelling of unfamiliar words
- evidence of spoken Latin or unusual forms
- other mis-spellings
- grammatical irregularities
- may or may not have professional appearance



Any of the above categories might also include decoration in the form of patterns or scenes cut in relief. Spelling irregularities listed under type E can be found in inscriptions that have features belonging to any of the other categories. It does not follow that a well-executed official inscription will be free from divergent spellings. Factors affecting the preservation of the inscription can, of course, affect the appearance; for instance weathering could cause an inscription to appear to have been crudely executed when this was not the case. It is important to bear this in mind and to view the inscriptions personally if possible when making observations about matters of style or skill.

Initial classification of inscriptions as types A-E is done on the basis of the drawings in RIB I. I therefore accept that my observations cannot be entirely accurate. There is not always a clear cut distinction between texts in monumental capitals and rustic capitals, for example, and a drawing cannot show the texture of the stone, or how well the die was polished before carving. However I felt this was a reasonable basis on which to start my investigations and subsequently every effort was made to study at first hand inscriptions selected for further comment. Classification of a particular inscription as type A, B, C, D or E does not imply that it has all the features in that list but enough of them to identify the type.

Lists of spelling irregularities which qualify an inscription for a Type E classification are included at the end of the relevant chapters.<sup>12</sup> Whilst every effort has been made to make these lists comprehensive, there is always the danger that some points have been overlooked. The errors and spelling irregularities are listed under the same headings for all groups of inscriptions. The headings have been adapted from information in Colin Smith's paper on Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain.<sup>13</sup> The adaptation obscures many of the finer points of linguistic detail and yet some simplification was deemed necessary to facilitate record keeping. The points covered are listed below with some brief explanatory notes:

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<sup>12</sup> An amalgamation of these tables can also be seen in the catalogue volume.

<sup>13</sup> *ANRW* II 29. 2, 891-948.

## 1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections.

### Reduction of diphthong:

**e** for **ae** (common from 1st century A.D.)

**o/a/u** for **au** (uncommon)

### Changes in stressed and unstressed vowels:

**ar** for **er**

**ian** for **ien**

### Changes in stressed vowels:

**i** for **e** (common confusion of vowel sounds)

**e** for **i** (common confusion of vowel sounds)

**u** for **o** (rarely found)

### Unstressed vowels in hiatus:

**E, i, o,** and **u** after a consonant and followed by a vowel in hiatus ceased to have a syllabic value in the first and second century A.D. Thus *pallium* would be pronounced as two syllables. **E** and **i** in this position came to be pronounced the same and this led to confusion about spelling e.g: *adpertiaiat* for *adpertiaeat* (RIB 659) and *palleum* for *pallium* (RIB 323).

### Initial unstressed vowels.

**i** for **e** (most common confusion)

**o** for **u**

**a** for **au** (particularly when the next syllable has a stressed **u**)

**e/a** variation (as in *Delmatarum/Dalmatarum, Vellaunius/Vallaunius*)

### Unstressed medial vowels:

These include several common confusions.

**e** for **i**

**i** for **e**

**o** for **u**

**u** for **o**

### Final vowels:

Weak articulation led to confusion:

**e** for **i**

contraction of **ii** to **i** was standard even in the first century A.D.

**o** for **u** was less common and perhaps quite late.

**2. Elision of medial vowels and related hypercorrections.**

**3. Changes in the sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections.**

Particularly the tendency for medial **p, t, k** to be sounded as **b, d, g** which was common practice in western provinces:

**b** for **p**

**d** for **t**

**g** for **k**

Also:

**c** for **qu**

**q** for **qu**

**b** for **v** (a feature of Greek-speaking provinces)

**4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections.**

**5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections.**

**6. Loss of final consonant.**

Particularly loss of final **m**.

**7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.**

Various changes reflecting pronunciation:

**nn** for **nd**

**c** for **nc**

**g/gg** for **ng**

**ct** for **nct**

**nt** for **nct**

**p** for **mp**

**b** for **mb**

**np** for **mp**

**bs** for **ps**

**lt** for **lpt**

**mt** for **mpt**

**s** for **str**

**8 Various renderings of x .**

**s** for **x** (Common before a consonant from 2nd century A.D. and common as final **x/s** in 2nd and 3rd century A.D.)

Perhaps emphasising pronunciation as **ks**:

**xs** for **x**

**cs** for **x**

**gs** for **x**

**9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections.**

Occasional occurrences after **o, i, u**.

Includes loss of **v** which is really a semi-vowel.

**10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.**

Include:

loss of initial aspirate

insertion of a **w** or **j** sound to make a glide between two different vowels.

**11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.**

E.g: a confusion of gender or about **i/e** ablative ending.

**12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.**

Include some common contractions.

**13. Confusion over proper names.**

Names of various origins are rendered in Latin, but since they are not in general usage no established orthography applies. Many of the names show linguistic features indicated under other headings in this list.

**14. Grammatical confusion.**

Various.

**15. Errors by craftsmen and scribes.**

Generally accidental.

**16. Unusual words / usage.**

An additional category used when appropriate.

The method outlined above for collection of data is followed as far as possible for all inscriptions included in this study. The evidence reveals a wide range of uses of literacy. After careful scrutiny any justifiable comparisons between the output of different literate groups are made. There is an attempt to assess indications of shared knowledge and professional training, varying degrees of linguistic competence and standards of literacy, any evidence of a blending of different cultures and, if possible, to identify literate Britons and foreigners. The intention has been to test the notion of an educated, literate social élite in the light of the evidence and either accept, reject completely or modify it as a result of findings.

**CHAPTER II**  
**LITERATURE SURVEY**

## LITERATURE SURVEY

Some general works on Roman epigraphy have provided necessary background information for this thesis. Two of the most useful publications are Arthur Gordon's "Illustrated introduction to Latin epigraphy"<sup>1</sup> and Lawrence Keppie's recent book, "Understanding Roman Inscriptions".<sup>2</sup> Keppie draws on inscriptions from Italy and the provinces; he has some valuable information on the survival and recording of inscriptions and stresses the importance of autopsy, even when dealing with very familiar stones. He gives a clear picture of the practical applications of epigraphy in military, civic and private contexts.

Since the early 1980s there has been a growth of interest in literacy in the ancient world. There is now a substantial body of material dealing with the history and development of literacy in ancient civilisations; those dealing with the situation in various provinces of the Roman Empire are of particular relevance to the present work. Roman Britain has often been neglected because of the paucity of written material compared to finds from Egypt, Rome and Pompeii. Although finds from Roman Britain are relatively few, they have attracted linguistic scholars to study the quality of "British Latin". Such work has, of course, become very pertinent since the discovery of the curse tablets at Bath and Uley and of the Vindolanda tablets. The expertly produced transcripts, translations and commentaries by R.S.O. Tomlin, A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas and the linguistic studies by J.N. Adams are of inestimable value. Their importance for this study is apparent from the frequent references to them. It now remains to discuss some of the other literature which has influenced the conception and production of this thesis.

William Harris' work, published in 1989, is a broad survey of the history and use of literacy throughout the Greek and Roman World from the eighth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.<sup>3</sup> In his discussion of the late Roman republic and the high empire, he considers that people whose native tongue was not Greek or Latin might have been

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<sup>1</sup> University of California Press 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Batsford 1991.

<sup>3</sup> W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, Harvard, 1989.

motivated to learn one or other of these languages by the associated cultural prestige, commercial advantage, a wish to communicate with officials or social contact.<sup>4</sup> These important ideas become submerged, however, in the subsequent discussion of bilingualism and multilingualism in some provinces.

It is understandable why Harris chooses to illustrate the functions of literacy in the Roman Empire with examples taken mainly from Egypt and Pompeii. His remarks on literacy in Roman Britain are based on a calculation of the number of monumental inscriptions per 100sq. kms. and references to a few informative graffiti. At the time of writing Harris did not have the benefit of the publication of the Vindolanda tablets or the Bath curses. Even so, it is difficult to see how the survival rate of monumental inscriptions can relate to general literacy levels throughout the population unless statistically valid figures for other forms of datable writing are available for comparison. This is not possible for Roman Britain. Other practical considerations, such as the shortage of good stone for inscriptions in the south of Britain are acknowledged by Harris. Datable monumental inscriptions could highlight times of increased optimism and confidence in an established way of life, as suggested by Ramsay Macmullen,<sup>5</sup> but peak periods of production would have to match peak periods of production of many other forms of writing for any relationship between monumental inscriptions and literacy to emerge. Estimating the proportion of literates in a past society does not reveal anything about the nature of literacy. All estimates are likely to be inaccurate and it seems more valuable to examine the evidence for clues about the people who were writing and their motives, skills and accomplishments. Harris' book is a very good general survey of ancient literacy but it is not within the scope of the work to give a detailed account of literacy in Roman Britain.

Edgar Polomé's review of the linguistic situation in the western provinces gives only a very brief account of Roman Britain.<sup>6</sup> He contrasts widespread use of Latin in daily life among the urban communities of lowland Britain with scant knowledge of the

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<sup>4</sup> Harris 1989 p 176.

<sup>5</sup> The epigraphic habit, *American Journal of Philology*, 103, 1982, 233-46.

<sup>6</sup> *ANRW* II 29. 2 1983, 527-35.

language in rural and highland populations. This is a long-held view of literacy in Roman Britain and further detail is not offered.

The collection of papers in *Literacy in the Roman World (LRW)* examines various aspects of literacy.<sup>7</sup> Material from a variety of sources and historical periods is scrutinised and questions are raised about origin, function, social implications, religious and political significance. Tim Cornell looks at literacy in Etruria and Latium from the seventh century B.C. and finds a wide variety of public and private functions.<sup>8</sup> He makes a strong case against accepting surviving archaeological evidence as a true representation of what originally existed. He rightly points out that the evidence is bound to be heavily biased for several reasons: physical conditions affecting survival; the preferences and preoccupations of archaeologists; the fact that some items such as grave goods and votive offerings were sealed in antiquity and were meant to be preserved. Later on he addresses the problem of identifying uses of literacy which are not well represented in the evidence and draws attention to mundane graffiti on pottery. These sometimes represent ownership marks or have some association with commercial activity. His particular concern is with early evidence from Etruria and Latium but his remarks are valid wherever early evidence of literacy is sought: if writing survives on items that were never intended to be preserved, even if sources are meagre, it could reveal valuable information about uses of literacy in everyday activities.

James L. Franklin Jr., writing about the parietal inscriptions of Pompeii,<sup>9</sup> feels that the vivacity and sheer mass of evidence suggests a widely literate population.<sup>10</sup> He identifies many types of writing and attaches great importance to graffiti as evidence of literacy among the lower classes. However he feels that any statistical evaluation of literacy levels goes beyond the evidence: an impression of widespread literacy is acceptable but this cannot be tied to any statistical analysis. He also comments briefly

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<sup>7</sup> J.H. Humphrey ed., *JRA* Supp. Ser. 3, Ann Arbor 1991.

<sup>8</sup> LRW 7-35.

<sup>9</sup> LRW 77-99.

<sup>10</sup> LRW p 81.



on some of the spelling and grammatical errors in the graffiti which reveal that the writers were writing as they spoke and do not appear to have been highly educated.

Mireille Corbier, in her paper, *L'écriture en quête de lecteurs*,<sup>11</sup> advises against a too simplistic view of the functions of literacy:

*“on court le risque de juxtaposer des usages au lieu d'établir les rapports et les hiérarchies existant entre les différentes formes d'écriture.”*

She confines her remarks mainly to literacy in the Roman period during the late Republic and the early centuries of the Empire and is concerned with different levels of competence in both reading and writing.

Mary Beard, discussing writing and religion, looks beyond the utilitarian functions of the written word to examine its power and symbolic significance.<sup>12</sup> She criticises Harris for regarding literacy as an “optional extra” in pagan religions<sup>13</sup> and aims to show that there was a good deal of writing associated with cults, rituals and sanctuaries in the Graeco-Roman world. She also claims that writing played a central rôle in defining the nature of human relations with the divine and the nature of pagan deities. She uses as evidence Pliny the Younger's description of the numerous inscriptions on the walls and pillars of the shrine of the god Clitumnus.<sup>14</sup> Parallels are then suggested in the many inscribed remains found at the shrine of Jupiter Poeninus in the Great St Bernard Pass through the Alps and at the fountain of Apollo in Cyrene. She quite reasonably says that, although the background and significance of each individual message is impossible to detect, the fact that these tributes appear in large numbers is significant. She perhaps over-emphasises the significance of writing one's name in the form of a graffito: recording one's presence by scratching one's name on a wall is a practice continued to the present day but Mary Beard suggests that at a religious sanctuary this symbolised one's rôle in the cult. The issuing of oracles in written form is a different matter. This might not have had a purely practical purpose

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<sup>11</sup> LRW 99-118.

<sup>12</sup> LRW 35-59.

<sup>13</sup> LRW p 37.

<sup>14</sup> Pliny Epistles viii 8, 7.

and could have been a means of enhancing the mystery of the cult and the power of its priests and diviners, perhaps ultimately for some political motive.

Nicholas Horsfall<sup>15</sup> takes up the cause of the literate bricklayer's labourer from Montemach who wrote a memorandum in rather inelegant Latin on clay in the second century A.D; it records days spent on different activities including hod-carrying.<sup>16</sup> He then examines evidence of literacy among the provincial poor. Again the importance of graffiti is brought up and he questions Harris' neglect of evidence from Magdalensberg (Noricum) and Condotomagus (La Graufesenque) for literacy related to commercial activity. He makes some interesting suggestions about the transmission of literacy in street schools aided by natural human curiosity and the existence of public notices. He feels that the literacy level of the Roman crowd gathering around a public notice deserves some consideration, presumably because such gatherings might increase the motivation of some people to learn to read. He also thinks that professional writers and public scribes should not be overlooked just because evidence about them is scanty.

Ann Ellis Hanson, writing on illiteracy in ancient times,<sup>17</sup> agrees with Harris on his estimation of low levels of literacy in the Graeco-Roman world but points out that in Graeco-Roman Egypt illiterates and semi-literates participated in literate activity and collected documents pertaining to themselves as did literates.<sup>18</sup> She draws evidence from the Julio-Claudian *grapheion* at Tebtunis which shows that illiterates (defined as those who did not know Greek letters), who had to make use of Greek documentation, came to the public record office in the company of a literate relative or friend or sometimes used professional scribes at the office. The language of central government in Egypt was Greek; official notices were posted in Greek and were expected to be understood. Those natives who were employed in administration might be literate in their own language but they were expected to also learn Greek. Peasants received receipts written in Greek as proof of their annual five days' labour

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<sup>15</sup> LRW 59-79 (Statistics or state of mind).

<sup>16</sup> LRW p 59.

<sup>17</sup> LRW 159-197.

<sup>18</sup> LRW p 160.

maintaining the canal embankments, and detailed tax and census records were kept in Greek. Large numbers of illiterates were unavoidably caught up in literate activity. Written documents and records had direct relevance for them.

Alan K. Bowman argues for widespread literate skills in the ancient world and urges caution in disregarding illiterates who participated in the literate mode.<sup>19</sup> He accepts that regional differences need to be taken into account but shares Ann Ellis Hanson's view that very many illiterates in Egypt were thoroughly familiar with literate modes and would submit documentation when necessary through the hand of someone who could write. He also points out that it is necessary to examine the range of activities over which literacy is attested in the ancient world. It does not easily match the conventional notion of a literate social élite. He rightly says that it is difficult to show how literate individuals and groups fitted into the wider pattern of literacy. This is always going to be a problem when working with patchy evidence from a past society. Habits of writing, use of scribes and regional differences all have to be taken into consideration.

Keith Hopkins<sup>20</sup> takes a look at the wider implications of literacy, its integrating force within society<sup>21</sup> and its potential for promoting cultural and ideological change.<sup>22</sup> He selects evidence from Egyptian papyri from Keranis, Tebtunis and elsewhere to illustrate his perception that not only did the proportion of literates grow but there was increased use of writing by literates.<sup>23</sup> The organisation of the Roman army and Roman provincial administration created a need for literacy and so caused it to spread, not only among the upper tiers of the administration; he detects a pervasive sub-élite literacy which he feels received too little prominence in Harris' work.

Contributors to *Literacy in the Roman World* have brought new conceptual dimensions to the study of ancient literacy. The narrow view of a literate social élite

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<sup>19</sup> LRW 119-133 (*Literacy in the Roman Empire: mass and mode*).

<sup>20</sup> LRW 133-159 (*Conquest by book*).

<sup>21</sup> LRW p 136

<sup>22</sup> LRW p 144.

<sup>23</sup> LRW 142.

is challenged; archaeological evidence is closely scrutinised and attention is given to underlying issues. Literacy is seen as a valuable tool within society for generating progression and change at a rate that is impossible in an illiterate environment. This publication is an important milestone in the study of ancient literacy. Only Alan Bowman's paper, however, is concerned with evidence from Roman Britain.

The theme of power lies behind a series of papers on literacy collected and edited by Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf.<sup>24</sup> The interpretations of power are varied and the papers deal with widely varying cultures, drawing on Persian, Greek, Syrian, Egyptian and Roman material. Alan Bowman's contribution is a discussion of the Vindolanda tablets.<sup>25</sup> He deals in some depth with subject matter and technical expertise and gives insight into the personalities of the authors. He looks at: the power of literacy as an instrument of acculturation and of institutional control; literacy as a force promoting the cohesiveness of the army and its penumbra; the power of individuals to generate their own texts (p 111). He warns against inferring that anyone is illiterate because he uses a scribe instead of writing personally or taking bad handwriting as a sign of illiteracy.

Recent interest in the sort of Latin that was used in Roman Britain perhaps goes back to the publication of Kenneth Jackson's work, "Language and History in Early Britain".<sup>26</sup> This enormously detailed study can only be fully appreciated by those with a knowledge of Celtic languages. One important and long accepted view put forward by Jackson is that British Latin was archaic and would sound old-fashioned to Latin speakers from other provinces. He attributes this to correct schooling of the upper classes and the fact that Britain is an island and therefore perhaps less influenced by changing speech patterns of the Continent. This view was eventually challenged by A.S. Gratwick in 1982.<sup>27</sup> He examines evidence of Latin loan words in Welsh and shows that, in a representative sample of over 80 words, about a third were

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<sup>24</sup> *Literacy and Power*, Cambridge, 1994.

<sup>25</sup> *Literacy and Power*, 1994, 109-125 - The Roman imperial army: letters and literacy from the northern frontier.

<sup>26</sup> Edinburgh 1953.

<sup>27</sup> *Latinitas Britannica* - Was British Latin archaic? in N.P. Brooks ed., *Latin and the vernacular languages in medieval Europe*, Leicester 1982.

borrowed from Latin which was in some way incorrect or colloquial and the rest, which appeared to come from correct Classical Latin forms, were borrowed early before they had been subjected to sound changes in evolving speech patterns. He thus feels that Jackson was mistaken in his belief that users of Latin in Roman Britain had been taught old-fashioned, correct orthography and that “British Latin” was particularly correct.

J.C. Mann produced a brief but useful paper in 1971 which lists inscriptions from Roman Britain showing evidence of spoken Latin forms.<sup>28</sup> Twelve years later Colin Smith expanded on this idea and published a lengthy paper on Vulgar Latin forms in Roman Britain, giving a full discussion of the linguistic processes behind the spelling irregularities. It is Colin Smith’s paper which offers most help for compiling the lists of spelling irregularities which accompany this work.<sup>29</sup> Eric Hamp, in 1975, raised the question of social gradience in spoken Latin in Britain, but it is difficult to know exactly how one might follow up his ideas.<sup>30</sup>

It is against this background that the current work was devised. From an early stage it was decided not to attempt any numerical estimation of literacy levels in Roman Britain. There are no reliable criteria on which to base estimates and when numbers or percentages of “literate” in a society are suggested the figures do not relate to any particular degree of literacy. It is perhaps best to accept that very few people in Britain must have attained a high standard of literacy until the introduction of free state education in recent times. Written material from Roman Britain cannot reveal how many people could read and write at that time; it is better to suggest lines of inquiry which can be reasonably pursued in the archaeological record.

The intention throughout this study is to sustain close methodical scrutiny of written work which, for the most part, is believed to have been produced in Roman Britain. Working knowledge of Latin in the province is the focus of attention. The study is therefore confined to the first to fifth centuries A.D. Consideration of literacy as an

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<sup>28</sup> Spoken Latin in Britain as evidenced in the inscriptions, *Britannia* ii, 1971, 218-24.

<sup>29</sup> C. Smith, Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain, *ANRW* II 29. 2, 1983, 891-948.

<sup>30</sup> E. Hamp, Social gradience in British spoken Latin, *Britannia* vi, 1975.

instrument of power or as a force promoting cultural change are interesting concepts in the study of history but they are not the purpose of this document. The key concern is with the motives for and the practicalities of writing.

One initial problem is how to organise the material so as not to forget that writing is a function of human beings. They are likely to write or read as much or as little as suits their own needs. For this reason it was decided to explore four aspects of human activity, religion, work, funerary customs and personal social and domestic life. Manipulating material from a past society brings the temptation to take an overview which ignores the contribution of the individual. Kevin Greene highlights this point in his work on the Roman economy:<sup>31</sup>

“...the reduction of the rôle of individuals in favour of amorphous trends of which they were unwittingly a part.”

Few aspects of human life can allow the individual to shine through more than the use of language. The first task with all the inscriptions used in this study is to attempt to find out who wrote them. Having gone as far as possible in identifying individuals in terms of name, rank or function a little more detail can be added by asking why they wrote and looking at the style and quality of the writing. If some extra evidence becomes apparent concerning the personality or ability of the individual it is highly valued in view of the natural limitations of the evidence. At this point the individual is welcome to take a prominent position although extreme caution must be exercised about generalising from particular cases.

A picture of literates in Romano-British society can only be built up very slowly and it will never be complete but its complexity is a source of attraction. Britain is not a particularly rich source of Roman inscriptions in numerical terms but the curses and the Vindolanda tablets are very important new sources of provincial Latin. They provide a stimulus to fresh interest in all the inscriptions of Roman Britain and I feel that this is an opportune time to consider writers and writing, not only as sources for historical detail, but as worthwhile studies in their own right.

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<sup>31</sup> Archaeology of the Roman Economy, Batsford, 1986, p 11.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RELIGIOUS DEDICATIONS:**

**Study group 1: religious dedications in which the instigators are identified as military personnel.**

**Study group 2: religious dedications in which the instigators are not identified, by rank or unit, as military personnel.**

**British curses.**

**Miscellaneous religious inscriptions.**

# RELIGIOUS DEDICATIONS

## STUDY GROUP 1: DEDICATIONS IN WHICH THE INSTIGATORS ARE IDENTIFIED AS MILITARY PERSONNEL.

There are 282 dedications in the study group (Table R1 - Catalogue p 4)). They have been selected largely on the grounds of completeness and because the dedicators are identified by military rank or unit. Inscriptions which are too fragmentary to supply the necessary information have been avoided and few lost dedications have been used. The group includes seven dedications which were set up by associates for the welfare of military personnel. All the inscriptions are published in RIB I or in recent volumes of *Britannia*. References to inscriptions in RIB I are given in the text, as numbers enclosed in brackets; references to other sources are specified in the footnotes.

### **Deities.**

The deities are listed in Table R5, below. It is not an aim of the present work to examine statistics for the worship of particular deities in Roman Britain. This would not be viable because the study groups select fairly complete inscriptions, thus omitting evidence from fragments. The study groups are however large enough to show the proportion of dedications to Classical, Celtic and other deities which might be of some relevance when considering the sources and the dedicators. Inscriptions to Celtic deities number 42 in the first study group with a further 13 inscriptions in which there is equation of Classical and Celtic deity. Of the British deities, *Antenociticus* and *Cocidius*, in particular, were adopted by the Roman army and feature on official military inscriptions. Among the miscellaneous deities are German goddesses worshipped by recruits to the auxiliary forces and some British deities such as *Verbeia*, goddess of the Wharfe (635). and *Matunus* (1265).

### **Instigators.**

Since this study group has been selected because the dedicators identify themselves as military personnel, it is to be expected that most will be officers instigating official



**Table R5: Religious dedications - deities in study groups 1 and 2.**

DEITY	STUDY GROUP 1	STUDY GROUP 2
Jupiter	73	10
Fortuna	19	6
Mars	16	32
Genius	14	7
Silvanus	13	7
Apollo	9	3
Minerva	8	3
Victoria	7	3
Hercules	6	4
Nymphs	4	3
Neptune	3	2
Mercury	2	12
Vulcan	0	2
Diana	1	3
Parcae	0	3
Numen Aug. (alone)*	2	5
Disciplina Augusta	5	0
Asclepius	1	3
Matres	14	14
Mithras	13	0
Dea Syria	3	0
Antenociticus	3	0
Cocidius	11	5
Coventina	6	8
Veteres (Hueteres?)	1	44
Belatucadrus	1	12
Brigantia	0	6
Sulis	4	6
Suleviae	0	3
Nodens	0	1
Ratis	0	4
Mogons	2	5
Deity unknown	11	6
Miscellaneous	30	38
TOTAL	282	260

\*also occurs in conjunction with other deities.

Celtic deities 42 108

Romano-Celtic equation 13 24

**Deities and Celtic epithets associated with Mars :**

Study group 1 : Braciaca (?), Nodons, Belatucadrus, Ocelus, Cocidius, Camulus.

Study group 2 : Lenus, Olludius, Loucetius, Corotiacus, Alator, Toutatis, Rigas, Condatis, Barrex.

Cocidius, Belatucadrus/Belatucadrus, Rigisamus, Ocelus, Vellaunus,

+ Thincsus (Germanic).

dedications. In the case of Jupiter dedications the instigators are almost always prefects, tribunes or centurions. Sometimes the officer is named as the actual dedicator, sometimes the dedication is attributed to a cohort or a cavalry unit and the name of the commanding officer is supplied. Only four dedications were set up by a cohort, *vexillatio* or by soldiers on garrison duty, who do not actually name their commanding officer (815, 1130, 1582, 1583); one of these is an incomplete inscription which might have included the name of the commanding officer (1582). In the case of other deities, more than half of the dedicators are again known to be men of senior rank but some 74 inscriptions in the study group are from men of other ranks or by dedicators whose status is uncertain.

Legionary legates appear as instigators on three of the dedications. At Caerleon two legates of the Second Augustan Legion are found, Calpurnius Rufilianus who set up a slab to Jupiter Dolichenus (320), and Postumius Varus, who was of senatorial rank, restored a temple to Diana in the third century (316). Claudius Hieronymianus built a temple to Serapis when he was legate of the Sixth Legion at York, probably at the end of the second century (658).

Of the prefects who made dedications to Jupiter probably the most remarkable is Marcus Maenius Agrippa, who set up four altars to Jupiter Optimus Maximus when he was prefect of the First Spanish Cohort at Maryport (823-826). He had a distinguished career which brought him to Britain in several capacities. He had first commanded a cohort of British infantry serving on the Lower Danube. Hadrian then selected him to command the First Cohort of Spaniards, the move which brought him to Maryport. He later returned to Britain to serve as admiral of the fleet and subsequently as procurator and his son became a member of the Roman senate.<sup>1</sup> The centurion, Marcus Cocceius Firmus, stationed at Auchendavy dedicated four altars to a wide range of deities (2174-2177). Professor E. Birley has traced his origins to the Lower Danube and part of his career to service with the imperial horseguards at Rome.<sup>2</sup> The prefects, tribunes and centurions recorded in religious dedications are

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<sup>1</sup> A. Birley, *The people of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1979, p.50.

<sup>2</sup> E. Birley, *Roman Britain and the Roman Army*, Kendal 1961, p154.

usually men of equestrian or occasionally senatorial rank, whose origins can sometimes be traced to fairly affluent families from Italy and the provinces. Anthony Birley<sup>3</sup> traces equestrian officers to Greek speaking provinces, Africa, Spain and the northern and north western provinces. Sometimes names suggest Celtic, perhaps even British origin, for example, Paternius Maternus on an altar from Netherby (966), and M. Simplicius Simplex at Carrawburgh (1546).

Men from the lower ranks serving with the legions and auxiliary forces have also left religious dedications. It is interesting to note the way in which they identify themselves. Sometimes it is just by military unit, sometimes it is by rank or military function: *signifer* (2141), *armatura* (305), *librarius* (1134). There is a *gubernator* serving with the Sixth Legion at York and no doubt navigating craft up the River Ouse from the Humber estuary (653).

Occasionally dedicators feel the need to give more personal information about their origins or career. This applies to officers as well as other dedicators. The prefect P. Sallienus Thalamus of the Second Legion, who made two dedications at Caerleon in the reign of Septimius Severus, includes his two sons in the dedications and records his home town Hadria, on the Adriatic coast of Italy in the inscriptions (324, 326). Flavius Longus, a tribune of the Twentieth Legion at Chester, set up an altar to the *Genius Loci* with his son. They came from Samosata, on the Upper Euphrates (450). The prefect, Aulus Cluentius Habitus, descendant of the Cluentius defended by Cicero in 66 BC, refers to his home town of Larinum just by the letter L on his altar to Mithras. Presumably he felt that fellow devotees would be familiar with the family name and its origins (1545). Details of previous experience can also be included in dedications. Two tribunes serving in northern Britain record that they were formerly in the praetorian guard at Rome (966, 988 - *ex evocato*). A tribune from Maryport mentions that he was a local senator in his native town of Saldae in Mauretania (812).

The dedications by ordinary soldiers also contain interesting information about their origins. Surviving inscriptions from northern Britain reveal Germans, who seem to be

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<sup>3</sup> A. Birley op.cit. note 1.

recent recruits, feeling very strong ties with their homeland and their native deities. Sometimes they record their home district before their military unit as if their strongest feelings are for their home. This seems to be the case with the *cives Tuihanti*, perhaps from Twenthe in Holland, stationed at Housesteads (1594) or the *pagus Vellaus* and *pagus Condustris* serving with the Tungrian Cohort at Birrens (2107, 2108), the Condrusi being a tribe between the Eburones and the Treveri.<sup>4</sup> A strong feeling of community seems to have been retained by these recruits who were stationed in a foreign land. The deities which they venerated appear to support this view. The Tuihanti include the two German goddesses, the *Alaisiagae*, in their dedication to Mars and the emperor's deity. The soldiers from Vellaus set up their altar to one of their native goddesses, *Ricambeda*, and the men from Condustris to *Viradecthis*. Other similar examples can be cited. It appears that this particular genre had a religious function but also served to foster the community bond. Not only Germans record their nationality in their religious dedications. Recruits from Raetia set up an elegant altar to *Victoria Augusta* at Birrens (2100), and a second century dedication to Mercury at Castlecary attests Italians and Noricans serving in the Sixth Legion (2148). Some dedications have a very obvious link with the dedicator's job. Hunters who help to provide extra fresh meat to supplement army rations dedicated an altar to Silvanus at Birdoswald (1905). Clerical staff are attested on dedications to Minerva, *actarii* from Caernarvon (429) and Ribchester (1101) and a *librarius* from Corbridge (1134).

There are about 218 instances of dedicators recording their names in inscriptions in this study group. This includes the names of officers who were in command at the time of the dedication and a few names which appear more than once. As one might expect in this official military epigraphy, a large proportion of those named use *tria nomina*, a practice common with citizens of most classes from the first century B.C. until the decline in the use of a *praenomen* in the second century A.D.<sup>5</sup> An almost equal number use *duo nomina*, which was a long-standing tradition, although the

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<sup>4</sup> Caesar B. G. vi 321.

<sup>5</sup> The system of *tria nomina* continued for members of the aristocracy well into the fourth century A.D. See Benet Salway, What's in a name? A survey of Roman onomastic practice from 700 B.C. to A.D.700, *JRS* lxxxiv 1994, 124-145.

precise combination of names changed.<sup>6</sup> There are very few exceptions to this in Study Group 1. Six dedicators use more than three names, including three of senatorial status; use of multiple names was a phenomenon of the aristocracy under the Empire.<sup>7</sup> Only 18 of the 218 recorded examples are single names. Use of a single name can indicate lack of citizenship, but after the grant of universal franchise by the Edict of Caracalla in A.D. 212, use of one name became quite common because large numbers of new citizens bore the same imperial *praenomen* and *nomen*. In official records the names Marcus Aurelius would be applied to such citizens as a formal indication of citizenship. Official military dedications are a formal use of literacy and one might expect all dedicators to use their full name. Most do, although Gaius Silvius Auspex omits his *praenomen* on one of his altars at Birrens (2108). Among those using a single name are several Germans (926), two dedicators who identify themselves as freedmen and therefore probably bore the names of their patrons (1271, 2094) and two who add their status of *architectus* as a mark of distinction (1542, 2096). A summary of nomenclature can be seen in Table R8 which is included in the discussion of Study Group 2 (p 55).

To sum up, military dedicators range from legionary legates to quite recent recruits in the auxiliary forces. There are men of senatorial status and men who probably did not receive Roman citizenship until their discharge from the army. The majority, however, are officers, some of whom travelled with their families (1271). They were recruited from Italy as well as the provinces. Many were pursuing an equestrian career and there is evidence of administrative experience in their local town councils before recruitment to the army (812). Men from such families would have some education, would be familiar with the Latin language and would have adopted Roman habits. The centurion M. Cocceius Firmus at Auchendavy, although not of “officer class”, perhaps came from a romanized provincial family. It is not possible to know details of the background of the ordinary soldiers making religious dedications. Their origins, if not stated, can sometimes be inferred from nomenclature as can their citizen or peregrine status, but not with any real certainty. Recruitment and training methods

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<sup>6</sup> Benet Salway op. cit. p 131.

<sup>7</sup> RIB 316, 445, 816, 1041, 1396, 2034. See also Benet Salway op. cit. p 141.

would ensure familiarity, at least with spoken Latin, but the extent to which the individuals making the dedications were educated or literate in Latin is uncertain. All that is certain is that they were participating directly or indirectly in literate activities.

### **Reasons for making dedications.**

Jupiter dedications vary slightly from those to other deities with regard to the reasons offered for the dedication. Well over half of them mention no reason at all (Table R6 below). If they were set up for the ceremony of swearing the oath of allegiance on January 3rd the reason would be obvious enough.<sup>8</sup> When a reason is given, by far the most common is a formula for fulfilment of a vow. Some inscriptions mention the welfare of the emperor or of the imperial household, and dedications to Jupiter Dolichenus usually have *iussu* or *monitu dei*. Other reasons include the donation of an altar and screens by a *beneficiarius consularis* (235), a wish by soldiers of the Sixth and Twentieth Legions for the welfare of their detachments on garrison duty at Corbridge (1130), a wish for the welfare of a prefect and his family at Housesteads (1589) and fulfilment of a personal vow for himself and his family by a prefect from Brescia, who was posted to Vindolanda early in the third century (1686).

For dedications to deities other than Jupiter, the most common reason given is fulfilment of a vow but a significant number mention no reason (Table R6). Occasionally this is because damage to the stone does not allow the reason to be read, but where no reason was ever stated perhaps it is worth considering whether it was self-explanatory. Location and convention seem to be key factors. Over half the dedications to *Fortuna* do not give any reason, but offerings to *Fortuna* are often associated with bath buildings and setting up an altar there would be a convention which required no further explanation. Her power to guard and protect was well recognised and her protection would thus be sought for the users of the bath-house. She is sometimes invoked as *Fortunae conservatrici* (575) or *reduci* (1212) which perhaps further supports this view. Similarly the reason for erecting an altar to the Nymphs near water sources (460), or to Neptune on the bridge over the Tyne (1319)

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<sup>8</sup> L. Keppie, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions*, Batsford 1993, p.94.

seems self evident. Appeals to deities for good luck or protection could be very general in nature and the reason implied rather than stated. This might well be the case with the dedication to the hunting god *Silvanus* by the *venatores Bannesses* (1905) or to the *Matres Alatervae* by the First Tungrian Cohort at Cramond (2135) or to *Viradecthis* by the German recruits (2108). The dedications to *Disciplina Augusta* (1127, 2092, 990, 1978), which are thought to have stood in the chapel of the standards in a fort, give a very stark and forceful message - discipline has divine force, obedience is mandatory - there is no question of reason.

**Table R6: Reasons for religious dedications.**

	STUDY GROUP 1	STUDY GROUP 2
No reason stated	96	92
VSLM formula and its variations	92	88
For welfare of emperor, his family and household	13	8
Restoration of temple, shrine etc.	13	7
A gift at personal expense	9	23
For welfare of friend or patron	6	2
For welfare of self and family	12	15
Other	41	25
TOTAL	282	260

For deities other than Jupiter it is more common to find a reason given for the dedication than not. Most often it is fulfilment of a vow, building or restoring a temple or shrine, or wishes for the welfare of self, family, friends or emperor. Some dedications record successful campaigns. In addition there is an interesting range of personal motives for making a dedication which include being inspired by a dream or vision, pride in one's achievements and gratitude. Titus Flavius Secundus, a prefect of the Hamian Archers at Carvoran, set up an altar to *Fortuna Augusta* in the fort's bath-house, because of a vision (1778). A soldier was warned in a dream to persuade a friend's wife to set up an altar to the Nymphs near Risingham fort. The inscription forms two hexameters (1228). The First Tungrian cohort set up a dedication slab to the gods and goddesses at Housesteads following an interpretation of the oracle of

Apollo at Claros (1579), a reason which is attested on altars across the Roman Empire.<sup>9</sup>

Emotions can be revealed even in inscriptions on stone. Perhaps there is a hint of home-sickness on the part the tribune Cornelius Peregrinus, from Mauretania, who set up his dedication *Fortunae Reduci* at Maryport (812). There is no concealing the personal pride of Gaius Tetius Veturius Micianus, the cavalry prefect whose hunting expedition in Weardale ended in the capture of a wild boar, an exceptionally fine specimen, which many of his predecessors had failed to bag - *ob aprum eximiae formae captum quem multi antecessores eius praedari non potuerunt*. He boasts of this success on an altar set up on Bollihope Common (1041). Another cavalry prefect, who originally came from Xanten on the Rhine, displays joy and relief in his dedication to Hercules at Carlisle (946). The slab records the slaughter of a band of barbarians by a cavalry unit that continued to justify its title *Augusta*, awarded for valour. The stone formed the arched head of a niche or window and was impressively carved with a decorated border (Fig.1a). It was clearly a matter of pride to the cavalry unit, the commander and to the mason who made it. Two altars from Corbridge also commemorate Roman successes in battle against British tribes. The prefect Q. Calpurnius Concessinus records the slaughter of a band of *Corionotatae* (1142) and a successful expedition to Britain, probably under Septimius Severus, is celebrated on the other altar (1143). Favourable results are also mentioned on a dedication to Diana at Newstead, but their nature is left unexplained (2122).

Gratitude for personal advancement is the motivating factor in some inscriptions. Perhaps the most outstanding example is the verse dedication by Marcus Caecilius Donatianus on his promotion to tribune, possibly during the sole reign of Caracalla A.D. 212-217 (1791). The poem honours the north African goddess, *Virgo Caelestis*, who is here identified with *Mater Divum, Pax, Virtus, Ceres, and Dea Syria*.<sup>10</sup> Donatianus is himself of north African origin. The poem might have been written some time in the second century and used by Donatianus for his dedication, or he

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<sup>9</sup> A. Birley, *Chiron* 4, 1974, p.511-13.

<sup>10</sup> G.R.Stephens, The metrical inscription from Carvoran, *Arch. Ael.* 5, xii, 1984, p.149-56.



could have composed it himself. On an altar to *Antenociticus* at Benwell, Tineius Longus showed gratitude for his promotion to senatorial rank under the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (1329). A transfer to the command of the Frisian unit at Burgh-by-Sands inspired two dedications, precisely dated to October 19th and 21st A.D. 241 (882-3) but the name of the dedicator is not preserved. Promotion evidently prompted other altars and dedications. RIB 311 records promotion from legionary legate to legate of *Gallia Narbonensis*.

Sometimes an inscription accompanies the gift of a statue or relief. This must represent an expensive and impressive offering in which the sculpture was probably of more significance than the inscription. This might well have been the case with the carved altar to Apollo found at Whitley Castle (1198). The inscription is very worn but it merely records that the dedication was made by someone from the Second Nervian Cohort. The sculptured panels show Apollo equated with Mithras and his torch-bearers. The relief on a pedestal erected to Hercules, also from Whitley Castle, has scenes from the labours of Hercules on the sides, to complement the inscription and the statue (1199). An image of *Roma* might have adorned the base set up at High Rochester, on her birthday, by *duplicarii* from the unit of scouts stationed there. A study of the iconography associated with inscriptions offers scope for research.

To sum up, the reasons for setting up religious dedications in a military context are quite wide-ranging. Official occasions, such as erecting an altar to Jupiter for the swearing of the oath of allegiance, or to deities whose benevolence is sought, may require no further explanation. The location and associated ritual make it clear why they are there. Fulfilling a vow, prayers for someone's welfare and building or restoring a temple or shrine are all conventional reasons for making a dedication. The vows are sometimes personal or can be an official act. All the above reasons are quite commonplace and can be expressed using standard formulae. Such inscriptions would represent a standard task for a skilled stonemason. Variations from the norm, such as the poem to *Dea Caelestis* at Carvoran (1791), or the arched panel to Hercules at Carlisle (946), would represent a special order and would require the skill of a master mason to produce them. Clearly these special orders entailed greater input by

the dedicator. Minimal information would be required for a mason to produce a conventional dedication using standard formulae, but anything more elaborate would depend upon closer communication with the dedicator and the production of careful notes or drafts. There is also then the question of readership, which will be considered later.

### Style.

The vast majority of surviving religious dedications by military personnel take the form of inscriptions on stone altars, slabs and, less frequently, statue bases. They usually give the name of the deity in the dative case followed by dedicator and reason, using a conventional form that would be familiar to instigator, craftsman and anyone who read them. Exceptions to the normal pattern are relatively few. There are only four inscriptions in the first study group which do not begin with the name of the deity; two are verse dedications (1228, 1791) and in the other two the name of the dedicator precedes that of the deity, a form which resembles the opening of a letter (846, 2141). A similar degree of regularity can be seen in the closing formulae, for example when fulfilment of a vow is recorded, *VSLM* or *VSLLM* is absolutely standard with very few instances of shortening to *VS* or *VP*. There is one possible error which is discussed below (2146).

Iconography might be an important factor in the message conveyed. It is the statuette of a *Genius* from Carlisle, wearing mural crown and holding a *patra* and *cornucopia* which suggests protection of the century of Bassilius Crescens, rather than the inscription (944). Verse inscriptions have already been mentioned as noteworthy departures from the norm (1228, 1791 - Fig.2b), requiring specialised knowledge on the part of the dedicator or mason and communication between the two.

As already discussed, a large proportion of the religious dedications by military personnel are official in nature and were set up by or under the supervision of commanding officers. Therefore it might be reasonable to expect them to have been produced by skilled masons trained to meet the army's requirements, whether the

maisons themselves were serving soldiers or not. It follows then that, if one applies the method outlined in the introduction for the classification of inscriptions on stone, a large proportion of the inscriptions should display the professional qualities listed under type A and B. In order to test this I have assigned the category labels A-E to all the inscriptions in the study group except in a few cases where the writing is not sufficiently legible. The results can be seen in Table R9, included with the discussion of Study Group 2 (p 61).

Initial classification of the inscriptions suggests that some 47% showed type A or B features, 10% had type C features and only 5% had predominantly type D features. The 31% with irregularities of spelling or grammar (type E) included some from all the other groups. The remaining 7% are either lost or too worn to attempt classification. I would suggest that inscriptions showing features of types A-C were probably produced by trained craftsmen and this is also true of many of the inscriptions with type E features. Type D could include inscriptions attempted by amateurs or by someone who lacked the necessary expertise or the correct tools for the job. It appears therefore that most of the religious dedications from known military personnel were produced in specialist workshops and relatively few are crudely carved without the requisite skill and craftsmanship.

Where official dedications are concerned, there does not appear to be any particular correlation between the quality of the masonry and the rank of the dedicator or the deity revered. It seems rather to be a matter of where the carving was done and the availability of skill locally. Date is also a significant factor here, but accurate dating is not always possible. Professor M. Jarrett's paper on the location of non-legionary troops in Roman Britain provides some useful evidence for dating.<sup>11</sup>

Spelling irregularities do not appear to relate to the rank or status of the dedicator in any particular way. A prefect or tribune seems as likely to use a divergent spelling as a common soldier, but date is also a significant factor here. Of the 282 inscriptions in

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<sup>11</sup> *Britannia* xxv, 1994, p.35-77.

**Table R7: Religious dedications by military personnel : instigators by rank / spelling irregularities.**

Instigator:	Number of inscriptions:	Spelling irregularities:
Under legatus Augusti pro praetore	3	2
Legatus legionis	3	0
Praefectus	77	22
Tribunus	46	10
Beneficiarius Consularis	11	4
Singularis Consularis	2	1
Centurio (leg)	26	5
(coh)	11	4
Ordinatus	2	1
Optio	5	2
Praepositus	2	2
Princeps (leg)	1	1
(coh)	1	1
Architectus	3	2
Cornicularius	1	1
Actarius	2	1
Duplicarius	3	0
Decurion	5	1
Medicus	1	0
Miles (leg)	8	3
(coh)	8	3
Legio	6	2
Cohors	14	3
Vexillatio (leg)	3	1
(coh)	2	2
Numerus	2	2
Pagus	2	0
Actor	1	1
Gubernator	1	1
Custos armorum	1	1
Librarius	1	0
Imaginifer	1	0
Signifer	1	0
Armatura	1	1
Emeritus (leg)	1	0
Liberti	6	2
Rank unknown	18	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>89</b>

this group, 89 contain spelling irregularities or errors of some kind. Of these, 60 are inscriptions attributed to men of higher ranks,<sup>12</sup> and 29 are inscriptions by other ranks, units, freedmen and a few of uncertain status. In percentage terms this means that 67% of the inscriptions which show some form of irregularity are found among the 72% of dedications by men from the higher ranks and the remaining 33% are found among

<sup>12</sup> decurion and above.

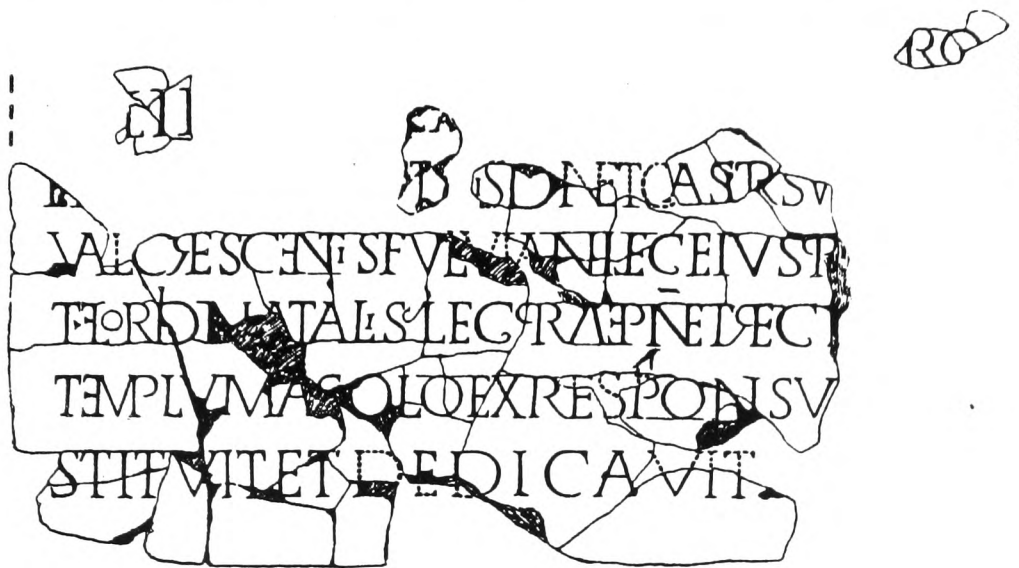
the 28% of inscriptions from other ranks. The ratios are fairly close but since the inscriptions attributed to lower ranks include some whose dedicators are of unknown status the figures cannot be precise enough to make any further comments worthwhile (Table R7 above). The types of irregularity are very similar throughout, mainly spellings which reflect common pronunciation rather than strictly correct orthography, a few grammatical errors, masons' errors and confusion over proper names (Table R12). The language in this group of inscriptions, taken as a whole, tends to be grammatically correct, schooled Latin with relatively few exceptions. I shall now discuss dedications selected from each category in a little more detail.

Type A: (Figs. 1a and 1b)

Among the dedications with type A features are two from Ribchester (587, 590). They are both of early third century date and share features with other inscriptions of similar date. They have complex ligatures involving reversed letters and there is a stylish variation of letter size to include small capitals within the text and sometimes these are placed within another letter (590, 640). In 587 in particular, the serifs are cut precisely on the guidelines which have been correctly paired to leave the lines evenly spaced. RIB 946 is slightly earlier in date but is cut with such precision that templates might have been used for the letter shapes, unless the skill of the *ordinator* was such that he could achieve almost perfect results by marking out the text with a brush. The altar to the Nymphs, from Chester (460) is the product of a legionary workshop which was the source of other fine inscriptions. The dedication to the Invincible Sun, from Corbridge (1137) is crisply cut with v-shaped cuts on a smoothly polished die. It is dated to A.D. 162-8, but the erasure of the first line could have taken place after A.D. 222 when Elagabalus, who was associated with the cult, was discredited. Erasing *Soli Invicto* suggests that the inscription was a prominent feature, still likely to be read over fifty years after its production.

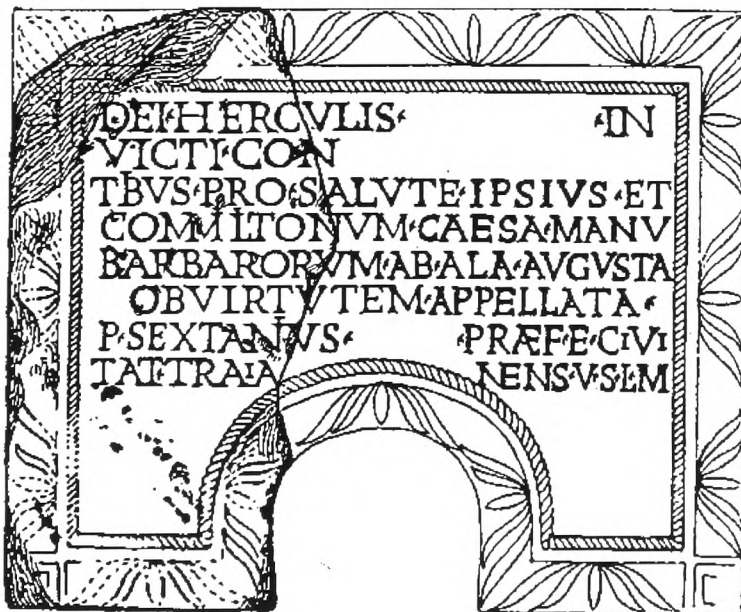
Birrens seems to have been a centre of epigraphic excellence in the mid second century. The two altars in Figure 1b illustrate the point (2092, 2100). Both have decorative features characteristic of the workshop at Birrens. The bolsters either side of the focus have rosettes on the ends. The Mars altar has a central *lunula* on the

**Fig.1a: Religious dedications by military personnel - type A lettering.**



RIB 587 Tablet commemorating the restoration of a temple. Ribchester 3rd century.

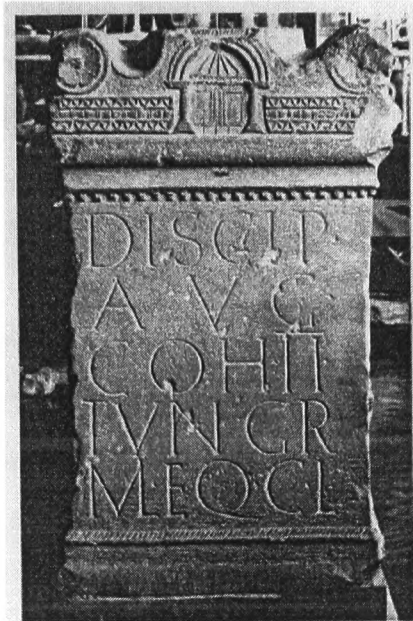
*...p]ro/ [sa]l (ute) Im[p(eratoris) Caes(aris) Al]ex[andri Aug(usti) N(ostri) et/ Iul(iae) Mamaeae ma]t[r]is D(omini) N(ostri) et castr(or)um su[b cura]/ Val(eri) Crescentis Fulviani leg(ati) eius pr[o pr(a)etore]/ T(itus) Florid(ius) Natalis c(enturio) leg(ionis) praep(ositus) n(umeri) et regi[onis]/ templum a solo ex res[pon]su [dei re]stituit et dedicavit de suo.*



RIB 946 Dedication to Hercules. Carlisle late 2nd century.

*Dei Herc[ul]is... In]victi Con[ .virtu]/tibus pro sa[lute ipsius et]/ commiliton[um caesa manu]/ barbaroru[m ab ala Augusta]/ ob virtu[tem appellata]/ P[ub]lius Sextaniu[s.....] praef[ectus] e civi]tat(e) Traia[nens(ium) v[otum] s[olvit] l[ibens] m[erito].*

**Fig. 1b: Religious dedications by military personnel - type A lettering**



RIB 2092 Altar to Disciplina dedicated by the Second Cohort of Tungrians. Birrens 2nd century.  
(After Keppie 1986)



RIB 2100 Altar to Mars and the Emperor's Victory dedicated by Soldiers of the Second Cohort of  
Tungrians. Birrens 2nd century. (National Museum of Antiquities Scotland HMSO 1980))

capital and a concentric circle design in the middle of the last line, both of which are found on other dedications from Birrens. RIB 2107 is in similar style. One man seems to have worked on both 2100 and 2107, possibly responsible for both arranging and cutting the text. All the decoration is of very fine quality.

Type B: (Figs. 2a and 2b )

A very large number of the dedications by military personnel have features from this category. The Maryport altars are a particularly fine group offering much of interest to study. The distinctive decorative features are discussed in some detail by Professor M. Jarrett.<sup>13</sup> The work of individual craftsmen seems to be detectable. The unusual abbreviation of *Optimus* to *OPM* with a ligature (822, 824) and the circles with central dots on the capital suggests the work of one mason. The dedication slab (832) with finely carved peltas and rosettes might have been built into a structure that housed the altars used in the ceremony of swearing the oath of allegiance. Troops stationed at Maryport in the second century must have been confronted with Roman epigraphy of a high standard. The mason responsible for 837 perhaps also carved 838. The first line of each is interesting. The need to give Mars the epithet *militari* seems to be a reminder that he had other associations in the Romano- Celtic world. The style of the lettering is also noteworthy. The precise date of the two altars is not known but it is tempting to wonder whether the artistic arrangement of ligatures and smaller capitals in 837 was a new fashion in epigraphy. It resembles work from other locations which can be dated to very late second and early third century.

The altar to *Silvanus* from Bollihope Common, which boasts of the capture of a wild boar (1041) and the verse dedication to *Dea Caelestis* from Carvoran (1791) both use closely spaced rustic capitals. The lengthy texts could not have been completed otherwise. In either case the *ordinator* must have taken great care to arrange the text. Neither inscription has ligatures and there are very few abbreviations. This would help to make the meaning clear to any potential readers. Ligatures and abbreviations were probably easily understood in standard formulae but would hinder

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<sup>13</sup> Maryport, Cumbria-a Roman fort and its garrison, Wilson, Kendal 1976 p.10.



**Fig. 2a: Religious dedications by military personnel - type B lettering.**

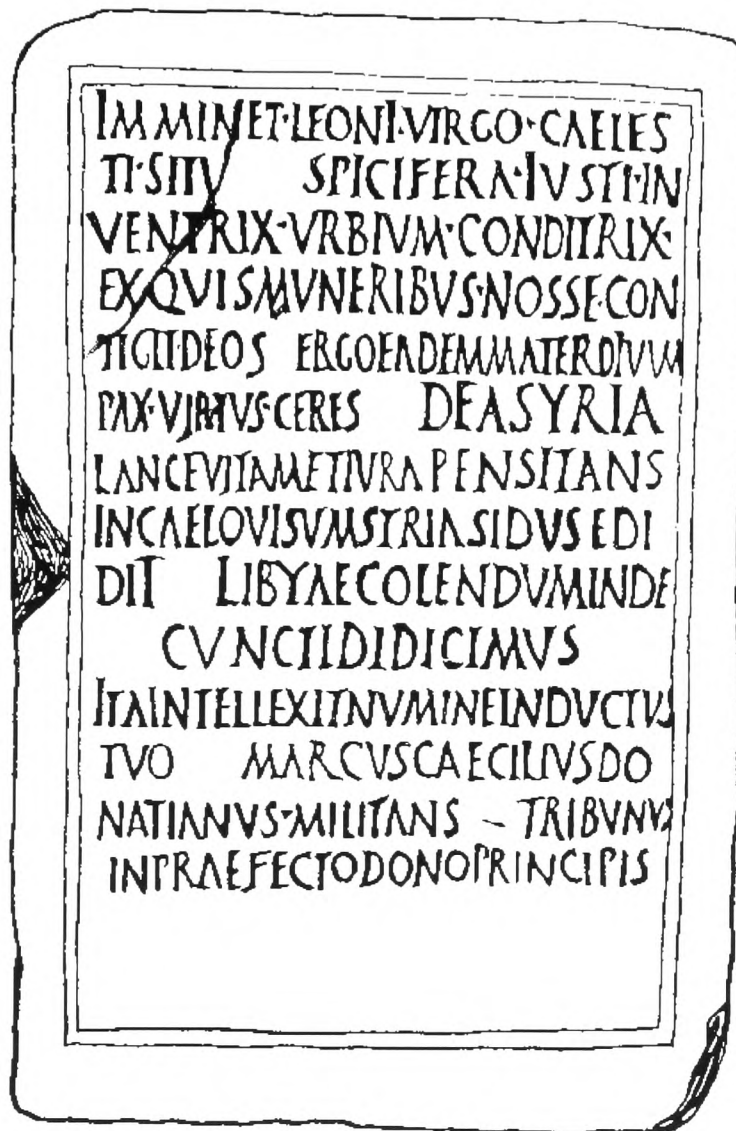


RIB 832 Dedication to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus.  
Maryport 2nd century. (TCWAAS xv 1915)



RIB 2177 Altar to Mars, Minerva, the *Campestres*, Hercules, Epona and Victory dedicated by the centurion Marcus Cocceius Firmus.. Auchendavy 2nd century (After Sir George Macdonald 1934)

**Fig. 2b: Religious dedications by military personnel - type B lettering.**



RIB 1791 Verse dedication to *Virgo Caelestis*. Carvoran early 3rd century.

*Imminet Leoni Virgo caeles/ti situ  
spicifera iusti in/ventrix urbium conditrix/  
ex quis muneribus nosse con/tigit deos:  
ergo eadem mater divum/ Pax Virtus Ceres  
dea Syria/ lance vitam et iura pensitans.  
in caelo visum Syria sidus edi/dit  
Lybiae colendum: inde/ cuncti didicimus./  
ita intellexit nummine inductus/ tuo  
Marcus Caecilius Do/natianus militans  
tribunus/ in praefecto dono principis.*

comprehension in these lengthier texts. In 1791 the end of each line of verse is marked by a space except for the second line, which has a stop after it. There is use of the interpunct in the first four and a half lines of the text. After this it only appears in the first half of the sixth line and there is an isolated example in line thirteen, perhaps suggesting forgetfulness or diminishing care. The enlarged letters used to identify the goddess with *DEA SYRLA*, are perhaps the result of close consultation between the dedicator and the mason; special prominence is given to this equation but there is no need to suppose that the intention was to identify her with the Syrian/born empress, Julia Domna.<sup>14</sup> In the case of these two inscriptions, my opinion is that the *ordinator* and sculptor are likely to have had quite a high level of literacy.

### Type C: (Fig 3)

When guidelines are not correctly marked or adhered to, the letter size becomes less regular and the result is less satisfactory. In 816 the capital has been expertly decorated with rosettes and demi-lunes but the guidelines appear to have sloped down to the right eventually leading to an attempt to compensate for this in the last two lines by varying the letter size. This appears to be a flaw which could have been corrected at the stage of *ordinatio* and raises the questions about how the *ordinator* viewed his task. Was he satisfied just to have fitted all the text onto the die? How was it marked? Was it difficult to remove and redraft? Marks in chalk or charcoal could have been removed fairly easily, light scoring of the surface would require repolishing. Perhaps the *ordinator* was short of time or just could not be bothered. In any case the text was carved as it stood, the result being good but less than perfect.

The tribune, Caballius Priscus dedicated at least four altars to Jupiter at Maryport. On 819 the text does not appear to have followed the bottom guideline with any degree of precision although the letter size is fairly regular. In 820 the letters vary in width and height - perhaps the work of an apprentice? The altar to *Fortuna* from the bath-house at Netherby (968) is comparable with other altars from there which, as a group, do not

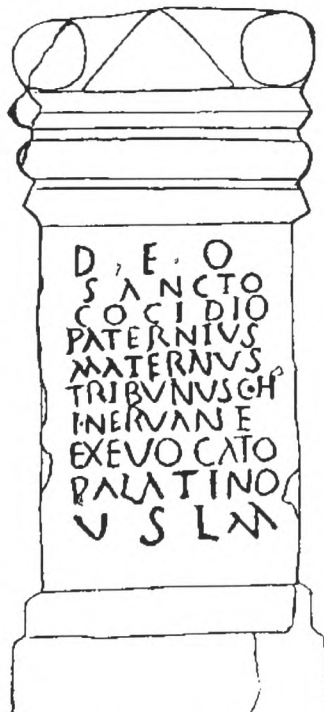
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<sup>14</sup> G. R. Stephens, The metrical inscription from Carvoran, *Arch. Ael.* 5, 1984, pp 149ff.

**Fig. 3: Religious dedications by military personnel - type C lettering.**



RIB 826 Altar to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus dedicated by the First Spanish Cohort. Maryport 2nd century. (TCWAAS xv 1915)



RIB 966 Altar to Cocidius dedicated by the tribune Paternius Maternus. Netherby 3rd century.

reach very high standards in terms of epigraphic style. The dedication to the *Matres* from Carrawburgh (1540) was set up by an ordinary soldier. It is quite small, 9x17 inches, and was probably a personal offering. Perhaps he could not have afforded the skills of a professional mason and might even have carved the text himself. Inscriptions from Carrawburgh are very varied in quality.

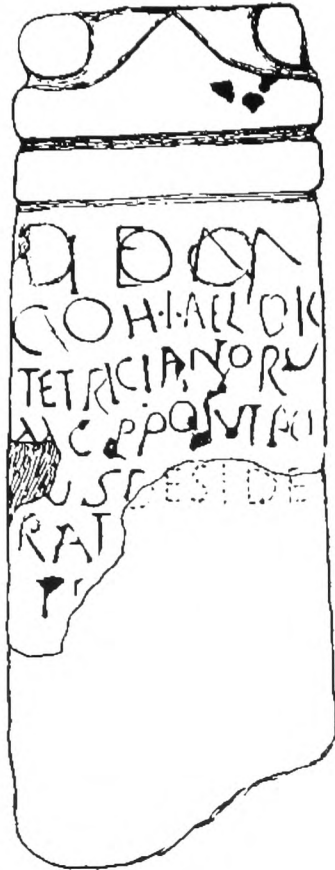
#### Type D: (Fig 4)

Few of the religious dedications by military personnel appear to fit this category, although some of the type E inscriptions also have production flaws listed under type D. Birdoswald has produced some examples. Two are official Jupiter dedications made by the First Dacian Cohort and are datable to A.D. 235-8 (1896) and A.D. 297-305 (1885 - Fig. 4); the latter is on a re-used altar. They can hardly be the work of the same craftsman who produced 1880 and 1888, which are also probably third century Jupiter dedications but not so closely datable.<sup>15</sup> An earlier slab of A.D. 219 (1914) shows expertise on the part of the *ordinator* and sculptor and has relief on the side panels and a later slab of A.D. 297-305 (1912) recording rebuilding at the fort is also skilfully produced. The third century saw a great diversity in the quality of epigraphy at Birdoswald. It seems possible that the range of quality in the official inscriptions might reflect troop transfers and the availability of skilled craftsmen at any particular time. Unfortunately several inscriptions from Birdoswald are lost or badly worn which makes it difficult to investigate this further. The insertion of *PR* (*praetoriae*) in 1896 seems to be the correction of an omission. It is not possible to know whether the omission occurred at the drafting stage or when it was transferred to the stone but the corrections seems to indicate that the work was only checked after cutting and the mistake could have been picked up by the dedicator. The secondary use of an altar and the inferior carving on 1885 suggests maintenance of a tradition in the face of many practical difficulties, making the best of materials to hand.

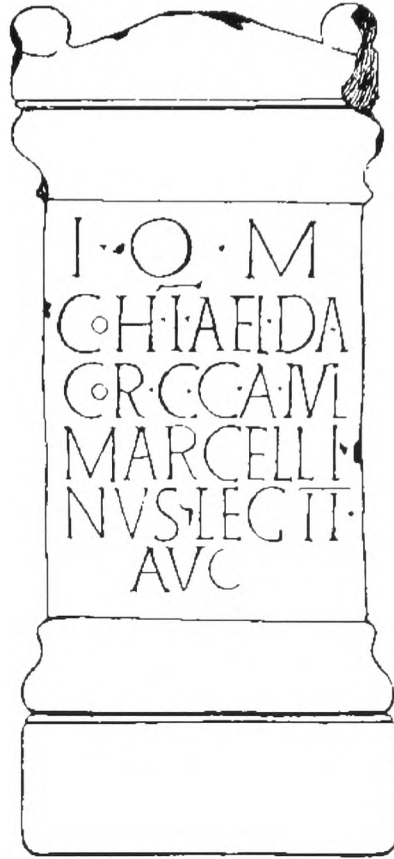
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<sup>15</sup> M. Jarrett, Non-legionary troops in Roman Britain, *Britannia* xxv 1994 p 46 (for the presence of *Coh I Aelia Dacorum* at Birdoswald in the third century - RIB 1880, 1885).

**Fig. 4: Religious dedications by military personnel - type D lettering.**

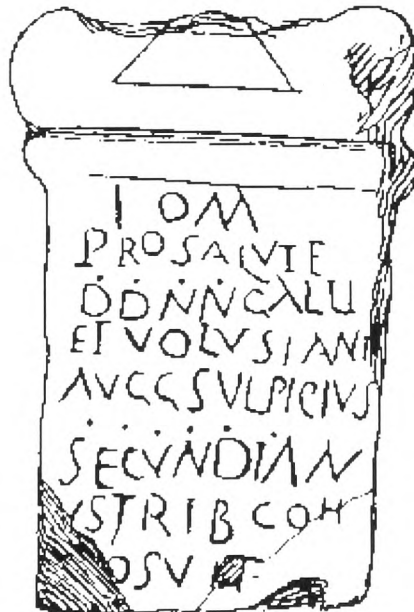


RIB 1885



RIB 1880

Contrasting epigraphic quality from Birdoswald.



RIB 2507 Altar to Jupiter and Emperors Gallus and Volusianus/  
Bowness-on-Solway mid 3rd century.

The Jupiter altar from Bowness-on-Solway (2057), dated to A.D. 251-3, is again in the tradition of such dedications but it is rather small and appears to have been carved without guidelines and with very irregular letter size. The same could be said of 1299. Rather different circumstances seem to have prevailed in the case of 827. Here is a beautifully carved and decorated altar from Maryport but, after the inscription was prepared, additional information seems to have been received about promotion to tribune of the Eighteenth Cohort of Volunteers and this has been squeezed in at the end.

The verse dedication to the Nymphs (1228) is unique in several ways. It was found near a stream to the east of Dere Street, just south of Risingham fort. It seems to be a personal dedication and was perhaps not produced in the workshop at Risingham which was the source of some very fine epigraphy. The two hexameters must be original and presumably composed by one of the people mentioned in the text - the dreamer might well have been the poet. Whoever inscribed the stone seems to have lacked the necessary tools. The first line and the first two letters of the second are cut fairly sharply with a chisel but the rest of the text is very crudely cut, tapped out with a mason's pick.

Type E: (Table R12 - at the end of this chapter)

The spelling irregularities, which occur in about 32% of the inscriptions in this first study group are listed in Table R12. The headings which I have used are outlined in the introduction (Ch. 1). They are adapted from categories discussed by C. Smith, in his paper on Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain.<sup>16</sup> Many of the spelling irregularities, that is those which differ from the conventions of Classical Latin, reflect speech patterns which were becoming firmly established among Latin speakers of all classes from the first century A.D. A few can be traced to an earlier date.

The second century inscription from Castlecary (2148) has *pie* for *piae* and *ed* as an abbreviation for *aedem*. This used to be considered the earliest datable evidence from

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<sup>16</sup> C. Smith, Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain-epigraphic and other evidence, *ANRW* II 29 2 p.893-948.

Britain for *ae* being pronounced as an *e*, a process that was firmly established by the first century A.D. and virtually universal in spoken Latin by the end of the second century. However, earlier examples now appear in the Vindolanda tablets and in a stilus tablet from London.<sup>17</sup> The official religious inscriptions from military sources tend to retain the Classical Latin spelling of common words such as *praefectus* and *praeest*. The forms, *prefectus* and *preest*, which reflect pronunciation, are less common. This seems to show conservatism in written forms and a knowledge of correct orthography on the part of scribes and some craftsmen.

The various renderings of Greek letters were also well established as was the pronunciation of *tramarinis* (919 1224) and *discipulinae* (1127, 1978). They are the sort of changes that were going on in all provinces and are not peculiar to Britain. The same is true of changes in the form of the cases of some nouns. The dative and ablative plural of *deus* (926 1529) took various forms and use of the vocative case became rare (812). This particular group of inscriptions shows very few changes in the form of verbs and has few instances of the loss of a final consonant.

Confusion over personal names is understandable. The people composing and carving the inscriptions were using Latin but this was not necessarily their native tongue and the nature of their education in Latin is uncertain. Phonetic spelling seems to take over when there is doubt about a name. It is almost possible to hear the sounding of words like *Cov-ventina* (1535) and *Su-vevae* (1538). Sometimes the unfamiliarity and confusion seems to indicate that the mason had no idea about the pronunciation of the name eg: *Iminthonius*, if this is a correct reading; it could be read as *L. Minthonius* with a reversed L (2134).

Grammatical errors are very few in this first study group. The inscription dated A.D. 242 from Old Carlisle (897) was perhaps copied from an incorrect draft by a mason whose knowledge of Latin was imprecise, and who perhaps had little interest in the content of the text he was carving. If it was composed by Aemilius Crispinus, the cavalry prefect from Africa, he was presumably less certain about Latin grammar than

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<sup>17</sup> RIB 2443.11.



the composer of the poem to *Dea Caelestis* (1791) or the dedication to *Silvanus* from Bollihope Common (1041).

Mistakes, when they occur, sometimes shed light on the production process. In RIB I, Collingwood and Wright record that *domo* is corrected to *domu* in an inscription from Ribchester, dated A.D. 238-44 (583). This would show that the work must have been checked, but not until after the stone had been cut. If the text had been arranged by an *ordinator* and then checked, the alteration could have been made before cutting. The correction itself is interesting because the more common classical form *domo* has apparently been perceived as an error and recut as the less common form *domu*. There are several possible implications. One man could have arranged and cut the text, unaware of any mistake, until a superior or the dedicator checked the work later. The perceived error could have been made in the original draft, or the mason could have misread the draft. The fact remains that, if a correction occurred, someone felt that the original version was not acceptable on a major public dedication. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to see this correction, because the stone is too weathered. A copying error perhaps accounts for the unusual formula *PSPLL* on an altar from Castlecary (2146). The *PS* could be an error for *PF*, the title of the legion if the mason misread a cursive draft. There is no way of knowing whether this was the case but, if a rather poor cursive draft was given to a mason who did not realise that *PF* was intended to be part of the title of the legion, he would then have no reason to try to fit these letters into line five, where they would logically belong, following *Leg VI Vic*. Such inexperience or carelessness might have been shown by a mason who, on the same stone, cut an A upside down for a V (line 2).

One can only imagine the discussion that might have taken place when the name *IMINTHONV* was carved on the Jupiter altar from Cramond and then *IS* was added above, still leaving an incorrect version of L(?) Minthinius (2134). Similar second thoughts seem to be in evidence in an inscription from Clifton, Westmorland, in which a name, probably Subrius, was first abbreviated to *SV* and then *VBR* was added above, giving *SVVBR* which is still incorrect. Once cut, there was no easy way to erase an unwanted letter, although this was sometimes done. An altar from Inveresk

was re-used by filling in the original inscription with cement and re-cutting. This now makes the secondary inscription difficult to read but this need not have always been the case; the die could have been painted a neutral shade before the new inscription was picked out in red.<sup>18</sup>

On the whole, however, the standard of production in official military dedications shows a degree of consistency, suggesting a combination of schooling and training. Knowledge of Latin appears to be fairly sound at the point of composition or advising on the preparation of a draft. This probably reflects the educational achievements of the dedicators - men of rank in this case. Even when spelling irregularities occur, they still generally present perfectly respectable Latin which is showing inevitable linguistic development over time. The training of masons in the use of handbooks for standard formulae and abbreviations may also be a factor affecting production.

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<sup>18</sup> G.S. Maxwell, Two inscribed stones and an architectural fragment from Scotland, *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 113, 1983, p.379-90.

## **STUDY GROUP 2: DEDICATIONS IN WHICH THE INSTIGATORS ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED AS MILITARY PERSONNEL.**

The second study group contains 260 inscriptions, again selected on the grounds of completeness (Table R2 - Catalogue p 23). The dedicators are not identified as military personnel, although some no doubt were; there is no mention of rank or military unit. I have looked at the range of deities, dedicators, reasons for the dedications and the style of the inscriptions and compared them to the first study group.

### **Deities.**

The list of deities can be seen in Table R5 above (p 26). Some differences emerge between the two study groups, but it must be remembered that the groups do not include all the fragmentary and lost inscriptions. The popularity of Mars in a non-military context is well attested.<sup>19</sup> The absence of cults particularly associated with the army, such as the cult of Mithras and *Disciplina Augusta*, is to be expected. The *Matres* feature in Romano-Celtic contexts whether military or civilian. Official military dedications to British deities are relatively few and the large number of small altars to the *Veteres* and *Belatucadrus* which come from military areas offer no certainty about the precise status of their dedicators. Celtic deities in this second study group number 108 (42% of total), compared to only 42 (15% of total) in the first group. There is also a higher incidence of Romano-Celtic equation, 24 cases in the second group compared to 13 in the first. Equation with Mars is the most common. He is equated with 15 different Celtic counterparts in the second study group and with 6 in the first group. Thus the second study group, which contains mainly civilian and unofficial dedications, feels much more Celtic in character although it is a Roman application of literacy. The miscellaneous deities include some that are British, *Arnomecte* (281), *Tridamus?* (304), Celtic *Epona* (1777) and the classical deities *Oceanus* and *Tethys* (663).

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<sup>19</sup> M. Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art*, Routledge, 1989.

## **Instigators.**

As might be expected, there is a great diversity of dedicators in this second group. Firstly there are individual civilians and civilian bodies making official dedications. Secondly there are a few dedications whose nature and location suggest that they are in fact official military inscriptions and so perhaps belong more properly with the first study group, although their dedicators do not mention rank or military unit in the usual manner of official military dedications. Finally there is a large number of seemingly personal dedications, mostly from military sites, but the precise status of the dedicators is not known. I shall discuss them in this order.

### (i) Official civilian inscriptions.

Only about 15% of the study group seem fairly certain to be official civilian inscriptions. Among the dedicators are senior provincial administrators: a governor of Britannia Prima (103), a third century governor of Britannia Superior,<sup>20</sup> two procurators (2066, 2132), a *iuridicus*, the senior legal official (8) and senatorial decree was apparently the instigation for the dedication to Nero from Chichester (92). Dedicators working at local government level are evidenced in several inscriptions. In London, the *vicinia* set up a marble offering to the Mother Goddesses at its own expense (2); at Old Carlisle the *vikani* made a dedication to Jupiter, Vulcan and the emperor in A.D. 238-44 (899); at Vindolanda the *vicani* set up an altar to the imperial household and to Vulcan (1700). The *curia Textoverdorum*, recorded on an altar inscribed, *deae Sattadae*, at Vindolanda, could perhaps be a local governing body (1695). Local administrators might have been responsible for dedications to Hercules and the emperor at Silchester (68, 69), to the *Genius loci* at Cirencester (101, 102), to the imperial cult and the goddess *Ioug...* from the site of the *canabae* at York and the restoration of a temple there (656, 648). The visit of the Greek grammarian, Demetrius, to York was marked by inscribed gifts (662, 663). The statue base to the imperial cult and *Silvanus* from a villa site in Somerset also has an official appearance and could have been set up by a lessor of an imperial estate (181).

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<sup>20</sup> *Britannia* viii, 1977, 429 no. 16.

Priests, priestesses and priestly colleges also feature among the dedicators. This probably applies to the inscription marking the restoration of the Four Seasons façade at Bath (141). A *haruspex* is also recorded at Bath.<sup>21</sup> The two dedications to *Brigantia* found in West Yorkshire were perhaps set up by local people of some standing, who had received citizenship prior to its being granted to all free inhabitants of the empire in A.D. 212. Both have the honour of serving the cult of *Brigantia*, one setting up an altar at his own expense (623) and the other being master of sacred rites (627). An imperial freedman is named on a lost altar to *Britannia* from the site of the Roman *colonia* at York. A priestess, Diodora, set up an altar to Hercules of Tyre at Corbridge where Pulcher, possibly a priest, set up another to a Syro-Phoenician goddess, *Astarte*. Both altars are inscribed in Greek hexameters (1124, 1129). They perhaps indicate the presence of eastern traders in the town which was such an important supply base for troops on Hadrian's Wall. A small altar to *Nemesis*, of unknown provenance, records the name of a priest, Apollonius (2065). Members of priestly colleges are recorded in two dedications to Mercury from Birrens (2102, 2103). They were found in a ruined temple outside the fort and mark the personal donation of a statuette to the guild of worshippers and the setting up of a statue by the worshippers. The cult of Mercury could be associated with traders.

Other civilian dedicators of official inscriptions are the guild of craftsmen who dedicated the temple of Neptune and Minerva at Chichester under Claudius (91) and the guild of *peregrini* associated with the inscriptions from a Romano-Celtic shrine, possibly to Mars, at Silchester (69, 70, 71). Gaius Antistius Frontinus a *curator* (guild treasurer?) from Lincoln was perhaps a prominent local figure (247). There is also the wealthy merchant, Placidus, who traded with the Rhineland and set up a temple and inscription at York.<sup>22</sup>

For this group of civilian inscriptions the names of only 20 dedicators survive since they often record the act of an official body rather than an individual. Half of those recorded use *tria* or *duo nomina* (Table R8 below). Dedicators using a single name are

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<sup>21</sup> *JRS* 1966, 217 no.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Britannia* viii, 1977, 430 no.18.

**Table R8: Dedicators in religious inscriptions - style of nomenclature.**

Nomenclature	Sex	STUDY	STUDY GROUP 2		
		GROUP 1	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
		Official military	Official civilian	Official military?	Personal
3 names	m	101*	10	3	8
3 names + filiation	m	9	1	0	1
2 names	m	90	3	1	36
2 names + filiation	m	0	0	0	1
2 names	f	0	0	1	6
2 names + filiation	f	0	0	0	0
1 name	m	18	5	8	62
1 name + filiation	m	0	0	0	10
1 name	f	0	1	1	5
1 name + filiation	f	0	0	2	0
TOTAL		218	20	16	129

\* includes six people who use more than 3 names.

mainly Greeks who are not using Roman style of nomenclature: the grammarian Demetrius at York (662, 663) and two priests and a priestess, all mentioned above (1124, 1129, 2065)

(ii) Official military inscriptions (without specific mention of dedicator's rank or unit).

These account for 8% of the second study group. In some cases the dedicators are unnamed but location of the finds clearly indicates their official nature. This is the case with the silver plaques to *Cocidius* from the strongroom of the Headquarters building at Bewcastle fort (986,987), the altar to the local goddess *Arnemecta* from the strongroom at Brough-on-Noe (281), Jupiter altars from Newcastle (1316, 1317), Chesters (1432), and Castlesteads (1984) and a dedication recording building

restoration at Chester (455). The dedicator of an altar to *Fortuna* from the bath-house at Chesters identifies himself only as a German. He does not mention his rank or unit as is more normal with official military dedications. The dedicators of a stone door jamb from the shrine outside Housesteads fort (1593) also call themselves *Cives Tuihanti* with no mention of their rank or unit although they presumably belonged to the company which dedicated the altar to the same deities, Mars and the *Alaisiagiae* (1594). The four Germans named on an altar to *Maponus* found near Brampton also fail to mention any connection with the army. Although making official military dedications, recording their nationality seems to be more important than recording military status, as if ties with their homeland are still strong and community spirit needs to be preserved. Two altars found outside South Shields fort are probably official, one to *Brigantia* and the other giving thanks for the safe return of Caracalla and Geta (1053,1054).

The remaining dedications made by people known to be connected with the army come from doctors and ladies accompanying their husbands or fathers to their military posts. Greek doctors seem to have been responsible for dedications at Maryport (808) and Chester (461). Sosia Iuncina, the wife of a legionary legate at York, left a dedication to *Fortuna* in the bath-house (644) and Hermione, who set up altars to Juno and the Emperor's Valour at Maryport, was perhaps the wife of an officer. The wife of a legionary centurion is recorded at Westerwood on the Antonine Wall.<sup>23</sup> The fragments of a Jupiter dedication from Birrens suggests a female dedicator but this is far from certain. A summary of style of nomenclature is included in Table R8.

(iii) Possible personal dedications (status of dedicators unknown).

The vast majority of religious dedications in the second study group leave the status of the dedicator uncertain. In many cases the dedication was probably personal or private. There must be a variety of dedicators but the task of identifying them more closely and understanding their methods and abilities in using this form of literacy application is not easy. Inevitably many questions must remain unanswered.

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<sup>23</sup> *JRS* 1964, 178 no.7.

The personal nature of the dedications makes it difficult to distinguish military from civilian inscriptions. Location of the finds suggests that a large number of inscriptions were made by or for serving soldiers but because many of the altars are very small and unofficial, there was no possibility or need to include rank or unit in the inscription. A personal name suffices and both soldiers and civilians have personal names. Even when the find spot is noted precisely inside or outside a fort it does not help because small altars are portable, easily carried off for rebuilding or by souvenir collectors, and anyway soldiers might have deposited their offerings at shrines outside the fort along with civilian devotees. Since civilian settlements developed around most forts, it seems at least possible that the epigraphic habit might have spread among the civilian community, particularly where the worship of British deities is involved. Soldiers marrying into native families will have been instrumental in the exchange of cultural ideas and the exchange will have been a two-way process.

Although there can be no absolute certainty, some civilians can perhaps be recognised among the personal dedications. The silver items found at Stony Stratford and Barkway (215-220) or the stone reliefs from Wiltshire (99) and Gloucestershire (125, 129) might have been placed by visitors to Romano-Celtic shrines; this could also be the case with bronze letters found at rural temple sites, such as Woodeaton (238, 239); reliefs of Mercury might have been set up by traders at York (655), Carlisle (952), Corbridge (1133) and Vindolanda (1693); a villa owner perhaps commissioned an inscribed bronze statuette to *Mars Rigisamus* (187), or made the simple relief to *Lenus Mars* at Chedworth (126). Retired legionaries might have been responsible for some of the dedications from the *colonia* at York (650, 652).

Some dedicators identify themselves by filiation only, others add information about their origin or trade. Hence we know that Priscus, the son of Toutius, was a stonemason and a native of Chartres, making a dedication to *Sulis* at Bath (149). Peregrinus, the son of Secundus, came from *Gallia Belgica* and chose to set up his altar to his own Celtic *Mars Loucetius* and *Nemetona*, also at Bath (140). Freedmen (138, 219, 645), sculptors (151), bronze-smiths (194, 213, 274) and a goldsmith (712) can all be found. Female dedicators, Brica and Ianuaria at Greta Bridge (744) and



Vettia Mansueta and her daughter Claudia Turianilla might have been from the families of military officers. One married couple set up a relief to *Fortuna* and *Bonus Eventus* at Caerleon (318) and another couple, possibly farmers or traders, set up an altar to the Mother Goddesses “from other folk,” *Deabus Matribus Ollototis*, in a civilian settlement on the Roman road between Chester and Wroxeter (574 - Fig.6). Antonianus, who made a verse dedication at Bowness-on-Solway, might have been trading with Ireland (2059).

Identifying native Britons among these dedicators is not easy. At Colchester Lossio Veda, the Caledonian, made his offering to Mars, and Similis, a tribesman of the *Cantiaci*, put up an altar to the *Sulevae* (191-2). Nomenclature is not much help since by the late second and the third century there was a mixture of Celtic and Latin names in most communities and even within individual families. The granting of Roman citizenship and the Latinizing of Celtic names began to blur any distinction between native Britons and incomers.<sup>24</sup> Auxiliary soldiers probably dedicated many of the personal altars from the military sites. A few state that they are Germans, Virilis (1102), Aurelius Crotus (1525), Maduhus (1526) and Calve (1597). In other cases German nationality can be inferred from the nomenclature or choice of deity. For the rest nomenclature is interesting, but, as has already been stated, offers no certainties.

Over half of the dedicators of personal altars use a single name (Table R8 p 55) and most of these occur on small altars. Use of a single name can indicate lack of citizenship, especially when combined with filiation, but the situation becomes more complicated in the third century.<sup>25</sup> Many dedicators would perhaps not think to use their official *tria nomina* on a personal altar, even if they bore them. Often the die is too small in any case. When just one name is used and the altar is small, crudely carved and perhaps with spelling irregularities, a picture emerges of humble devotees. There are several examples, a few of whom are: Lunaris from Carrawburgh (1521), Deccius and Binius from Carvoran (1805 1806), Romana from Great Chesters (1729), and Monime from Netherby (967). Dedications giving the three names

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<sup>24</sup> A. Birley, *The people of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1979.

<sup>25</sup> See discussion of nomenclature in study group 1 above and Benet Salway (*JRS* 1994) p 135.

associated with Roman citizenship are few. Examples of these are Titus Aurelius Maternus who set up an altar to Apollo for his own welfare at Netherby (965) and Gaius Vinicius Celsus who dedicated an altar to *Mars Alator* at South Shields, again for his own welfare (1055). Some of those who record two names may be showing the third century tendency to omit the *praenomen*. On almost a third of the altars which appear to be personal the dedicator is un-named.

The most striking feature about these personal dedications is that over half are made to British deities or Celtic versions of Roman deities. Such a high incidence of native deities seems to suggest that the dedications come from a stratum of society in which there was social interaction between the army and native civilians, the sort of society that developed in the civil settlements around the forts. The firmly established epigraphic habits of the military world are combined with reverence for native deities. Some of the inscriptions could come from soldiers' families. The small altar to the *Veteres* from Great Chesters set up by a woman called Romana seems to be a possible example (1729). If the dedications came mainly from soldiers themselves, then perhaps a certain proportion of them might be local recruits preserving their allegiance to native cults, but adopting Roman epigraphic habits during their military service.

### **Reasons for the dedications.**

In the second study group about 35% of the dedications give no reason (Table R6 above p 32). This is not really surprising since very many are small altars which do not have a great deal of space for the inscription. There are several reliefs and statuettes which depict the powers of the deities revered. When reasons are mentioned they are mostly variations of the *VSLM* formula, requests for the welfare of self, family or patron, dedications in honour of the emperor or his household, gifts at personal expense and occasionally the restoration of a temple. There are very few reasons which are unique to an individual dedicator and which reveal anything of his personality but there are occasional glimpses. The business-like nature of Vassinius who promised six denarii to Jupiter for his safe return recalls the nature of the

arrangements proposed by the victims of theft at Bath, but here we know that Vassinius was a satisfied devotee (215). The Colasuni brothers added the actual price of 100 sesterces to their *de suo* formula and the bronze-smith specifies the cost of the bronze. To the modern reader they seem to be preoccupied with the monetary value of the gift but items of bronze and particularly of silver are often inscribed with a record of the weight as they had a value as bullion (274). The goldsmith who had *Feliciter sit Genio loci, servule utere felix tabernam aureficinam* inscribed in his shop seems to have favoured a friendly working atmosphere (712 - Fig.6). Antonianus, perhaps an entrepreneur, who made the verse dedication to the *Matres* at Bowness-on-Solway, had a high level of literacy and knew the works of Virgil (2059).

### **Style.**

The dedications in the second study group mostly attempt to adhere to the established conventions for religious dedications, using standard layout and formulae but there are four cases in which the name of the dedicator precedes that of the deity, using epistolary format (148, 307, 632, 641). There are also several variations in the *VSLM* formula. They include its reduction to *votum* or *votu* and in one case it is written *VSML* (652) in another it is rather unusually *votum in perpetuo* (1903). The use of *votum* rather than *VSLM* on small altars cannot be due to lack of space; perhaps some dedicators preferred a less formal approach. Some of the small altars only have the name of the deity. When applying the A -E categories used for the first study group, certain differences emerge (Table R9, p. 61). Only inscriptions on stone are considered in the A -D categories whereas type E relates to all inscriptions in the study groups. The “unknown” category marked “?” includes inscriptions that are lost or too worn for consideration and those done on metal where the production techniques are not quite the same.

There are clearly far more type A and B inscriptions in the first study group than in the second and more type D and E inscriptions in the second than the first. Type A and B display the sort of features to be expected in inscriptions produced by trained craftsmen. Type C also show a knowledge of professional standards but perhaps less

well executed than in types A and B. Type D covers features which are often described as crude and these inscriptions might have been produced by amateurs. Type E features can be found in addition to any of the other classified features and it is important to bear this in mind when looking at spelling irregularities.

**Table: R9: Comparison of lettering for study groups 1 and 2.**

Study group 1			Study group 2		
Type	No.	%	Type	No.	%
A+B	132	47	A+B	40	15
C	28	10	C	35	13
D	13	5	D	34	13
E	89	31	E	121	47
?	20	7	?	30	12
TOTAL	282	100%	TOTAL	260	100%

Type A. (Fig.5)

Since the first study group contained mainly official military dedications, a high standard of epigraphy was to be expected and this can be seen in the 47% of inscriptions which show type A and B features. The second study group contains far fewer official inscriptions and a large proportion of dedications which seem to be personal. I have only observed type A and B features in 40 stones in the second group and it would seem reasonable to suppose that most of these are among the dedications which appear to be official rather than personal. This is in fact the case; 24 of the 40 are among the official dedications which only account for about 23% of the whole group. The other 15 type A and B inscriptions are distributed among the remaining 77% of dedications, the majority of which seem to be personal. One unusual example must be mentioned. The small altar to *Deo Huetiri* from Netherby is a particularly fine piece of epigraphy. The die, which is flanked by attached columns, is beautifully polished and the inscription is cleanly cut with just the faintest trace of paired guidelines (973 - Fig.5). Small personal altars are not always crudely fashioned.

**Fig. 5: Religious dedications in study group 2 - type A/B lettering.**



RIB 973 Small altar inscribed Deo Huetiri.  
Netherby (5x9ins.)  
(Photograph CSIR)



RIB 808 Dedication to Asclepius by  
Aulus Egnatius Pastor.  
Maryport.  
(TCWAAS xv 1915)



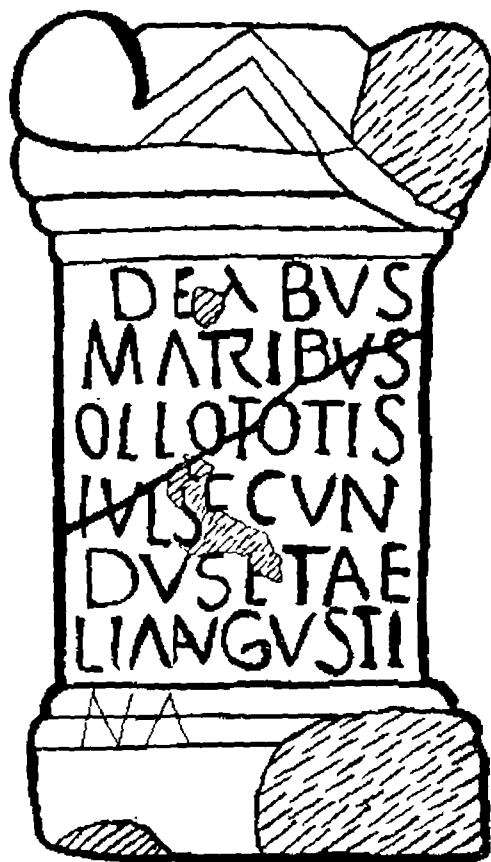
RIB 103 Rectangular base of a Jupiter column. Cirencester late 3rd century.  
(TBGAS lx 1939)

*I(ovi) O(ptimo) [M(aximo)/ L(ucius) Sept(imius) [...]/ v(ir) p(erfectissims) pr(aeses)0  
B[r(itanniae)]/resti[tuit]/ civis R[emus]/*

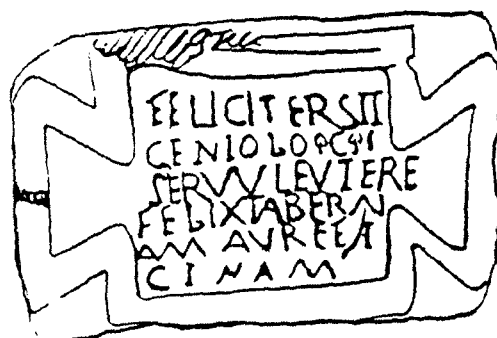
*Septimius/ renovat/ primae/ provinciae/ rector/*

*[Si]gnum et [e]rectam [p]risca re/[li]gione co/[l]umnam.*

**Fig.6: Religious dedications in study group 2 - type C lettering.**



RIB 574 Altar to the *Matres Ollototae*, set up by Julius Secundus and Aelia Augustina. Found near the Roman road to Wroxeter at Heronbridge, Cheshire



RIB 712 Dedication to the *Genius loci* from a goldsmith's shop. Norton, near Malton Yorkshire.

### Type B. (Fig. 5)

Type A and B features are so similar that distinction is often debatable and for this reason they are combined in Table R8. Fig. 5 shows some of the type A/B inscriptions from the second study group. The *Asclepius* dedication from Maryport is beautifully cut in Greek on a slab decorated with peltas (808). The inscription recording the governor of Britannia Prima is now very damaged but the inscribed faces have columns at the corners and the whole monument, a Jupiter column, must have been very impressive when it was complete (103). The Sulinus altar from Bath (151) is very carefully arranged and centred at the *ordinatio* stage but the M at the end of the last line has been squeezed in awkwardly. The dedication slab to the *Matribus Parcis* from Carlisle is beautifully polished and cleanly incised between paired guidelines. The only slight imperfection is again at the *ordinatio* stage. A small space was left before the first word of the text, causing the last word of the first line to be cramped (951). The three fragments from Silchester, combining large and small capitals come quite close to the style of lettering found on some official inscriptions of late second and early third century date (69-71).

### Type C. (Fig.6)

Type C inscriptions make up a small proportion of both study groups. The goldsmith from Malton (712), the couple making a dedication to the *Matres Ollototae* outside Chester (574) and the trader, Antonianus, from Bowness-on Solway (2059) all left inscriptions showing features of professional production but the letter size varies.

### Type D. (Figs.7a and 7b)

Inscriptions showing type D features include many which are often described as crude and which appear to be the work of amateurs. There are more type D inscriptions in the second study group than in the first - 13% compared to 5%. In addition to this, if the type E inscriptions for both study groups are compared, there are far more which have a combined DE classification in the second study group than in the first. About 21% of the second group have a DE classification compared to just over 1% of the first group. I have selected a few dedications which show type D or DE features in Figs 7a and 7b. These are all altars which I have seen and which I believe were

**Fig. 7a: Religious dedications in study group 2 - type D or D/E lettering.**



RIB 972 Silvanus altar.  
Netherby (10x17 ins.)



RIB 1458 *Do Votri* altar.  
Chesters (5x9 ins.)



RIB 1052 Altar to Esculapius.  
South Shields (13x26 ins.)



RIB 1139 (7x11 ins.)



RIB 1140 (9x13 ins.)  
Three small altars from Corbridge.



RIB 1141 (3¼x6 ins.)



originally poorly inscribed. The poor epigraphic quality does not seem to be the result of subsequent weathering.

The *Silvanus* altar from Netherby (972) is very crudely inscribed, apparently with a pick. There has been no attempt to use guidelines to regulate the letter size and the letters are very large in proportion to the die. This altar is in striking contrast to the *Deo Hueteri* altar from Netherby mentioned above, but this is quite exceptional among altars to the *Veteres* (973 - Fig.5). The dedication to *Esculapius* from South Shields is crudely cut with uneven depth of incision and no apparent use of guidelines (1052). At Vindolanda the lettering on the altar dedicated by the *vicani* to *Vulcan* is noticeably inferior in quality to that found on some of the military dedications there (1700). The two small altars from Corbridge (1139, 1141) also provide a striking contrast with the official epigraphy from there which is of a very high standard. They are undated but their poor quality might be due to the fact that they are personal and produced without access to professional masons, factors which need not be related to date. The two small altars from Chesters are both crudely cut but one has a die which was smoothly polished to begin with (1454) whereas the other has not (1456). Small blank altars have been found at Coventina's Well and at other sites on the northern frontier. They were presumably available for purchase by soldiers or civilians. Perhaps price varied with quality. Fine-grained stone that could be well polished, providing a smooth surface to inscribe, might have been more expensive, especially if it had to be brought some distance. What happened after purchase can only be guessed. It seems that in some cases amateur sculptors were at work. Perhaps those who were to some degree literate had a useful, marketable skill. Some dedicators may have cut the stones themselves. Literate friends may have helped out. Written personal dedications are directly in line with official inscriptions and seem to have appealed to a level of society with access to at least minimal skills of literacy and stonecutting. The possibility of making uninscribed votive offerings should not be overlooked and the decision to make a written dedication must represent personal choice.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> There are numerous uninscribed altars from *Glanum* in Gaul (Miranda Green pers. comm.).

**Fig.7b: Religious dedications from study group 2 - type D or D/E lettering.**



RIB 1525 Small altar to Coventina set up by Crotus, a German.  
Carrowburgh (6x11 ins.) (Photograph CSIR)



RIB 1532 Small altar to Coventina  
set up by Crotus.  
Carrowburgh (5x10ins.)  
(Photograph CSIR)



RIB 1532 as photographed for E. A. Wallis  
Budge's catalogue of the Clayton  
collection, 1907.

Type E. (Fig. 7b)

Spelling irregularities for both study groups are listed in Tables R12 and R13 (at the end of this chapter). The same headings have been used for each group to facilitate comparison. Both groups have spelling irregularities which reflect common changes in pronunciation that could be heard in the spoken Latin of many provinces, but they occur in 31% of the inscriptions in the first study group and in 47% of those in the second (Table R8 above p 55). The irregularities listed under points 1 -10 in both lists are very comparable. There is no real difference between the type of irregularities found in predominantly official inscriptions and predominantly personal inscriptions. Points 11-15 in the two lists start to show some variations. One apparent difference is the increased use of *dibus* as the dative plural of *deus* in the second study group, but this is easily explained because there are more dedications to plural deities, the *Veteres* in this instance. *Dibus* is also found when a plural is required in an official religious dedication; it is a common form of the dative plural of *deus*. There are also more instances of variations in the form of verbs in the second study group, particularly of *posuit*. Some of the variations are seen by Hamp as peculiar to Britain.<sup>27</sup>

Confusion over proper names is common to both study groups but the numerous small altars to *Belatucadrus*, the *Veteres* (*Hueteres?*), *Mogons* and *Coventina* provide a more extensive list of variations in the second group. Smith points out that these spelling variations are partly due to Vulgar Latin forms and partly to be explained through German and Celtic phonology.<sup>28</sup> This really indicates the root of the matter. The dedicators have perhaps a mixture of Celtic and Germanic backgrounds and are writing Latin inscriptions to deities only known through oral communication. The *Veteres* and *Belatucadrus* do not appear on official inscriptions and so do not seem to have become established in Romano-Celtic worship at a level that might have produced an officially recognised form of the name. Most of the small altars

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<sup>27</sup> E. Hamp, Social gradience in British spoken Latin, *Britannia* vi, 1975 p.150-1. He discusses certain vowel sounds and the reduction of the consonant cluster *nct* to *nt* in *defuntus* and *santus* which he claims is a British development, based on evidence of borrowing into Welsh as *sant*.

<sup>28</sup> *ANRW* II 29. 2 p. 928.

dedicated to them do not seem to be the work of accomplished masons and that seems to leave the work in the hands of amateurs - a few literates helping out illiterate friends or performing the service for a small fee. The level of literacy involved need only be very basic: knowledge of letters and the ability to reproduce sounds.

The precise nature of the *Veteres* (*Hueteres*?) has never been fully understood. Whatever the original name or function, it seems that at some point some dedicators thought in terms of the “Old God” or “Old Gods”. *Deo Veteri* and *Dibus Veteribus* are more common than any other spelling of the name. The concept of an old deity might have been acceptable to communities of soldiers and civilians living in and around forts from Benwell to Castlesteads on Hadrian’s Wall and at Netherby to the north of the Wall and Lanchester, Ebchester and Chester-le-Street to the south. If the key concept is that of the old deity, it might explain the apparent confusion over gender and number. Some dedicators might have recalled an old god or gods whereas others recalled an old goddess. The notion could be vague without necessarily being mysterious.

Confusion over grammar and errors by the mason are slightly more common in the second study group than in the first (Tables R12 and R13). The second group also has more dedications which contain more than one type of irregularity, for example an error in writing *deo*, confusion over a proper name and loss of a final consonant (m) all occur in *Do Blatucadro votu* (1776) and two of these occur in *Deo Baliticauro votu* (1775), both from Carvoran. The two small altars to *Coventina* dedicated by a German called Crotus are fairly crudely incised, although he chose stone that is fairly fine-grained (1525, 1532). They are illustrated in Fig.7b. One has *Die Coventine* while the other perhaps reads *Deae Covetine*. If they are by the same man, one might expect more consistency, but they were probably inscribed at different times and he could easily have produced a different version on the second occasion; close examination of the stones suggests that they might have been inscribed by the same hand. RIB records the verb on one of the altars (1532), as *SLVI*, perhaps for *solvit*, showing loss of the final consonant which is not uncommon in substandard Latin. The closing formula is confused and Collingwood reads *pro m(ea) sa(lute)*, which is a

bold interpretation. Close examination of the inscription, as it appears today, cannot support this reading (see Fig.7b), since only *pro s* seems fairly certain and the M and A look as if they might be traces of an earlier inscription. An early photograph of this stone, also shown in Fig.7b, appears to show differences in lines 2 and 4. Personal inspection confirms the appearance of the stone as it is in the modern photograph, but the early one is clearly different, and the differences do not seem to be because the picture was taken at a slightly different angle. The word *s(o)lvi* cannot be read in the early photograph and it looks as if the last line could have been intended to read *GERMA(NVS)*, as in 1525. There was then subsequent recutting and general confusion. The concern must be that some damage or recutting took place in recent times.

It is tempting to think that dedicators of small personal altars carved the text themselves, especially when the lettering and spelling are flawed. The evidence does not usually allow anything more than a suspicion that this might be the case. Perhaps 1525 and 1532 are the work of one German auxiliary soldier who was sufficiently literate to attempt an inscription. His knowledge of customary formulae for religious dedications must have been imperfect, causing him to make a rather strange dedication (1532). There also now appears to be evidence of foreigners' Latin in some of the Vindolanda texts in which one or two very unusual phrases appear.<sup>29</sup>

The altar to Mars from Greta Bridge (742), dedicated by Enemnogenus, who has a Celtic name, shows confusion in the last three lines. Three formulae are used, *aram posuit*, *votum solvit ....m(erito)* and *pro se et suis*. The words *pro se et suis...merito* begin in the last line but whoever carved it did not allow himself enough room and finishes the inscription by filling in space at the ends of lines 6 and 7 leaving a very unsatisfactory result. The dedication *Do Votri* from Chesters appears garbled to the point of being illiterate, but the new reading of the first line as a name *Suadnus*, relieves some of the difficulty (1458 - Fig 7a).<sup>30</sup> Audagus, who might be a German, has inserted the letter I as a correction in his dedication to *Blatucairo* at Brougham

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<sup>29</sup> cf *Tabulae Vindolandeses II*, 310, 343, Bowman and Thomas, 1994; for discussion of language see J.N. Adams, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, 86-134.

<sup>30</sup> For new reading see RIB I 1995 edition with *addenda* and *corrigenda* by R.S.O. Tomlin.

and *Do* seems to have been rewritten as *Deo* on the silver plaque from Bewcastle (987). Corrections must imply some sort of checking and a realisation that there is a correct or acceptable spelling. On a small altar to *Belatugagro* from Castlesteads the name of the dedicator seems to be a later addition by a different hand. Perhaps originally no dedicator was named and when Minervalis appropriated the altar he added his own name (1976). The small altar to *Vit* from Corbridge just appears to have been cut with minimal skill (1141). A misreading of a cursive draft might account for the *opere maronio* which occurs on a dedication slab to Mercury at Colchester. The dedicator has an African name and he has given Mercury the obscure title *Andescocivouco* which contains some Celtic name elements (193).

The relief of the three Mother Goddesses of uncertain provenance in the Newcastle area (1318) shares some points of detail with a funerary relief from Corbridge (1181). These will be discussed in Chapter 5 where a figure is provided. Both stones also have circle decorations and an inscription which exceeds the panel provided for it. The lettering of the two inscriptions show similarities of form, particularly the M, the distinctive L with a sloping tail and the N which leans to the right. On both inscriptions the letter size is uneven. It seems possible that they could be the product of one workshop or of one mason and he might have been a Celt.

The diverse standards of production of the dedications in the second study group seem to reflect diverse origins. Although complying generally to the accepted conventions for religious dedications this group of inscriptions is not as uniform as the official military dedications.

## BRITISH CURSE TABLETS.

The use of curse tablets is wide-ranging in terms of geography, time, subject matter and the socio-economic status of their authors and intended victims. Gager's recent work covers their background composition and use.<sup>31</sup> Surviving curse tablets from the Graeco-Roman world contain contributions from North African, Egyptian, Jewish, Persian and even Christian sources. Their use spans some thirteen centuries; early examples from Selinus in Sicily date from c.500 BC. Their applications included cursing rivals in chariot racing, business or love, cursing legal opponents and thieves and casting spells to win someone's love. Pliny the Elder commented:<sup>32</sup>

"There is no-one who is not afraid of being spellbound by curse tablets"

The British curse tablets are not so varied in their application but they provide insight into a tradition which had developed for dealing with personal complaints and grievances which seem to have been inadequately covered by law. The curses which are published in TSMB 2<sup>33</sup> will be numbered as published e.g. Tab. Sulis 98. Those from various volumes of the *Journal of Roman Studies* and *Britannia* will be by letter and place name e.g. E - Uley; the letters refer to the list of these curses in Table R3 of this study.

### **Status of the authors.**

Some clues about the socio-economic status of the people who deposited the curse tablets at Bath might be gleaned from the range of votive offerings found in the spring, from nomenclature and from the items of lost property. The more expensive objects listed under votive offerings seem to be items of priestly regalia and vessels used in religious ritual.<sup>34</sup> The personal possessions, like most of the stolen goods, are every-day objects such as combs, spindle whorls, a pewter ink pot, pewter amulets and inexpensive jewellery for example, copper alloy brooches and bracelets. Henig

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<sup>31</sup> Curse tablets and binding spells from the Ancient World, OUP 1992.

<sup>32</sup> Natural History, 28 4 19.

<sup>33</sup> The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, Vol. 2, ed. Barry Cunliffe, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988 (Abbreviated to TSMB 2).

<sup>34</sup> TSMB 2, 6-20, items 1-33.

points out that the gemstones need not have been votive offerings but could represent casual losses since they compare with finds from legionary baths at Caerleon and York (TSMB 2, p21-32). Coins are mainly bronze and it is impossible to know how much any individual visitor threw into the spring with the exception of the four gold coins, which clearly indicate a very substantial offering (TSMB 2, p 361). Lost property includes cloaks, tunics, headgear, small amounts of money and a silver ring. Votive offerings and lost property all seem to be the type of items that could have belonged to ordinary working people or tradespeople visiting the shrine. Only the gold coins point to a wealthy visitor. Authors of some tablets from other locations in Britain were perhaps farmers. There are references to two wheels and four cows (R - Uley), an animal (P - Uley) and perhaps a female mule (S - Ratcliffe-on-Soar).

Tomlin's discussion of the names found in the Bath curse tablets is convincing in its suggestion that the people were probably not from the upper classes of society. He finds "a mixture of Celtic names and colourless Latin *cognomina*" (TSMB 2, p 98).<sup>35</sup> Rarely is there any further information about identity. Occasionally a patronymic is used (Tab. Sulis 10, 30) or a matronymic (Tab. Sulis 30, 98?). Sometimes names are glossed "wife" or "slave" (Tab. Sulis 9, 30). Three tablets involve families (Tab. Sulis 30, 53, 94). In one of the families the husband's name, Uricalus, is thought to be Celtic but his wife is called Docilosa, perhaps formed from the Latin Docilis, although there could also be a connection with the Celtic name Docca, and the children are named after her, Docilis and Docilina. Uricalus' brother has a Roman name, Decentius. Such families are perhaps fairly typical of the Romano-Celtic population in third century Britain. I wonder about the status of Honoratus, the petitioner at Uley, who lost two wheels and four cows from his home. He sounds like a small land owner. He might not have been of lowly status. His curse tablet (R - Uley) is well written in respectable Latin. It is very direct and personal and written in the first person. It reads as if he wrote it himself. Perhaps Honoratus represents the upper echelons of the rural community. If he could write Latin, perhaps he would educate his children in the language and employ literate staff to help with farm records and accounts. The overwhelming impression, however, is that this particular

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<sup>35</sup> Celtic names outnumber Roman names in the proportion 80:70 (Tomlin TSMB 2 p 97).



application of literacy touches upon the personal cares and concerns of very ordinary people. Whether they inscribed the tablets themselves or not, they found it perfectly natural to use a written form of complaint in personal matters.

### **Reasons for the complaints.**

The majority of the British curse tablets which are explicit about the reason deal with theft. At Bath the crimes seem to be acts of sacrilege, since the inference is that most of them occurred there, in a holy place. This could account for the severity of some of the proposed punishments. There is also a sanction against perjury (Tab. Sulis 94), a complaint of damage to an animal ( P - Uley) and Tretia Maria, in London, is apparently the object of some personal grudge (RIB 7). The authors want to recover their property and threaten or punish the culprits. The texts which give no explanation are mostly name lists. They were perhaps accompanied by prayers or oral curses but there is no way of knowing. A few of the texts are garbled or illiterate.

### **The process of cursing.**

There is very little evidence about how curses were procured. Three references show that spells could be bought. Plato says that spells were offered for sale to the rich “at trifling expense” by “mendicant priests and soothsayers”.<sup>36</sup> Lucian of Samosata, writing in the second century A.D., describes the purchase of love charms from a Syrian woman who “does not charge a big fee”<sup>37</sup> and Apuleius, in the second century A.D., mentions a love charm bought for a large sum.<sup>38</sup> The evidence might not be directly relevant to the British curses, but it does add some support to the feeling that this is a practice with a use for semi-professional skill, for which there could have been a ready market at Bath.

The verb *defigere*, to curse, does not occur in the Bath tablets but *configere* and *defigere* are both found in tablets from elsewhere (RIB 6, 7, 221). The practice of

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<sup>36</sup> Republic II 364c, trans. F. MacDonald Conford, OUP 1941.

<sup>37</sup> Dialogue of the Courtesans, 4. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *Metamorphoses* 9. 29.

cursing was forbidden in law by the early third century A.D.<sup>39</sup> but, even if they were aware of this fact, the British authors would probably feel that they were making legitimate requests for the return of stolen goods. The language is often quasi-legal, but the fact that tablets were often folded and sometimes pierced with nails shows that they had something in common with the more sinister curses. If an intended victim knew that he was cursed, the fear engendered might be an intentional form of menace. Tomlin uses a very apt description:<sup>40</sup>

“They are documents from the notoriously ill-defined borderland where religion marches with magic and perhaps also with law”

Perhaps purveyors of curses, if they existed in Britain, would need to keep an aura of respectability, offering a little quasi-legal or religious knowledge to their clients. These popular appeals for justice could not carry the full weight of legal sanctions but perhaps “professional” and client worked out their own form of retribution, drawing on traditions of folk-lore and cursing. The recently published tablet from Brandon (T) might just be evidence of the sort of punishment meted out to “cowards, shirkers and the unnaturally vicious” by the Germans. The guilty were drowned in swamps, held down with hurdles.<sup>41</sup> The act of writing down the penalty is an act of confirmation. The deity has a permanent record of the matter just as permanent records are written down in civil and religious law. Perhaps the use of the written word makes the practice seem respectable.

### **Style and Language.**

The style of the handwriting and the use of formulae are discussed in some detail by Tomlin.<sup>42</sup> An examination of linguistic developments is found in J.N. Adams’ paper, “British Latin, the text, interpretation and language of the Bath curse tablets”.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Julius Paulus, *Sententiae*, 5. 23.

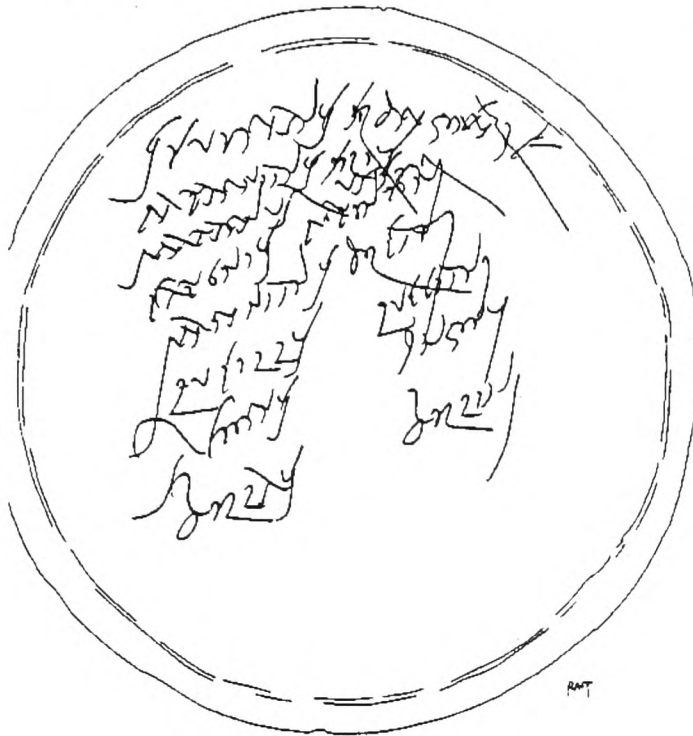
<sup>40</sup> TSMB 2, p. 60.

<sup>41</sup> Tacitus, *Germania* XII, 1.

<sup>42</sup> TSMB 2, p. 63-74, 84-94.

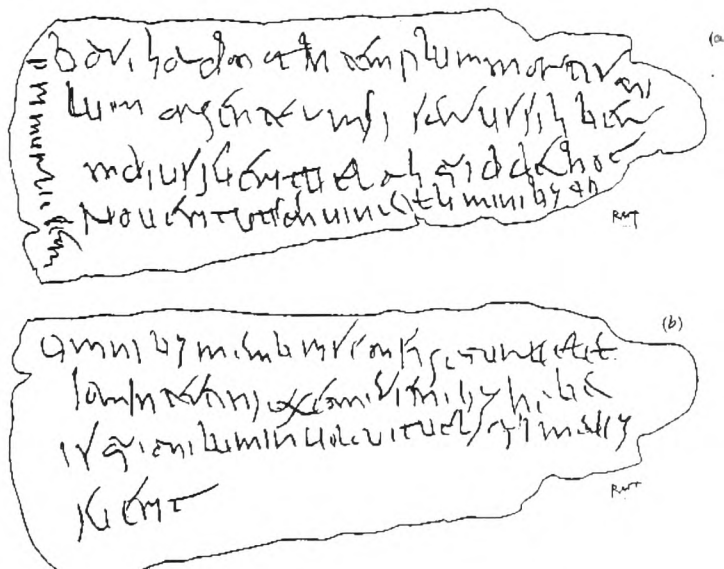
<sup>43</sup> *Britannia* xxiii, 1992 p.1-26.

**Fig.8: Examples of Old Roman Cursive (ORC) and New Roman Cursive (NRC) from Bath.**



Tab. Sulis 30 A list of names written in elegant ORC on a pewter plate.

Names: -Severianus fil(ius)/ Brigomall(a)e/  
 -Patarnianus filius/-Matarnus ussor/-Catonius Potentini/-Marinianus Belcati/-Lucillus Lucciani/-  
 Aeternus Ingenui/-Bellaus Bellini.



Tab. Sulis 97 Complaint in NRC about the theft of a silver ring.

a) *Basilia donat in templum Martis anilum argenteum si se(r)vus si liber/ medius fuerit vel aliquid de hoc/ noverit ut sanguine et liminibus et/ b) omnibus membris configatur vel et/iam intestinis excomesis (om)nibus habe(at)/ is qui anilum involavit vel qui medius/ fuerit.*

### Handwriting competence.

The majority of the lengthier texts from Bath are of second or third century date written in Old Roman Cursive (ORC) by a practised hand (Fig.8)<sup>44</sup>. A smaller number are of third or fourth century date in New Roman Cursive (NRC). The work of a practised hand is a very significant feature. Whoever wrote the texts must have been used to handling a stylus and wrote with ease on the piece of lead, producing fairly regular, legible script. Setting aside for the moment any consideration of language or content, the ability to write fairly legibly at some length probably implies that the writer used this skill quite frequently in his daily life. In the absence of an organised system of education, providing basic literacy and hand-writing practice for all, it is unlikely that people who rarely had any need to write anything would be able to produce flowing legible script even if copying from a draft. Actually composing the text is a skill beyond the ability of handling the writing materials. The art of writing well is an achievement that should not be underestimated. It is only mastered with considerable practice.

It seems reasonable to suppose that some of those who had acquired the skill could represent a scribal class who earned a living by writing. Clerical tasks are well attested in Egyptian papyri and in the Vindolanda tablets but very little is written about scribes themselves. Nicholas Horsfall feels that the evidence for public scribes is inconclusive but suggests that the more important the document, the greater the likelihood that a semi-professional writer would be employed.<sup>45</sup> The existence of scribes in a busy Roman town like Bath seems very likely. They might be employed for many purposes other than writing curses.

Not all the tablets from Bath appear to be the work of a practised hand. Some show a poor level of competence, as if the writer were applying himself to an unfamiliar task (Tab. Sulis 15, 16, 17, 18). Temple officials could have been at hand to advise or help

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<sup>44</sup> Translation of Tab. Sulis 97 (Fig.8): Basilia gives<in> to the temple of Mars (her) silver ring, that so long as (someone), whether slave or free, keeps silent or knows anything about it, he may be accursed in (his) blood and eyes and every limb, or even have all (his) intestines quite eaten away, if he has stolen the ring or been privy to (the theft). (After R.S.O. Tomlin TSMB 2).

<sup>45</sup> in *Literacy in the Roman World*, J.H. Humphrey ed. 1991.

with curses but there is no reason to suppose that they were necessarily literate or accomplished writers. There are also illiterate tablets some of which have random scratches, whereas others are made to resemble writing (Tab. Sulis 112, 113). It seems that even illiterates wanted a visible communication with the goddess and a pseudo-text was better than nothing. Presumably their purpose could not be served by any other form of offering.

#### Name lists.

Name lists and names of individual suspects are an important feature of the British curse tablets. Names and messages were written on the walls of shrines at the fountain of Clitumnus,<sup>46</sup> at the shrine of Apollo Delphinion in Miletus and the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Mary Beard feels that recording one's name at a shrine was a significant act in establishing one's rôle in a pagan cult,<sup>47</sup> but perhaps it represents no more than a wish to record one's presence, a common function of graffiti to this day. Writing names on lead identifies suspects but seems also to be a step towards dominating an enemy or binding those who swear an oath. It is another part of the ritual along with folding, piercing with nails and uttering incantations.

The name lists in the British tablets range in style from two names inexpertly scratched in capitals (Tab. Sulis 2) to the list of eight names elegantly cut on a pewter plate and glossed *filius, ussor* or with a patronymic (Tab Sulis 30 - Fig.8). The undeciphered text of Tab. Sulis 14 contains Celtic name elements and seems to have been written in five different hands. Two more tablets have the name of the author written in a different hand using NRC when the rest of the text is ORC.

#### The use of formulaic and quasi- legal language.

These features of the Bath curse tablets are discussed in detail by Tomlin.<sup>48</sup> In tone, the curses resemble legal documents rather than prayers, although some authors take care to address the goddess with due reverence (Tab. Sulis 34, 35). Some of the

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<sup>46</sup> Pliny, Letters VIII 8.

<sup>47</sup> in Literacy in the Roman World, J.H. Humphrey ed. 1991, p.43.

<sup>48</sup> TSMB 2, 63-74.

formulae parallel those on tablets from other locations in the Roman World. A love spell of the third or fourth century A.D. from Antinoopolis on the Nile was accompanied by an unbaked clay figurine pierced with needles. It makes use of a binding spell found in *Papyri Graecae Magicae* and includes the penalty: “do not let her eat or drink”.<sup>49</sup> Some of the mutually exclusive alternatives must have been so common that they had many applications other than in curses. St Paul’s letter to the Galatians contains comparable expressions :<sup>50</sup>

“There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female”

The tablets from Bath have many expressions which can also be found in other British curses. The most common are the frequent variations of *si vir si femina, si servus si liber* and references to bringing the thief or the stolen goods to the temple. Others are listed in Table R10. Precise wording varies but there are strong similarities of theme, especially in the penalties: loss of life, health, sleep and other bodily functions. The language often shows some formality but lacks magical complexity which would make the use of handbooks essential. There are no magic words and symbols like those found in some of the earlier Greek and Egyptian curses. The knowledge involved in the British curses is not particularly recondite but it seems to be shared knowledge which could have been transmitted orally. Handbooks might have been available but I would not think they were essential. However, the relatively high level of literacy combined with knowledge of appropriate forms could suggest that semi-professionals were at work. There are enough variations in the formulae to indicate individually composed drafts rather than drafts using information copied from handbooks. Some formulae occur only once so far in Britain: *si paganus si miles* (U - Weeting with Broomhill); *seu gens seu ch(r)istianus* (Tab. Sulis 98).

The sanction against perjury is formal and contains a date although not the year. It seems to me that there might have been more to this than has survived. If the tablet is complete, then perhaps another existed which recorded the oath. Cases of theft record details of the crime as well as the penalty. It seems possible that some sort of record

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<sup>49</sup> *Papyri Graecae Magicae* IV 335-84, in Gager, *Curse tablets and binding spells from the Ancient World*, OUP 1992.

<sup>50</sup> Galatians 3, 28.

**Table R10: Similarities of expression between Bath curses and curse tablets  
from elsewhere in Britain.**

The following table does not include the frequent use of variations of *si vir si femina, si servus si liber* and references to bringing the thief or stolen goods to the temple.

<b>BATH</b>	<b>OTHER LOCATIONS</b>
<b>Same author?</b>	
Tab. Sulis 10 : Docilianus Bruceri (petitioner) ut.....maximo letum adigat nec ei somnum permittat elegant rustic capitals + professional appearance	P - Uley Docilinus (petitioner) ut maximo leto adigas nec somnum permittas elegant rustic capitals + professional appearance
<b>Impairing bodily functions.</b>	
Tab. Sulis 41: nec.... illos patiaris bibere nec manducare nec adsellare nec meiere	R - Uley: ei non permittas nec iacere nec sedere nec bibere nec manducare
Tab. Sulis 54: non illi permittas nec sedere nec iacere nec ambulare	C - Wanborough: ne illi permittas bibere nec dormire nec ambulare M - Uley: ne meiat ne cacet ne loquatur ne dormiat ne vigilet
<b>Depriving of health.</b>	
Tab. Sulis 32, 35, 41, 45, 52, 54, 64: .....sanitatem	E, M, P, R - Uley, J - Eccles Villa: .....sanitatem
<b>Paying with blood.</b>	
Tab. Sulis 65: hoc donum non redemat nesi sanguine suo	RIB 323: non redimat nisi vita sanguine suo
Tab. Sulis 99: Sanguine et vitae suae illud redemat	K - Brean Down: .....illa redimat sanguine suo
<b>The culprit.</b>	
Tab. Sulis 35: ab his qui fraudem fecerunt	G - Uley: fur qui fraudem fecit R - Uley: ei qui mihi fraudem fecerit
<b>Naming the suspect(s).</b>	
Tab. Sulis 8: a nominibus infrascriptis	I - Pagan's Hill: ab ipsis nominibus [inimicorum] meorum
Tab. Sulis 15: nomen.....rei donatur	L - London Bridge: de iste numene
Tab. Sulis 16: nomen furis.....donatur	
Tab. Sulis 102: numen furti (nomen furis?)	

## **Table R10 cont.**

### **Whoever did it.....**

Tab. Sulis 94:  
quicumque illic periuraverit deae Suli  
Tab. Sulis 98:  
quaecumque.....de bursa mea sex argenteos  
furaverit  
Tab. Sulis 99:  
quicumque.....deus eum inveniat

A - Kelvedon:  
quicumque res Varenii involaverit  
S - Ratcliffe-on- Soar:  
quicumque involasit

### **Lost.**

Tab. Sulis 5  
Docimedis perdidit(t) manicilia duo  
Tab. Sulis 6:  
stragulum quem perdidit  
Tab. Sulis 8:  
argentiolos quos perdidit  
Tab. Sulis 62:  
perdedi laenam, palleum, sagum, paxsam  
Tab. Sulis 99:  
Deomiorix.....perdiderit

RIB 306 :  
Silvianus anilum perdidit  
M - Uley:  
quidquid perdidit

### **Lost/stolen from my house.**

Tab. Sulis 99:  
it qui Deomiorix de hospitio suo perdiderit

Q - Pagans Hill:  
quod illi de hospitio meo.....  
R - Uley:  
conqueror me perdidisse rotas duas et vaccas  
quattuor et resculas plurimas de hospitio meo  
S - Ratcliffe-on-Soar:  
de hospitio vel vissacio quicumque illam involasit

### **Within nine days.**

Tab. Sulis 62:  
ut ante dies novem

L - London Bridge:  
antequod veniant dies novem  
U - Weeting with Broomhill:  
ante dies novem

### **Your majesty.**

Tab. Sulis 32:  
dono numini tuo maiestati  
Tab. Sulis 33:  
dono maiestati tuo  
Tab. Sulis 35:  
rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam

N - Southern Britain:  
oro tuam maiestatem  
R - Uley:  
me vindicatum esse a maiestate tua

### **Let the god find the culprit.**

Tab. Sulis 35, 44, 99:  
deus inveniat

G - Uley  
fur qui fraudem fecit inveniat



was made of the oath, either to be given to the goddess or to be kept as evidence; another possibility is that the oath was sworn verbally before witnesses. This unique tablet combining law and religion seems to imply semi-professional help. The same might be said of other quasi-legal texts, some of which are quite precise about what proportion of the goods should be offered to the deity. Saturnina offers a third of the value of the stolen property and refers to *res supradictas* and *fanum supradictum* in her *commonitorium deo Mercurio* (F - Uley). The appeal to Jupiter offers a tenth of the value of stolen money and uses a rare technical term *pariare* for “to pay up” (B - Ratcliffe-on-Soar). The language is technical and belongs to the world of written records rather than oral communication.

### Docilianus and Docilinus. (Fig.9)<sup>51</sup>

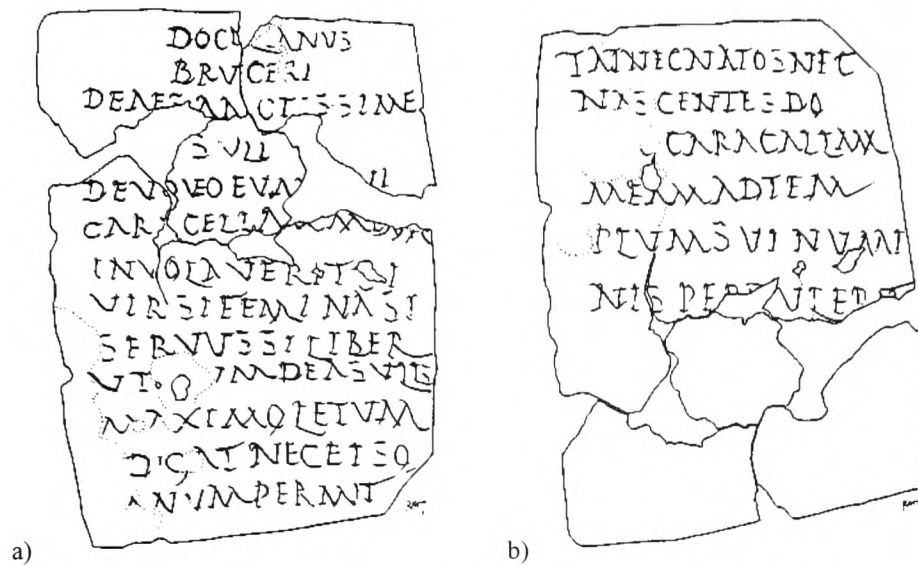
The close similarities between Tab. Sulis 10 and the text from Uley (P) are summarised in Table R10 and can be seen in Fig.9. They seem to point to one author Docilianus or Docilinus. The variation in the spelling of his name need not counter this view. There are two different spellings of *caracallam* in the Bath text and *Bruceri* could be an error for *Bruceti* (Tomlin). Confusion and miscopying of proper names is not uncommon, for example *Sallienius* / *Sallienus* at Caerleon (RIB 324, 326). Docilianus could have lived somewhere between Bath and Uley and visited the two shrines. The tablets use the same penalties *maximo letum adigat* / *maximo leto adigas*, *nec ei somnum permittat* / *nec eis somnum permittas*. Even the order of the penalties is the same, death first and then loss of sleep, as if death were insufficient. There is a grammatical error in the Bath tablet due to the confusion of two possible constructions with *adigere*.<sup>52</sup> The two tablets also bear a striking resemblance in style of production: both are in elegant rustic capitals and both look professional. The Bath tablet opens like a letter and the Uley tablet addresses Mercury formally. Docilianus

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<sup>51</sup> Translation of texts in Fig.9: **Tab. Sulis 10** - Docilianus son of Brucerus {Brucetus?} to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, that...the goddess inflict death upon... and not allow him sleep or children now and in the future, until he has brought my hooded cloak to the temple of her divinity. (After R.S.O. Tomlin) **Briannia xx 1989 329 no. 3** - Docilinus to the god Mercury. Varianus and Peregrina and Sabinus who have done evil harm to my animal and are...I request that you inflict death upon and do not allow them health or sleep unless they redeem from you what they have done to me.

<sup>52</sup> J. N. Adams, *Britannia* xxiii, 1992 p.7.

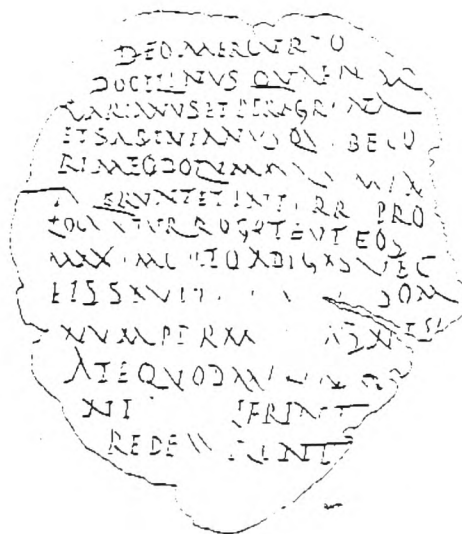
**Fig. 9: Docilianus (Bath) and Docilinus(Uley).**



Tab. Sulis 10 Docilianus complains to Sulis about the theft of a hooded cloak.

(a) Docilianus/ Brucerii/ deae sanctissim(a)e/ Suli/ eum[qu]i/ caracellam meam/ involaverit si/ vir si femina si/ servus si liber/ ut [.]um dea Sulis/ maximo letum/ [a]digat nec ei somnum permit/

(b) tat nec natos nec/ nascentes do/[ne]c devoteco caracallam/ meam ad tem/plum sui numi/nis per[t]ulerit.



Britannia xx 1989 329 no.3 (Uley).  
Docilinus complains to Mercury that Varianus, Peregrina and Sabinianus have harmed his animal.

Deo Mercurio/ Docilinus QVAENM/ Varianus et Peregrina/ et Sabinianus qu[i] peco/ri meo dolum malum in/tulerunt et INT.RR[.] pro/locuntur rogo te ut eos/ max[i]mo [le]to adigas nec/ eis sanit[atem] nec] som/num perm[itt]as nisi/ a te quod m[ichi] ad[m]i-/ni[st]ra[ver]int/ redem[er]int.

need not have been a humble petitioner. Perhaps he had a literate slave who could write down the draft and arrange for it to be inscribed. If Docilianus composed the text and a slave wrote it down to be later inscribed, there would be plenty of scope for error at the various stages. If the cloak had been stolen at Bath perhaps appeal to the goddess might have been made on the spot. However, harm to his animal probably occurred on Docilianus' property but he might have been prepared to go to someone he knew to have a tablet inscribed and then take it from there to the most appropriate shrine.

#### Invoking the deity.

The manner in which the deity is addressed can be quite direct and personal using the first and second person: *dio M dono tibi.....negotium Eternae* (D - Old Harlow), *domine Nemesis do tibi palleum* (RIB 323), *conquaeror tibi Sulis* (Tab Sulis 54).

Alternatively the approach can be much more formal and impersonal :

*commonitorium deo Mercurio a Saturnina femina* (F - Uley). The person who has lost a bronze vessel at Bath seems particularly brusque; he curses the thief and, without any direct approach to the deity, concludes *deus inueniat* (Tab. Sulis 44).

Several of the curses from Bath take care to address the goddess with due reverence :

*dae sanctissime Suli devoveo* (Tab. Sulis 10), *dae Suli Minerve.... dono tuo maiestati* (Tab. Sulis 34), *dae Suli Minervae rogo sanctissiman maiestatem tuam* (Tab. Sulis 35). Petitions in the third person, *Lovernisca donat* (Tab. Sulis 61), *deo Mercurio donatur* (Q - Gloucestershire) are less intimate and perhaps more suggestive of composition by a paid scribe. Only one is definitely composed by a third party: *nomine Camulorigis et Titune.....devovi* (S - Ratcliffe-on- Soar), but there is no way of knowing why. It could be a matter of literacy or perhaps the petitioners just could not travel to the shrine or wherever the tablets could be obtained.

#### Reversed texts.

Reversal of letters or scrambling names is a feature of curse tablets from an early date. Several of the British tablets show some form of reversal (Tab. Sulis 4, 44, 61, 62, 98, 99, 103, J - Eccles Villa). They do not all have the same form of reversal; variations

include normal word order but each word written in reverse, reversal of each line, reversal of the entire text and reversing alternate lines. Producing a reversed or mirror image text is more complicated than a straight text. Experimentation quickly shows that it is essential to work from a draft written normally. Even then copying errors are almost inevitable, as scrutiny of the Bath tablets confirms. Reversal seems to enhance the magic power of the text and perhaps added to the secrecy, but some of these texts have further sophistications. Retribution for the theft of Vilbia (Tab. Sulis 4) involves sympathetic magic; the culprit is to become “as liquid as water”, so that placing the tablet in the sacred spring was a symbolic act. Whoever stole a bronze vessel (Tab. Sulis 44) is required to spill his blood in the vessel itself and is handed over to the god (*deus* not *dea*). Tab. Sulis 98 is a late text, completely reversed and written in NRC. It contains a formula not found in any other British tablet, *seu gens seu ch(r)istianus* and requires the thief to return the money, but adds a proviso against cheating. Unfortunately corrosion makes this part of the text unclear, but the general appearance of the tablet is very professional.

The sophistication of the reversed texts, variations in the formulae and attention to detail in the penalties all suggest the work of professionals. In comparison with others complaining of theft, the petitioners in some of the reversed texts seem to have lost fairly valuable items: Vilbia (a slave girl? Tab Sulis 4), a bronze vessel (Tab. Sulis 44), a cloak, tunic and horseblanket (Tab. Sulis. 62), and six silver coins (Tab Sulis 98). Perhaps in an effort to recover such losses the petitioners felt it was worthwhile spending a little extra on a professionally produced, reversed text.

#### Spelling, grammar and slips.

The spelling irregularities are listed as for religious dedications in Table R14. I have tried to make the lists fairly comprehensive but there are bound to be points which I have overlooked. Evidence of spoken Latin is abundant. The curses, although formulaic, are more freely composed than most of the other religious dedications. They therefore give a broader view of the sort of Latin that was current during the Roman period in Britain. Some of the same linguistic features can be seen in official

military dedications, non-official and civilian dedications and in the curses. People were probably speaking fairly similar variations of Latin but written forms depend on the nature of education and training. It is often not polished classical or literary Latin but represents the respectable current form of the language.

Grammatical confusion and errors are more frequent in the curses than in texts originating in military workshops (Table R12). This is partly because, in most of the official religious dedications, the content is quite narrowly limited by convention. Texts that depart from convention are usually the work of senior, educated men who would provide the draft. Even in a military environment, texts of a non-official nature show an increase in the number of errors and grammatical confusions. These features are fairly plentiful in the curses along with evidence of spoken forms. This seems to confirm the view that the curses were probably individually composed rather than copied extensively from handbooks. Even the commonly used formulae show spelling variations and errors. The curses date from the second to the fourth century and must reflect the linguistic changes of the period. Those who spoke and wrote Latin must have come from a variety of social and ethnic origins and with very different educational backgrounds. Dedications from military areas might display a conservatism associated with military training, but there is no such unifying force with the curses. The content of the curses, although traditional, is less tightly structured than most religious dedications and offers more scope for individuality.

It is interesting to note J.N. Adams' comments on the use of *hospitium* for house, which seems to be a British development and on the use of *baro* for man, which seems to have entered Britain quite early with recruits from Germany.<sup>53</sup> He also indicates some new forms such as *exactura* for *exactio* and *perexig...*, a new compound of *exigo*. *Species* in the sense of "goods" has been borrowed from the world of commerce and there are several examples of colloquialisms, such as the diminutive *hospitiolo* and *levare* in the sense of "lift" or "steal". Perhaps *mascel* was a colloquial form of *masculus*.

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<sup>53</sup> *Britannia* xxiii, 1992 p.1-26. the word *hospitium* also appears in the Vindolanda tablets, in the sense of "military residence", *Tabulae Vindolandenses II*, 156 line 2, Bowman and Thomas 1994.

Several texts show grammatical confusions which are bound to be difficult to unravel. Some are associated with later texts when the quality of Latin was deteriorating in remoter provinces. Education for many must have been a haphazard affair. Perhaps the wonder is that the Latin does not look even more strange to twentieth century students brought up on Caesar, Cicero and Virgil. Many of the scribal errors are associated with copying; some are inevitable when writing a reversed text. A few are corrected probably by the scribe reading through his own work. Some are just genuine slips which anyone can make in handwriting. The use of drafts for the lengthier texts is virtually certain.

## MISCELLANEOUS RELIGIOUS DEDICATIONS.

Inscriptions of a religious nature occur on miscellaneous items published under *Instrumentum Domesticum* in RIB II and *Britannia*. A total of 176 such items have been included in the present study (Table R4 - Catalogue p. 48) and in addition some 25 charms from RIB I and II and *Britannia*. Reference numbers are as published in these volumes. Although this is not a homogenous group of inscriptions, examination has followed the same principles as for other groups. The amount of information to be gleaned is sometimes meagre, but it is possible to make a few observations which relate to findings from other religious material.

### **Deities.**

The deities named in this varied group of inscriptions are listed in Table R11 below. The range differs slightly from that found on the dedications from RIB I which are mainly on stone. The major classical deities are again represented. Jupiter features on military equipment, baldric and belt fittings from various locations (2429.1-7). Mars occurs on a brass *tessera* from Markyate, Hertfordshire (2408. 1), a pewter cup from Cornwall (2417.1), a black burnished dish from Housesteads (2503.128) and probably in a graffito on mudstone from Newtown, Powys (2453.3). A bronze *trulla* from Clwyd has a *Sors Mercuri* stamp (2415.16) and Mercury is named on silver rings from Vindolanda (2422.29), Corbridge (2422.20) and Bittingford, Norfolk (2422.30), bronze tablets from Uley, Gloucestershire (2432.6) and Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk (2432.2) and on coarseware from York (2501.1), Rocester, Staffordshire (2503.129) and London (2503.130).

The Celtic and British deities present a different range from that found on stone inscriptions. *Antenociticus* and *Cocidius* do not feature on items, to date, under *Instrumentum Domesticum*; they occur most frequently on official military dedications from Hadrian's Wall. *Coventina*, *Belatucadrus*, and *Mogons* are also absent; dedications to them mostly appear on unofficial altars from military locations. *Deo Veteri*, well attested on small altars from the northern frontier, occurs on one

**Table: R11: Deities named in miscellaneous religious dedications and curses.**

Deities named in miscellaneous dedications		Deities named in the curses:	
Jupiter	10	Jupiter	1
Fortuna	2		
Mars	6	Mars	3
Genius	3	(+ Marti Mercurio)	
Silvanus	1		
Apollo	2		
Minerva	2		
Hercules	1		
Nymphs	1		
Neptune	1	Neptune	3
Mercury	10	Mercury	10
Matres	4		
Mithras	1		
Veteres	1		
Sulis	6	Sulis	16
Nodens	1	Nodens	1
Toutatis	7		
Faunus	12		
Chi-Rho	58		
A Chi-Rho Ω	27		
Jesus Christus	1		
Vivas in deo	5		
Deity unknown	2		
Miscellaneous	12	Nemesis	1

silver votive plaque from Leicestershire (2431.3). References to *Sulis* are confined to Bath. British inscriptions to *Toutatis/Totatis* are so far all on items under *Instrumentum Domesticum*. RIB 219, recorded with inscriptions on stone, is in fact a silver votive plaque from the Barkway hoard dedicated to *Mars Toutatis*. The letters TOT, perhaps an abbreviation of *Toutatis / Totatis*, occur on silver rings from Lincoln, York, Tetford and Wymeswold (2422.36-40). *Faunus*, the Roman woodland deity, whose name is inscribed on the silver spoons in the Thetford treasure, appears very much in a Celtic guise with a variety of Celtic epithets or counterparts: *Dei Fauni Auseci* (2420.12-13), *Dei Fauni Blotugi* (2420.14), *Dei Fauni Medugeni* (2420.17-19).

The great difference between these miscellaneous religious inscriptions and the other groups discussed is the appearance of Christian symbols and slogans, usually found on fourth or fifth century material. Christianity is generally treated separately from



pagan beliefs in the Roman world but they were concurrent and the material evidence from Roman Britain seems to give occasional glimpses of a transitional phase; the Senicianus ring from Silchester, inscribed *vivas in de(o)* has Venus depicted and inscribed on the bezel (2422.14) and the mosaic from Frampton villa combines a Chi-Rho monogram and a verse to Neptune (2448. 8). The practice of indicating religious allegiance by means of symbols or text is common to both pagan and Christian religion in the Roman Empire. The fact that there is inscribed Christian material of late Roman date from Britain suggests one channel for the continued use of Latin there.<sup>54</sup> Silver votives made in the form of a leaf apparently appealed to Christian and pagan alike in Britain, although they were not items normally associated with Christian churches (2431.4-11). The miscellaneous category of deities in this group include some of Classical or Eastern origin, *Bonus Eventus*, *Orcus*, *Zeus Serapis*, *Isis* as well as some of Celtic or British origin, *Sucelus*, *Epona*, *Maponus*, *Tugus*, *Abandinus* and *Narus/Narius(?)*. The charms are not usually deity specific.

### **Instigators.**

Only 18 of the 176 inscriptions in this group mention the name of the dedicator and there is virtually no information about status. Only three give the *tria nomina* associated with Roman citizenship: Titus Flavius Senilis, who was perhaps a religious official at the temple of Nodens in Lydney (2448.3), M.A. Sabinus engraved on a bronze *patera* from South Shields (2415.55) and P. Oranius Facilis punched on a bronze tablet, from Colchester, recording a statuette of Jupiter given under the terms of a will (2432.8). Four of the inscriptions give Latin *nomina* and *cognomina*: Fabius Dubitatus in gold inlay on the handle of a silver *trulla* to the *Matres* from the Backworth hoard (2414.36), Aelius Modestus scratched on the base of a pewter cup, dedicated to Mars, from Cornwall (2417.1), Aurelius Atticianus incised on a bronze tablet to Mercury from Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk (2432.2) and Aelius Romulus the name of a centurion, cut after firing, on a storage jar at Caerleon (2503.116). Most of these inscriptions mark fairly prestigious items and the dedicators are likely to have been men of some standing; only Aelius Romulus is unequivocally military.

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<sup>54</sup> C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D. 500*, Batsford 1981.

A silver *trulla* from Hastings has a graffito on the base dedicating the vessel to the divinities of the emperors and to Mars (?); the instigator records his filiation and appears to have a Celtic father: *Romulus Camulogeni fil(ius)* (2414.37). The single names are of various types. There are provincial Latin *cognomina* such as Senicianus, which is a fairly common name in Celtic speaking provinces, found on the gold ring from Silchester (2422.14); Publianus is quite rare but occurs on the base of a silver cup from the Chesterton hoard (2414.2); there are late Latin names such as Innocentia, Viventia, inscribed on a silver bowl from Chesterton (2414.1) and Exuperius on the silver *lanx* from Risley (2414.40) and there are some Celtic names such as Vatiaucus on a bronze plaque to a local deity, *Abandinus*, at Godmanchester (2432.4) and Mocux[s]oma (?) on a silver votive plaque from Leicestershire, inscribed *deo veteri* (2431.3). Again it is the value of the gift and the apparent formal nature of some of the dedications which suggest that these people were of some importance in their communities. The two dedicators with Celtic names are well away from the military frontier zones but are using traditional Roman applications of literacy.

The vast majority of the inscriptions in this group give no personal names. The items could have been purchased already inscribed, or the inscription could have been specially commissioned, or it could have been scratched on later as a graffito. There is no way of knowing who owned or inscribed these artefacts. Some are likely to be imports. The silver and gold items represent a considerable investment. The 176 inscriptions come from 74 sites of which 17 are certainly military, accounting for 25 of the items. However, finds from military locations are not necessarily of military origin; York has yielded a silver ring inscribed *DEO SUCELO* (2422.21), a buff jar with a graffito *MERQURIO* (2502.1) and an open work bone plaque from a woman's grave with the slogan *AVE [SORO]R VIVAS IN DEO* (2441.11). None of these need have military connections. The inscribed baldric and belt fittings, which clearly have military origins, were found in various locations, mostly military, but two were found at civilian sites, Silchester (2429.3) and Uley (2429.4). Most of the personal property with religious inscriptions could belong to soldier or civilian alike.

### Reasons for the inscriptions.

If the items are all taken individually and not as grouped finds,<sup>55</sup> rather more than a third of the 176 are either votive offerings or could perhaps have been displayed or used during religious ritual, either pagan or Christian. The inscriptions on them can therefore be regarded as formal rather than personal. Formal dedications to pagan deities on stone altars, particularly from military areas, tend to have a well established format: name of deity (dative), dedicator (nominative) and sometimes a reason (appropriate verb or formula). Very few of the items under *Instrumentum Domesticum* adhere to this pattern and explicit reasons for the dedications are rarely found. The bronze votive plaque from Godmanchester records a gift at personal expense to a Celtic deity by a Celt: *deo Abandino Vatiaucus d(e) s(uo) d(edit)* (2432.4). Public munificence again seems to be the motive for the dedication of the silver *trulla* by *Romulus Camulogeni filius* at Hastings (2414.37). A clay altar to Fortuna from Carlisle records fulfillment of a vow<sup>56</sup> as does a bronze tablet to Mercury from Caister-on-Sea (2432.2). The bronze ansate tablet from the site of a Romano-Celtic temple at Colchester is evidence of a legacy providing for a statuette of Jupiter (2432.8).

The inscriptions mentioned above clearly share features with official dedications on stone and their instigators or scribes must have had some experience of such epigraphy. In shorter inscriptions, which are not explicit about the reason, certain features perhaps indicate their purpose. The use of the dative case for the deity and the nominative for the dedicator seems to imply a gift or offering. A graffito on a pewter cup from Cornwall names the dedicator first and then the deity, a feature which is fairly rare in stone epigraphy: *Aelius Modestus deo Marti* (2417.1). Fourteen items bear the name of a deity in the dative but no dedicator is named. These include rings, pewter vessels, a bronze pendant, a bronze tablet, a slab of mudstone and pieces of pottery. They could all be votive offerings but the reason behind the gift is not

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<sup>55</sup> e.g. Chesterton, Thetford.

<sup>56</sup> *Britannia* xxiv 1993, 316 no.6.

clear. Thirteen items have the abbreviated name of a pagan deity but the case is not apparent and three bear names in the nominative. They are mostly finger rings which are personal possessions. The deities represented are *Toutatis*, Mercury and Neptune. The sites are both military and civilian, although there are rather more of the former. Perhaps the wearers selected deities who best served their needs or who were historically associated with their social origins. Luck, protection or apotropaic properties seem likely motives for religious dedications on personal possessions.

There are some seventeen items which give the name of the deity in the genitive. These include the *Dei Fauni* spoons from Thetford (2420.11ff); there is also a brass *tessera* of Mars (2408.1), a gold ring marked *Matrum.C. C.AE* (2422.9), a ring belonging to a priestly college of *Silvanus* (2422.52) and a belt fitting marked *Iovis* (2429.11). The Thetford spoons are perhaps the most interesting. If they were votive offerings the dative case would be more normal. Only one is written in the dative and that shows an inconsistency in the cases because *Fauni* has a genitive ending: *deo Fauni Saternio* (2420.22). If the spoons are the property of the deity as the genitive implies (see Ch. 6), it could suggest that they were kept at the shrine or sanctuary for use in ritual. Alternatively the genitive could result from a vagueness about cases in general (as 2420.22 implies) but a familiarity with the use of the genitive on personal property to indicate ownership; this practice was widespread in military and civilian circles. A second or third century samian bowl (Dr.31), from a Roman cemetery at Ospringe in Kent, seems also to have been used for communal ritual; it is inscribed around the wall : *Lucius Lucianius VLI Diantus Victor Victoricus Victorina Vas<s> Communis* (2501.307).

In Christian inscriptions, although the wording tends to be different, there are recognisable similarities of purpose and function. Inscriptions on votive offerings (2431.4-11) and items donated for communal worship (2414.1, 2 21, 39, 40, 2416. 8-14) serve the same purpose as dedications on plaques and *trullae* in pagan temples. Gifts are recorded: (*ded*)*erunt* (2414.1), *dedit* (2414.40). Various forms of the Chi-Rho monogram occur on a wide range of items for communal and private use. It was so easy to recognise and reproduce that it might almost be suggestive of illiteracy,

since use of this, unaccompanied by any text, requires no literacy skills. It could be used to represent Christ without any need to appreciate that the letters involved are the first two letters of the word Christ in the Greek alphabet. It could be a symbol of faith or could be regarded as apotropaic.

Fulfilment of a vow is attested on a silver votive leaf from the Chesterton hoard (2431.1). The use of a leaf as a votive offering is very much in line with pagan practice and not normally associated with Christian worship. The inscription in relief at the top of the plaque does not use the *VSLM* formula, common on pagan altars, but uses instead *votum quo(d) promisit conplevit* which is reminiscent of a plaque from the temple of Nodens at Lydney (RIB 307). Perhaps blatantly pagan formulae were avoided in Christian inscriptions. Personal exhortations such as *utere felix* and *vivas*, however seem to be common to both Christian and pagan inscriptions. These have not been included in the current selection of inscriptions; only the specifically Christian *vivas in deo* is included.

### **Style.**

The religious inscriptions under *Instrumentum Domesticum* are produced in a variety of ways. Some involve skilled craftsmen and special tools whereas the graffiti only require a sharp point and in the case of the Chi-Rho no writing ability at all. Knowledge of special formulae is sometimes apparent and in a few examples a high level of literacy is involved.

### Inscriptions which name the dedicator.

Of the eighteen inscriptions which include a named dedicator or owner, five are on metal objects which appear to have been professionally engraved or inscribed. There is no certainty that these are of British manufacture but the two bowls from the Chesterton hoard might have been; they were found with Christian votive plaques which seem to be British. The bowl offered or dedicated by Innocentia and Viventia is beautifully engraved in double stroke capitals and bears an extremely elegant version of the Constantinian Chi-Rho (2414.1). The Publianus bowl is engraved in single stroke capitals and bears a rather unusual legend with two Chi-Rho symbols:

*sanctum altare tuum , domine, subnixus honoro* (2414.2). The line is in the form of a hexameter. Grammatically the accusatives are the object of *honoro* leaving *subnixus* with an intransitive meaning; but sense seems to suggest that *subnixus* also partly governs *sanctum altare tuum* (although syntactically this would require an ablative). The impression is that Publianus is both supported by and honours the Church. This is certainly a sophisticated inscription which signifies skill in composition and technical skill in production.

The Risley *lanx* (2414.40) might have been an imported piece and the silver *trulla* to the Matres bearing the name Fabius Dubitatus appears to be of Gaulish manufacture (2414.36). Two rings with names inscribed might have been engraved in Britain. The gold Senicianus ring depicting Venus has a secondary Christian inscription: *Seniciane, vivas i<i>n de(o)* (2422.14). The accidental repetition of the letter I meant that the word *deo* could not be completed; the engraver blundered his task through lack of planning (*ordinatio*) rather than illiteracy. The bronze Iustinus ring from Richborough is similarly faceted and engraved: *Iustine vivas in deo*, but again there seems to have been an error, because the Chi-Rho on the bezel is inverted to the inscription (2422.70). This could, of course, be accidental but it might indicate that the craftsman was unfamiliar with the Christian symbol.

The bronze plaque from Caister-on Sea might have been attached to a statuette of Mercury. The dedicator has a Roman *nomen* and *cognomen* and uses standard formulae: *Aurelius Atticianus Mercurio VSLM* (2432.2). The inscription has ligatures after the style of monumental inscriptions and shows traces of enamelling. It must have been the product of a professional workshop which perhaps produced a range of formal inscriptions for the local community. The mosaic from Lydney, instigated by Titus Flavius Senilis, is professionally crafted using standard format. It is clearly formal and prestigious and it contains one spelling irregularity, *possuit* for *posuit* (2448.3). Doubling a consonant can occur for a number of reasons. It can indicate uncertainty; in the Vindolanda texts it sometimes indicates deliberate conservative

orthography.<sup>57</sup> It is not always an indication of poor literacy and is perhaps more likely to reveal something about schooling and the acceptable written forms of the day. Several of the name-bearing inscriptions are marked on metal by means of punched dots; it is a common technique which can give a professional appearance if the craftsman is skilled. Inscriptions in the present group which use this technique are quite standard in format. The Apollo plaque from Nettleton, Wiltshire, seems to have a misplaced interpunct between the A and the P of *Apol(lo)*; this could just be a slip or could suggest an illiterate craftsman misunderstanding a draft.

The blend of Roman craft and Celtic culture is apparent in some of the items under *Instrumentum Domesticum*, as it is with some of the stone inscriptions. The silver *deo Veteri* plaque from Thistleton, Leicestershire, is difficult to read but the dedicator seems to be Celtic: *Mocux[s]oma ?* (2431.3). Another plaque, which displays traditional Roman epigraphic format but belongs very much to Celtic culture, is the one from Godmanchester inscribed *deo Abandino Vatiaucus*; the god is local and the dedicator sounds Celtic (2432.4). The Iamcilla plaque from the Chesterton hoard has the legend worked in relief. The craftsman has made a few errors because he was working from the back. He was probably following a draft but accidentally produced some reversed letters and inverted the omega in the Chi-Rho monogram. Similar mistakes are seen in the reversed text curses. The dedicator is female and could be Celtic although this is not certain. As stated above, the formula is an alternative to *VSLM* and resembles that found on a plaque from Lydney.

All the name-bearing items that have been professionally inscribed are likely to have come from the wealthier sector of any community; P. Oranius Facilis' gift of a statuette to Jupiter at Colchester was made in accordance with his will: *P Oranius Facilis Iovi sigillum ex test(mento)* (2432.8). In terms of literacy these people had all the advantages. They could probably afford to educate themselves and their children and could afford to pay scribes and professional craftsmen to do the work for them.

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<sup>57</sup> J.N. Adams, The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets - an interim report, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, p.86-134.

Graffiti naming the dedicators could perhaps be the work of the dedicators themselves. If so, Aelius Modestus, recorded on a pewter cup from Cornwall, writes in a confident hand using capitals with some cursive forms; he puts *deo Marti* in full in the dative, but after his own name (2417.1). The silver *trulla* from Hastings is beautifully crafted with foliage and a head of *Silenus* on the handle. It might be a Gaulish import but *Romulus Camulogeni fil(ius)* could be of Celtic descent in Gaul or in Britain. He writes in stylish, even, rustic capitals, freehand around the base and, when the first circuit is complete, continues writing toward the centre of the base at one side; there is apparently no attempt at professional *ordinatio* here (2414.37). Aelius Romulus might well have scratched the graffiti to the *Genius* of his century, on a storage jar at Caerleon; as a centurion he would be very familiar with the standard format for such military dedications.

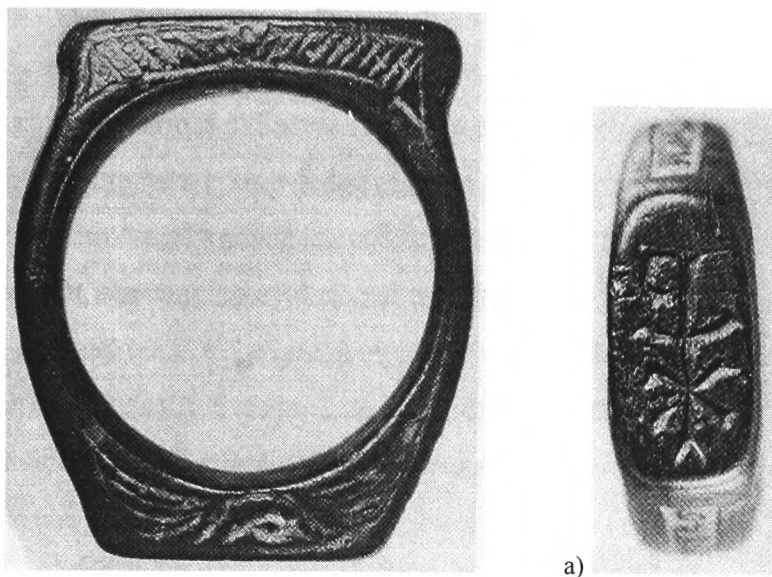
#### Inscriptions which do not name the dedicator.

Many of the religious inscriptions under *Instrumentum Domesticum* tend to be very brief, yielding very meagre information about their purpose and even less about the instigator or literacy. Production methods vary; most involve craftsmen such as engravers of jewellery, spoons and metal vessels, some of whom worked in niello or enamel. The punched dots technique was sometimes worked from behind in which case a draft would probably be used even for a short text. It is not impossible for an illiterate craftsman to produce a short accurate text with the help of a draft or a handbook. A skilled professional, on the other hand, would probably offer literacy as part of his service. Stamps and moulds of course require literacy in their production but thereafter anyone can use them.

Other techniques include openwork in metal or bone, painting on wallplaster or on pottery, cutting relief and assembling mosaics. All of these require very specialised skills. The jet ring from Chesters is a particularly fine example, probably of British craftsmanship (Fig. 10). Jet artefacts from different historical periods are relatively frequent finds from north east Britain. Since jet is a local material, British manufacture seems likely. The ring has two bezels, one bearing a very unusual



**Fig. 10: An inscribed jet ring from Chesters**



RIB 2422.80.

a) Chi-Rho b) *quis sepa(rabit) - (retro)* c) *meum et tuum* d) *durante vita*

retrograde form of the Chi-Rho and the other bearing the start of a fairly lengthy inscription, which continues on the hoop: *quis sepa(rabit) meum et tuum durante vita* (2422.80). The message is clearly very personal and could be interpreted as an expression of Christian faith or of a vow of love between a Christian couple. The words are cut in relief in sunken panels. There is no way of knowing who made or wore this ring but various skills are apparent: craftsmanship, possibly of a local man working in local material, knowledge of Latin including correct terminations and grammatical forms, and knowledge of Christianity and Christian sentiments. The Latin is correct, showing no evidence of the influence of spoken forms on spelling. Christian material tends to be late in terms of Romano-British finds and, if an inscription of this quality was produced in northern Britain, perhaps it adds to the growing evidence that Latin continued to be used throughout and beyond the Roman period. Its use was probably reinforced by continued links with the Continent through Christian connections but it need not have been reintroduced.

The graffiti tend to occur on less expensive items although not exclusively so: a silver *trulla* from Bath is so inscribed (2414.33). The fact that most of them are on cheaper items and are perhaps not written by professionals seems to suggest that whoever produced them might have had something in common with the inscribers of small personal altars. Because graffiti do not need the skills of a professional craftsman they are generally taken to be personal written records. Apart from the Chi-Rho which, on its own does not suggest any form of literacy, the religious graffiti indicate at least very basic literacy and in some cases knowledge of appropriate formulae; there are correctly terminated datives and conventional abbreviations. Some of the graffiti have spelling irregularities, but these are by no means confined to the graffiti; some are genuine errors and bungled attempts.

The charms include several which are probably imported from eastern provinces and say more about the appeal of magical texts than about literacy in Roman Britain. Those that were produced here are rather basic in form: phallic symbols carved on stone (RIB I 631, 872, 983, 2106) and the curious group of bronze rings from various

locations in central and southern England, bearing permutations of *OASCNXI* which are so far undeciphered.

**Fig.11: An inscribed votive tablet from Powys.**



RIB 2453.3.

Spelling irregularities (Table R15).

There are 176 inscriptions in this group but most of them tend to be brief. Consequently the sum total of written Latin is quite small and the list of spelling irregularities is short; the curses, being relatively lengthy texts, produced more irregularities. The list of irregularities can be compared to those found in other inscriptions (Tables R12-15). The Frampton villa mosaic of fourth century date,

combining Christian and pagan elements, contains four spellings, which are representative of the spoken Latin of the day (2448.8).

The slips could be due to copying errors, vagueness about cases and formulae, or carelessness. *Apollini Anextiomaro* could be a copying error for *Apollini Anextlomaro* which is known from Gallic inscriptions (2415.55). *UTERE EELIX* for *UTERE FELIX* on the lead casket from Nottinghamshire is a craftsman's error but it could imply that he did not really understand what he was moulding (2416.8). If, as seems likely, *MATRI* was scratched in error for *MARTI* on the crudely fashioned votive from Powys, it resembles the sort of spelling mistake that is made by inexperienced writers (Fig.11).

The Thetford spoons contain a few signs of linguistic confusion. Apart from the inconsistency of cases in *deo Fauni Saternio* (2420.22), there are three instances of *deii* for *dei* (2420.17, 20, 21) and uncertainty about the spelling of a name: *Medugeni* / *Medigeni* (2420.18, 19). Whoever made the clay altar to *Fortuna* at Carlisle seems to have become confused when trying to write an unabbreviated rendering of the *VSLM* formula.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Britannia*, xxv 1993, 316 no.6.

**Table R12: Religious dedications - Study group 1 - Type E.**

1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).

143	lebertus	for	libertus
310	Agustinus	for	Augustinus
324	prefectus	for	praefectus
326	Maeicia (h)	for	Maecia
659	adpertiniat	for	adpertineat
730	dae	for	deae
810	Delmatarum	for	Dalmatarum
829	prefectus	for	praefectus
897	prefectus	for	praefectus
897	pretore	for	praetore
913	Cesaris	for	Caesaris
918	prefecti	for	praefecti
919	divine	for	divinae
926	Vagdavarcustus	for	Vagdavercustus
966	Nervane	for	Nervanae
988	Felicessemus	for	Felicissimus
988	Cocideo	for	Cocidio
989	pretorio	for	praetorio
1041	prefectus	for	praefectus
1056	sancte	for	sanctae
1120	Saena (h)	for	Sena
1212	Dolocheno	for	Dolicheno
1266	Minerve	for	Minervae
1303	dio	for	deo
1320	Ociano	for	Oceano
1329	prefectura	for	praefectura
1337	Astorum	for	Asturum
1523	de	for	deae
1545	Vltina	for	Voltina
1546	prefectus	for	praefectus
1576	Baudihillie	for	Baudihilliae?
1586	Superstis	for	Superstes
1874	preest	for	praeest
1875	preest	for	praeest
	Fastus		Faustus
1980	prefectus	for	praefectus
2148	edem	for	aedem
2148	pie		piae
2195	prefectus	for	praefectus

2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).

600	sanctssimo?	for	sanctissimo
796	vexlacione	for	vexillatione
1127	discipulinae (earlier)	for	disciplinae (acceptable alternatives)
1225	Mogonito (h)	for	Mogonti
1396	Decmus	for	Decimus
1696	superors	for	superioris
1978	discipulinae	for	disciplinae (acceptable alternatives)
2177	Hercli	for	Herculi

3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

N/A

4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections (h).

(Table R12 cont.)

66	Pantera	for	Panthera
143	Eutuches	for	Eutyclus
147	Dionisias	for	Dionysius
726	Suriae	for	Syriae
897	Tusdro	for	Thysdro
1022	Dolycheno (h)	for	Dolicheno
1395	Mytrae	for	Mithrae
1527	Nimphae	for	Nymphae
1546	Mitrae	for	Mithrae
1599	Mitrae	for	Mithrae
1600	Mitrae	for	Mithrae
1725	Doliceno	for	Dolicheno
1792	Suriae	for	Syriae
2160	Nimphis	for	Nymphis
2091	arcitectus	for	architectus
2096	arcitectus	for	architectus

5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

147	imaginniferi (h)	for	imaginiferi
563	Apolini	for	Apollini
944	Bassilius (h)	for	Basilius
1041	Sebosianae (h)	for	Sebosianae
1131	Apolinaris	for	Apollinaris
1143	Britannicae (h)	for	Britannicae
1523	retulit	for	rettulit
2117	vexilatio	for	vexillatio

6. Loss of final consonant.

326	cu	for	cum
726	ara	for	aram
882	e	for	et?*
913	donavi	for	donavit
1016	ara	for	aram

\*possibly ligatured ETP

7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

429	conlabsum	for	collapsum
590	Seproni	for	Semproni
653	Audes	for	Audens
659	attigam	for	attigam
882	Ponpeiano	for	Pompeiano
919	tramarinis	for	transmarinis
1224	tramarinis	for	transmarinis
1529	libes	for	libens
1791	contigit	for	contingit?
1905	Banniesses	for	Bannienses
1982	Opsequente	for	Obsequente
2042	istante	for	istante

8. Various renderings of x . (Table R12 cont.)

1724	vexsillatio	for	vexillatio
1523	Frxiavonum	for	Frisiavonum
JRS lii 1962 192, no.8:			
	Proxsimus	for	Proximus

9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).

1524	Cubernorum	for	Cugernorum
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10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.

601	eiius	for	eius
780	souis	for	suis
1538	huus	for	huius

11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.

796	dibus	for	dis
926	dibus	for	dis
2109	dibus	for	dis

12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.

772	positit	for	posuit
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13. Confusion over proper names.

324	Sallienius	for	Sallienus
792	Svvbrius	for	Subrius
1225	Mogonito	for	Mogonti
1269	Moguntibus	for	Mogontibus?
1523	Convetinae	for	Coventinae
1524	Conventine	for	Coventinae
1534	Covventinae	for	Coventinae
1535	Covventinae	for	Coventinae
1538	Svvevae?	for	Suevae?
2134	Iminthonius	for	Minthonius

14. Grammatical confusion.

897 - confusion of datives and ablatives (*coniugi... totaque domu divina*) where genitives are required following *pro salute*.

1142 - genitive used for dative: *praesentissimi numinis dei v(otum) s(olvit)*.

1265 - ablative (*imperante*) occurs instead of genitive, again following *pro salute*.

1529 - *libes animo* for *libente animo*.

(Table R12 cont.)

1589 - no subject for the verb *posuit*. The name of the dedicator seems to have been included in the *pro salute* formula in confusion. Perhaps the draft should have read *pro salute sua et suorum Desidienius Aemilianus praefectus posuit* instead of what appears in the inscription -*pro salute Desidieni Aemiliani praefecti et sua suorum posuit*.

15. Errors by craftsmen and scribes.

452 - *Tanare* for *Tarano* by metathesis.

583 - *domo* corrected to *domu*?

890 - inverted A cut for V

895 - inverted A cut for V

913 - *Auggustorum* cut for *Augustorum*, because of frequent abbreviation to *Augg*.

1262 - small letter G cut inside the final G of AVG, creating a plural where a singular was intended.

1334 - *Matri<ri>bus* for *Matribus*.

2134 - *Iminthionius* carved for *Minthionius* due to unfamiliarity with the name. The final *i* and *s* have been inserted above as a correction.

2146 - an inverted letter A seems to have been cut for a V.

The final formula, PSPLL, is puzzling and the PS could be a mason's error for PF, *Piae Fidelis*, the legion's title. Illiterate or inexperienced craftsman?



### **Table R13: Religious dedications - Study group 2 - Type E.**

#### **1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).**

67	Saegon. (h)	for	Segon
138	Binignus	for	Benignus
149	cives	for	civis
191	victorie	for	victoriae
281	Arnomecte	for	Arnemectae?
318	Fortune	for	Fortunae
623	Breganti	for	Briganti
645	dae	for	deae
1449	dae	for	deae
1528	dae	for	deae
1537	dae	for	deae
1903	dae	for	deae
712	aureficinam	for	aurificinam
845	Hermionae (h)	for	Hermione
902	Ate	for	Ateus? Attius?
923	letus	for	laetus
1052	Viboleius	for	Vibuleius
1052	Esculapius		Aesculapius
1086	Victorie	for	Victoriae
1141	Miti(us)	for	Metius?
1200	Menerva	for	Minerva
1525	Die Coventine	for	deae Coventinae
1526	Coventine	for	Coventinae
1531	Agusta	for	Augusta
1532	Covetine	for	Coventinae
1533	Covontine	for	Coventinae
1543	Die Minerve	for	Deae Minervae
1593	Bede / Fimmilene	for	Bedae / Fimmilene?
1780	dee	for	deae
1799	Meni Dada	for	Maenius Dada?
1897	die	for	deae
2102	collignio	for	collegio
2103	colligni	for	collegii

#### **2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).**

193	Imilco (h)	for	Imilco
987	Auntinus	for	Aventinus
1053	Congennccus	for	Congennicus

#### **3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).**

1	bagis bitam	for	vagis vitam (imported)
99	fegit	for	fecit
1897	Latis	for	Ratis?
2043	Lati	for	Rati?

4. Greek letters : various renderings and related hypercorrectons (h). (Table R13 cont.)

628	Senopianus	for	Xenophianus
1022	Dolycheno (h)	for	Dolicheno
1526	Nimfae	for	Nymphae
	Nympis	for	Nymphis (Britannia XVI, 1983, 337 no.11)

5. Geminated consonants : confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

141	colegio	for	collegio
281	Motio	for	Mottio?
1053	Congennccus	for	Congennicus
1077	Auffidius	for	Aufidius
1539	Tranquilla	for	Tranquilla
1805	Deccius	for	Decius

6. Loss of final consonant.

1017	feci	for	fecit
1054	ob reditu	for	ob reditum
1126	ara	for	aram
1126	posui		posuit
1209	sacru	for	sacrum
1531	votu	for	votum
1775	votu	for	votum
1776	votu	for	votum
1532	slvi	for	solvit?
1694	ara	for	aram

7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

70	conlegio	for	collegio
151	scultor	for	sculptor
191	campesium	for	campestrium
924	sacto	for	sancto
1455	sacto	for	sancto
2044	sacto	for	sancto
1264	Herculenti (h)	for	Herculi
1335	sangto	for	sancto
1318	tramarinis	for	transmarinis
1532	libes	for	libens
1700	Vindolandesses	for	Vindolandenses

8. Various renderings of x.

N/A

9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).

(Table R13 cont.)

105	Suleis	for	Sulevis
187	Iuentius	for	Iuuentius
309	collegni (h)	for	collegi
1017	Riocalati	for	Rigocalati
2102	collignio (h)	for	collegio
2103	colligni (h)	for	collegi

10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.

N/A

11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.

140	Nemetona	for	Nemetonae
141	seris (1st decl.)	for	serie (5th decl.)
318	bono Evento	for	Bono Eventu
455	matre	for	matri
1456	dibus	for	dis
1457	dibus	for	dis
1605	dibus	for	dis
1729	dibus	for	dis
1730	dibus	for	dis
1803	dibus	for	dis
1804	dibus	for	dis
1805	dibus	for	dis

12. Changes and errors in the forms of verbs.

274	donarunt	for	donaverunt
307	promissit	for	promisit
923	posuivit	for	posuit
1529	possivit	for	posuit
1592	possivit	for	posuit
1606	posuivit	for	posuit
1729	possit	for	posuit

13. Confusion over proper names.

143	Eutuches	for	Eutyclus
307	Deo Nudente	for	Nodenti
759	<b>Deo Belatucadro*</b>		
776	<b>Deo Belatucadro</b>		
773	Deo Balatucairo	for	Belatucadro?
774	Deo Blatucairo		
1521	Deo Belleticauro		
1775	Deo Baliticauro		
1776	Do Blatucadro		
1784	Do Marti Belatucairo		
2039	Deo Belatocadro		
1976	Deo Belatugagro		
2056	Deo Belatocairo		
921	Deo Mogti	for	Mogonti?
922	Deo Mounti		
971	Deo Mogont. Vitire		
1226	Deo Mouno	for	Moguno

660	<b>Deo Veteri*</b>		
1139	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1548	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1697	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1698	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1793	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1794	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
2068	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		
1456	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
1605	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
1606	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
1699	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
1729	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
173	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		
1803	<b>Dibus Veteribus *</b>		
925	Vicribus	for	Veteribus?
973	Deo Huetiri	for	Deo Hueteri / Veteri??
1046	Deo Vitiri		
1047	Daeabs Vitiribus		
1048	Deabs Vitbus		
1087	Deo Vit		
1103	Deo Vitiri		
1104	Deo Vitiri		
1140	Deo Vitiri		
1141	VIt		
1335	Deo Vetri		
1336	Vitirbus		
1455	Deo Vitiri		
1457	Dibus Vitiribus		
1458	Do Votri		
1549	Huiteribus		
1602	Deo Hueteri		
1603	Deo Huitri		
1604	Deo Veteribus		
1728	Deo Vetiri		
1796	Deo Vetiri		
1799	Deo Vitiri		
1800	Deo Vitiri		
1804	Dibus Viteribus		
1805	Dibus Vitiribus		
2069	Huitiribus		
1522	Deae Conventinae	for	Deae Coventinae
1531	Covetina Augusta		
1533	Deae Covontine		
	Mabomi	for	Maponi? ( <i>JRS</i> , 1968, 207, no.28)
	Deo Mogonti	for	Deo Mogonti ( <i>Britannia</i> IV, 1973, 329, no. 10)
	<b>Dibus Veteribus</b>		no. 11
	<b>Veteribus</b>		no. 12)
	<b>Deo Veteri</b>		( <i>Britannia</i> V, 1974, 461, no.3)
	Deo ANSV Vitiri		( <i>Britannia</i> XVIII 1987, 368, no.7)

\*Bold type indicates commonly accepted form but since these names were transmitted orally there is no definitive written form.

14. Grammatical confusion.

(Table R13 cont.)

- 138 Nominative used instead of dative? - *dea Diana Sacratissima*.  
307 Confusion of dative and ablative - *deo Nudente*.  
456 *Deae matribus* mistake for *deabus matribus*.  
712 *Genio* for *Genius* with *sit* and *utere* governs accusative instead of ablative.  
744 *Ex voto solverunt* for *votum solverunt*.  
1454 Nominative used instead of dative - *dea Rat*.  
1531 Nominative used instead of dative - *Covetina Augusta*.

15. Errors by craftsmen and scribes.

- 140 The **e** was omitted from *Loucetio* and inserted later.  
193 *Opere maronio* perhaps an error for *marmoreo*.  
217 *Doe* for *deo*.  
329 *Pousuit* for *posuit*?  
652 *Cresces* seems to have been corrected to *Crescens*. VSML written for VSLM  
742 Last three lines show confused word order - the ends of ll. 6 & 7 seem to be a continuation of l. 8  
774 Originally *Blatucaro* but an **i** was added above to read *Blatucairo*.  
987 *Do Cocdo* rewritten as *deo*.  
1047 *Daeabs* for *deabus*.  
1123 *Deo Arecurio* for *deo Mercurio*? Misreading of a cursive draft or name of an unknown god?  
1321 *Do* for *deo*.  
1336 *vitirbus* for *vitiribus* / *veteribus*.  
1604 *Deo Veteribus* - mistake for *dibus veteribus*?  
1776 *Do* for *deo*.  
1784 *Do* for *deo*.  
1806 *Armilum* - perhaps for *armillam*, bracelet.  
*Britannia* xviii, 1987, 368, no. 7 - *Deo ANSV Vitiri*, perhaps a bungled attempt at *Deo Sancto Vitiri*?

### **Table R14: British curse tablets - spelling irregularities.**

Spelling irregularities are listed as for religious dedications. Curses in TSMB 2 are referenced by number only; others are by letter (see Table R3 ) or by RIB number.

#### **1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).**

4	Exsupereus	for	Exsuperius
4	Agustalis	for	Augustalis
8	Senicianus	for	Senecianus
10	sanctissime	for	sanctissimae
10	caracellam	for	caracallam
30	Brigomalle	for	Brigomallae
30	Patarnianus	for	Paternianus
30	Matarnus	for	Maternus
32	Minerve	for	Minervae
32	palleum (h)	for	pallium
32	frudem	for	fraudem
32	paxsam	for	pexam
51	Senicio	for	Senecio
54	conquaeror (h)	for	conqueror
62	paxsam	for	pexam
65	Minerve	for	Minervae
65	redemat (h)	for	redimat
96	Valaunecus	for	Velaunecus?
97	anilum	for	anulum
97	liminibus	for	luminibus
98	Senicianus	for	Senecianus
98	Mantutene	for	Mantutenae?
99	redemat (h)	for	redimat
102	numen	for	nomen
D	dio	for	deo
D	Etterne	for	Aeternae
E	eraptum	for	ereptum
J	nessi	for	nisi
J	sanetate	for	sanitatem
J	nesi	for	nisi
J	que	for	quae
L	vendicas	for	vindicas
l	numene	for	nomine
L	mi	for	me
L	Silvicole	for	Silvicolae
M	nessi	for	nisi
O	donator	for	donatur
Q	mimbra	for	membra
R	pareat	for	pariat
R	praecibus (h)	for	precibus
S	Titocune	for	Titocunae
T	ancela	for	ancilla
RIB 7	illeus	for	illius
RIB 7	sicreta	for	secreta
RIB 221	signeficator	for	significatur
RIB 306	anilum	for	anulum
RIB 306	Seniciani	for	Seneciani
RIB 306	demediam	for	demidiam
RIB 323	palleum	for	pallium

2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).

(Table R14 cont.)

99	hosipitio (h)	for	hospitio
RIB 323	domna	for	domina

3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

S	vissacio	for	bissacio??
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4. Greek letters : various renderings and related hypercorrections.

8	carta	for	charta
97	Euticius	for	Eutychius

5. Geminated consonants : confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h)

4	Catus	for	Cattus?
5	manicilia	for	manicillia
9	Catinius	for	Cattinius
17	Lucianus	for	Luccianus
30	Catonius	for	Cattonius
32	nissi	for	nisi
32	retulerint	for	rettulerint
37	lasetur	for	lassetur?
47	exxigi (h)	for	exigi
51	Belator	for	Bellator
55	recentisimi	for	recentissimi
55	Dacus	for	Daccus?
65	nessi	for	nisi
98	Aessicunia (h)	for	Aesicunia
D	Etterne (h)	for	Aetern(a)e
E, R	nissi	for	nisi
I, M	nessi	for	nisi
T	ancela	for	ancilla
RIB 6	Tyranus	for	Tyrannus
RIB 7	possitt (h)	for	possit
RIB 306	nollis(h)	for	nolis

6. Loss of final consonant.

5	sua	for	suas
5	perdidi	for	perdidit
5	involavi	for	involavit
5	destina	for	destinat
6	anima	for	animam
31	suaa	for	suam
32	paxsa	for	paxsam
38	pertuleri	for	pertulerit
39	anima	for	animam
94	deae Suli	for	deae Sulis
97	habe	for	habeat
H	cufia	for	cufiam
H	e	for	et

J	sanetate	for	sanitatem
J	salute	for	salutem
L	die novem	for	dies novem
L	u	for	ut
S	mola	for	molam
RIB 7	vita	for	vitam
RIB 7	Tretia	for	Tretiam
RIB 7	Maria	for	Mariam
RIB 7	no	for	non
RIB 306	perfera	for	perferat

7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

4	como(do)	for	quomodo
31	cus	for	quis
32	reliquas	for	relinquas
52	quandiu	for	quamdiu
52	tandiu	for	tamdiu
D	ividia	for	invidia
H	qod	for	quod
M	coscientiam	for	conscientiam
O	prolocuntur	for	proloquuntur
T	paretaior	for	parentatur?
RIB 6	deficus	for	defictus
RIB 7	metem	for	mentem

8. Various renderings of x.

9	Exsactor	for	Exactor
9	ussor	for	uxor
13	Espeditus	for	Expeditus
15	destrale	for	dextrale
30	ussor	for	uxor
32	paxsa	for	pexa
34	exsigatur	for	exigatur
37	Masentius	for	Maxentius
37	lasetur	for	laxetur?
62	paxsam	for	pexam
Q	laset	for	laxet

9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).

9, 36, 39,	serus	for	servus
49, 62,	serus	for	servus
65, 66,	serus	for	servus
87, 97,	serus	for	servus
102, T	serus	for	servus
53	Riovassum	for	Rigovassum
H	eveit	for	evehit
H	capolare	for	capitolare
RIB 306	devo (h)	for	deo



10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.

(Table R14 cont.)

31	suaa	for	suam (hiatus-filling /glide)
44	sanguem	for	sanguinem?
47, A	sangune	for	sanguine
65	sangun	for	sanguine
S	a devo	for	a deo

11. Changes and errors (e) in the form of nouns / adjectives.

4	dua (h)	for	duo
4	illas (f.pl.) (e?)	for	illa (n.pl.)
60	pannum	for	pannam - pan?
65	de	for	dea
66	pannum ferri	for	pannam ferri?
94	ad fontem deae Suli	for	ad fontem deae Sulis
94	(e)		
99	vitae suae (e)	for	vita sua (ablative)
A, B,H,M	mascel	for	masculus
A	pecunie (e)	for	pecunia (ablative)
D	Mercurius	for	Mercurio (dative)
D	aliam negotium	for	alium negotium
D	me	for	mei (gen.)
J	diebus (e)	for	dibus?
L	de iste numine (e?)	for	ab isto nomine
L	Metunus	for	Neptune (vocative)
RIB 307	deo Nudente	for	deo Nodenti (dat.)

12. Changes and errors (e) in the form of verbs.

4	liquat	for	liqueat
41	adsellare (VL active)	for	adsellari (CL deponent)
62	perdedi	for	perdidi
A	exesuerit (e?)	for	exedit - consumed? confused with <i>esurio</i> - to hunger?
B	pariat (e?)	for	pariet ? (present subjunctive of <i>pariare</i> , to settle - rare)
B	servat	for	serviat
U	furavit (VL active)	for	furatus est (CL deponent)
RIB 306	perdedit	for	perdidit

13. Confusion over proper names. (mostly listed under the other headings)

L	Metunus	for	Neptunus?
	Xsuperanti	for	Exsuperatius

14. Grammatical confusion.

99 - *qui* : error for *quod* causing confusion in the clause *qui Deomiorix ...perdiderit*.

E - *rapuerunt* : indicative for subjunctive in subordinate clause in indirect speech.

F - *convenit* : indicative for subjunctive in subordinate clause in indirect speech.

I - syntax breaks down after *quoniam* (l.5) because of confusion of causal and relative clause.

J - *quo* : error for *qua* (f. abl.); syntax seems confused but word division and reading are uncertain.

O - confusion of formulae : *duas partes AFIMA sua tertia ad sanitatem* makes no sense.

Did the scribe know what he was writing?

- *dum* with present indicative in sense of "unless".

P - faulty syntax: apparently no main verb with *Varianus et Peregrina et Sabinianus* as subject but corrosion in l.6 may have obscured the sense.

Q - syntax faulty l.6-9 : *non ante eum laset quam mimbra (?ra)pi manu diem mortis concrutiat ....*

RIB 306 - *nollis permittas for noli permittere.*

### 15. Errors by scribes.

	(c) - copying error		(hap) - haplography
	(crt) - copying a reversed text		(ditt) - dittography
2	Brpituenda (ditt?)	for	Brituenda
5	perdnt (c)	for	perdat (N copied in error for AT)
6	starugulm	for	stragulum
8	Aniola (c) (side 2)	for	Anniola
9	petio	for	petitio
9	rove	for	rogo? oro?
9	tpiasu?		bungled personal names?
9	gineninsu?		
10	Bruceri (c?)	for	Bruceti?
10	letum	for	leto
16	donatuur (ditt)	for	donatur
32	<s>se retegens (ditt)	for	se retegens
44	pure	for	puer
44	ipsmu	for	ipsum
44	aenmu (crt)	for	aenum
61	(crt)		involaverit corrected (mirror-image cursive)
61			
62	pure (crt)	for	puer (errors corrected in 5 lines)
94	<qui iuraverunt>		(ditt)
96	Compe<pe>dita (ditt)	for	Compedita (+overwriting)
95	Severia<ia>nus (ditt)	for	Severianus
95	Seni<i>la (ditt)	for	Senila
97	liminibus	for	luminibus
97	sanuine	for	sanguine (corrected but g inserted over wrong letter)
97			
98	chistianus	for	christianus
98	sx (crt)	for	sex
98	gens	for	gentilis (or an alternative form?)
99	hosipitio (c?)	for	hospitio
103	facit	for	faciat
103	aniam	for	animam
103	pedre (crt)	for	perdere
A	mulrer	for	mulier
A	exesu (l.4)erit(l.3)	for	exesuerit ( word completed above)
C	Tmotneo	for	Timotheo

E	nissi <nissi>		(ditt) - corrected
H	memina	for	femina
H	pulla (c)	for	puella
H	ocrisa (c)	for	ocrias
H	requirat<at> (ditt)	for	requirat
H	vulleris (c)	for	volueris
H	Neutu (c)	for	Neptu(nus) (corrected)
H	armlla (c)	for	armilla
H	capeolare (c)	for	captolare
J	die l.5 (crt)	for	dei
M	pedit	for	perdidit
M	maiet (c)	for	meiat
M	nessa	for	nessi (nisi)
M	si vir si mascel	for	si vir si femina (confusion of formula)
O	frenem	for	frenum (bridle)
T	li<li>berta (ditt)	for	liberta
T	mlier (c)	for	mulier
RIB 6	deficus	for	defictus
RIB 7	Tretia	for	Tertia?
RIB 7	intermxi<xi>ta	for	intermixta
RIB7	sit	for	sint
RIB 306	petmittas (c)	for	permittas

16. Some Vulgar Latin usage, colloquialisms and new forms. (Tomlin, TSMB 2; Adams, *Brit.* xxiii)

- 8 - *exactura* : a new formation as an abstract noun for *exactio*  
41- *adsellare* : VL active for CL deponent.  
- *manducare* (eat) : VL (see also I - Pagans Hill)  
44 - *levare* : VL and colloquial in the sense of "to lift, steal".  
- *latro* : used for "sneak thief" rather than in the classical sense of "a brazen robber"  
54 - *argentiolos* : colloquial use of diminutive.  
*quantocius*  
44, 57, 65, K, Q, R - *baro* (man) seems to have been introduced to Britain by German recruits.  
94, 103 - use of *facere* + infinitive  
97 - *in templum* for *in templo*  
- *medius* in sense of "accomplice / present"  
- *habet* perhaps in a colloquial sense "he's had it / he's done for"  
98 - *bursa* (purse) : early evidence of use with this meaning.  
- *gens* (pagan) : (Adams, *Brit.* XXIII 10) specialised term, unusual use of f. sing. as a generic term  
- *perexig...* : new compound of *exigo* (cf *excomesis* Tab. Sulis 97).  
- *species* (goods) : new usage of a commercial term.  
99, I, R, S - use of *hospitium* (house) seems to be a feature of British Latin; VL tends to use *casa*.  
100 - *dimittas* + accusative : new usage in sense of *permittere ut* + subjunctive  
B - *per intus* ; used as noun (innards).  
I - *antegod* : VL for *antequam*.  
R - *de hospitio meo* : VL use of diminutive.  
A, B, H, M, R - *mascel* : colloquialism for *masculus*?

**Table R15:**  
**Miscellaneous religious dedications ( *Instrumentum Domesticum* ) : Type E**

1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections:

2417.7	Minerve	for	Minervae
2448.8	cerulea	for	caerulea
2422.33	dae	for	deae
631	mintla	for	mentula

2. Elision of medial vowel:

2417.28	emita (h)	for	emta (empta)
2448.8	regmen	for	regimen
631	mintla	for	mentula

4. Greek letters - various renderings:

2448.8	delfinis	for	delphinis
2503.122	..olicen..	for	Dolicheno

5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

2422.21'	Sucelus	for	Sucellus
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7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

2417.28	emita	for	empta
2431.1	complevit	for	complevit
2448.8	scultum	for	sculptum
2502	Mercurio	for	Mercurio

11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives:

2420.17, 20, 21	deii	for	dei
2420.22	Fauni (gen)	for	Fauno (dat)

12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs:

2448.3	possuit	for	posuit
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13. Confusion over personal names:

2420.18	Medugeni	for	Medigeni
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14. Grammatical confusion:

(Table R15 cont.)

2420.17, 20, 21.	deii	for	dei
2420	Fauni (gen)	for	Fauno (dat)

15. Errors by craftsman and scribes:

- 2415.55 *Anextiomaro*, copying error for *Anextlomaro* (known from Gaul)?  
2416.8 *UTERE EELIX*, a slip for *UTERE FELIX*?  
2417.7 letter A of *DEAE* has been recut so that it resembles an M.  
2453.3 the word *MATRI* seems to have been inscribed in error for *MARTI*; the stone votive bears a depiction of the god Mars.  
2422.70 the Chi-Rho is inverted to the inscription.  
2422.14 repetition of the letter i has led to *deo* being left incomplete through lack of space.  
2423.16 Greek delta cut for alpha.  
2431.1 inscription in relief worked from behind - a Q has been reversed and omega inverted.  
2501.307 *vas <s>* repetition of letter s.  
Brit.XXIV 1993 316.6: *LIBIINS MIIRVIT MIIRVXX* - bungled version of *VSLM* formula?

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **WORKING LIFE:**

**Building and Quarrying**

**Manufacturing**

**Trade and Commerce**

**Administration**

**Travel and Transportation**

**Business and Law**

## WORKING LIFE

Inscriptions connected with working life in Roman Britain are found on a wide range of materials and cover a broad spectrum of activity. However, because of factors affecting survival, quite apart from difficulties of interpretation, the archaeological evidence alone cannot be expected to provide an accurate profile of the amount of writing or the nature of literate activity connected with day-to-day working life. Archaeological remains provide only fragmentary samples of some of the literate activity and invite conjecture about possible related literacy.

Evidence has been drawn from inscriptions recorded in RIB I and II, *JRS* 1960-69, *Britannia* 1970-94, the Vindolanda writing tablets, and in various papers on British potters.<sup>1</sup> Only inscriptions that are likely to have been produced in Britain have been considered for the present study. Familiarity with makers' stamps and production marks on imported goods is acknowledged as a stimulus for similar inscriptions in Britain but inscriptions believed to have been imported are generally excluded from this work.

The information has been considered under the following headings:

1. **Building and Quarrying:** building stones (honorific and functional), quarry graffiti.
2. **Manufacturing:** production marks on metal ingots, metal vessels, weapons, tools, instruments, waterpipes, wooden barrels, leather, fired clay objects, tiles, mortaria, coarse pottery, production and use of dies.
3. **Trade and Commerce:** writing tablets, inscriptions on stone, lead sealings oculists' stamps, graffiti on coarse pottery.
4. **Administration:** writing tablets, military diplomas, milestones, miscellaneous inscriptions on stone.
5. **Travel and Transportation:** labels, lead sealings, writing tablets, milestones.
6. **Business and Law:** writing tablets.

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<sup>1</sup> K.F. Hartley et al. (see p. 162 and bibliography)

## **BUILDING AND QUARRYING**

Some 587 inscriptions were considered in connection with building and quarrying activities (Table W 1 - Catalogue p. 54). Of these, 471 could be regarded as mainly functional in that they were made by the builders to record their section of the work, but some also have a commemorative purpose. The remaining 116 honour the emperor or governor under whom the work was carried out and are here treated separately. In both honorific and functional categories most of the evidence is military, although a few civilian inscriptions survive (7 honorific, 13 functional). References to inscriptions in RIB I are given in brackets as numerals only.

### **Honorific building inscriptions**

The names of the emperor, governor or occasionally the consuls allow most of the honorific inscriptions to be dated. This makes them a potentially rewarding group to study in matters of style, since it is sometimes possible to relate types of lettering and decoration to a particular period, and these features can then be compared with undated inscriptions; there is always a need for caution however. Altars and religious dedications have some comparable epigraphic detail but they are not usually closely datable. The honorific building inscriptions can be expected to display high standards of epigraphy; they usually occupied a prominent position and were prestigious pieces of work. Firstly some general points have been noted concerning size, lettering and decoration. These have been recorded by century and the A-E categories for lettering have been applied as for religious dedications on stone (Table W2 below). Secondly some further points of epigraphic detail have been compared century by century and for shorter periods within the second and third centuries (Table W3, p. 123). In both tables the numbers in normal print are the actual numbers of stones and the numbers in bold type are the percentage figures for that group; the totals are at the bottom of each column. The small sample of inscriptions available for the end of the second and third centuries and for the first and fourth centuries means that no general observations can be made.



Lettering styles vary but in both second and third centuries the production quality is good for honorific inscriptions. Apart from one stone which seems to have been inscribed with a pick at a quarry (1957), they seem to be the work of military craftsmen offering the best available skill. The increase in spelling irregularities for the third century could be regarded as natural linguistic development rather than a deterioration in linguistic standards (Table W 11). The only apparent change in decorative taste is the absence of peltas for the third century. Most of the inscriptions with peltas are Antonine in date. Plain borders were probably a standard feature but borders, ansations and peltas do not always survive, especially if the stone is broken or has been cut down for secondary use.

**Table W2: Honorific building inscriptions - size, lettering decoration.**

<u>CENTURY:</u>	<u>FIRST</u>	<u>SECOND</u>	<u>THIRD</u>	<u>FOURTH</u>
SIZE: <30x15 inches	0	3 5%	0	0
>30x15 "	0	11 19%	12 27%	1
>40x20 "	0	10 17%	4 9%	0
>50x25 "	1	11 19%	6 14%	0
Uncertain	0	24 40%	22 50%	0
LETTERING: A/B	1	27 46%	20 45%	0
BC/C	0	32 54%	22 50%	1
D	0	1 2%	0	0
Spelling irreg. E	0	6 10%	14 32%	1
SURVIVING DECORATION:				
Ansations	1	8 14%	6 14%	0
Plain borders	1	32 51%	27 61%	1
Peltas	0	13 22%	0	0
Decorated borders (leaf/cable)	0	10 17%	6 14%	0
Additional relief	0	11 19%	6 14%	0
-----				
m-military	1m	57m	41m	1m
c-civilian		<u>2c</u>	<u>3c</u>	
TOTAL		59	44	

(Lost / Too fragmentary =18)

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The main change from second to third century stems not from interest in presentation but in actual content. Second century stones almost invariably avoid any mention of the actual building work or what caused it to be undertaken; for this reason the

**Table W3 : Honoric building inscriptions - arranging and cutting.**

Century Date	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	2nd 98-138	2nd 138-61	2nd 161+	3rd 198-217	3rd 218-35	3rd 235+
Good use of paired guidelines	1	35 59%	27 61%	0	17 77%	16 50%	2 40%	14 58%	9 64%	4 67%
Even letter size	1	27 46%	23 52%	0	11 50%	14 44%	2 40%	11 45%	8 57%	4 67%
Pronounced serifs	1	28 47%	18 41%	0	11 50%	15 47%	2 40%	8 33%	6 43%	4 67%
Simple ligatures	0	11 19%	13 30%	0	3 14%	8 25%	0	6 25%	4 29%	3 50%
Complex ligatures	0	6 10%	18 41%	1	2 9%	3 9%	1 20%	7 29%	9 64%	2 33%
Imaginative use of large and small letters	0	10 17%	18 41%	0	5 23%	5 16%	0	9 37%	5 36%	4 67%
Stops	1	39 66%	33 75%	1	14 64%	24 75%	1 20%	16 67%	12 86%	5 83%
Leaf stops	0	16 27%	10 23%	0	6 27%	7 22%	3 60%	3 12%	4 28%	3 50%
Distinctive/ unusual letter forms	0	10 17%	12 27%	0	1 5%	9 28%	0	3 12%	5 36%	4 67%
Less precise use of guidelines	0	21 36%	14 32%	1	4 18%	15 47%	2 40%	8 33%	5 36%	1 17%
Uneven letter size	0	26 44%	17 39%	1	8 36%	17 53%	1 20%	10 42%	6 43%	1 17%
Weak/no serifs	0	27 46%	23 52%	1	9 41%	15 47%	3 60%	13 54%	8 57%	2 33%
Crowding at ends of lines/ text	0	11 19%	11 25%	1	1 5%	10 31%	0	6 25%	4 29%	1 17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>

restoration *[PORTAM].....[FECIT]* is no longer accepted for RIB 665.<sup>2</sup> The exceptions are: the slabs from the Antonine Wall, which record distance, the reference to building the *principia* at Rough Castle fort (2145) and perhaps the rather uncertain restoration of RIB 1051. In the third century, however, in addition to lengthy imperial titles, at least half the stones give fairly detailed information about the building programme. The language is to some extent formulaic: fallen down through age, *vetustate conlabsum*; built / restored from ground level, *a solo aedificavit / restituit*; but an effort is made to give some precise details: brought in water for the use of the First Gallic Cohort, *aquam usibus militibus Coh I Gallorum induxit* (1060); built this rampart of quarried stone with an annexe wall, *vallum cum bracchio caementicium fecit* (722).

Table W3 is concerned mainly with the skills of the *ordinator* and the sculptor. In the most carefully organised texts paired guidelines are used to keep the lines evenly spaced, regular letter size is maintained and crowding is avoided at the ends of lines and at the ends of texts. Simple ligatures save space by combining two letters; complex ligatures involve the reversal of one of the letters or perhaps a combination of three or more letters. The imaginative arrangement of large and small capitals is here seen as an artistic device or a rather elegant form of space saving; it does not refer to occasions when one or two small letters are squeezed in at the end of a line because space is short. Another possibility is that use of a large letter could be a “paragraphing” convention derived from written documents.

Less rigidly organised texts generally show less precision in the use of guidelines resulting in uneven spacing and sometimes irregular letter size. Such texts can reveal a different approach at the planning stage. The letters would be marked out freehand using a brush or charcoal rather than by more precise methods. The result depends very much on the skill of the craftsman and he might have to compensate for any misjudgment by reducing the size of the letters or straying outside his prepared panel (179). Occasionally the flowing forms of brush strokes can be detected in the letter forms or the superscript bars (1091, 1092, 1932, 2145).

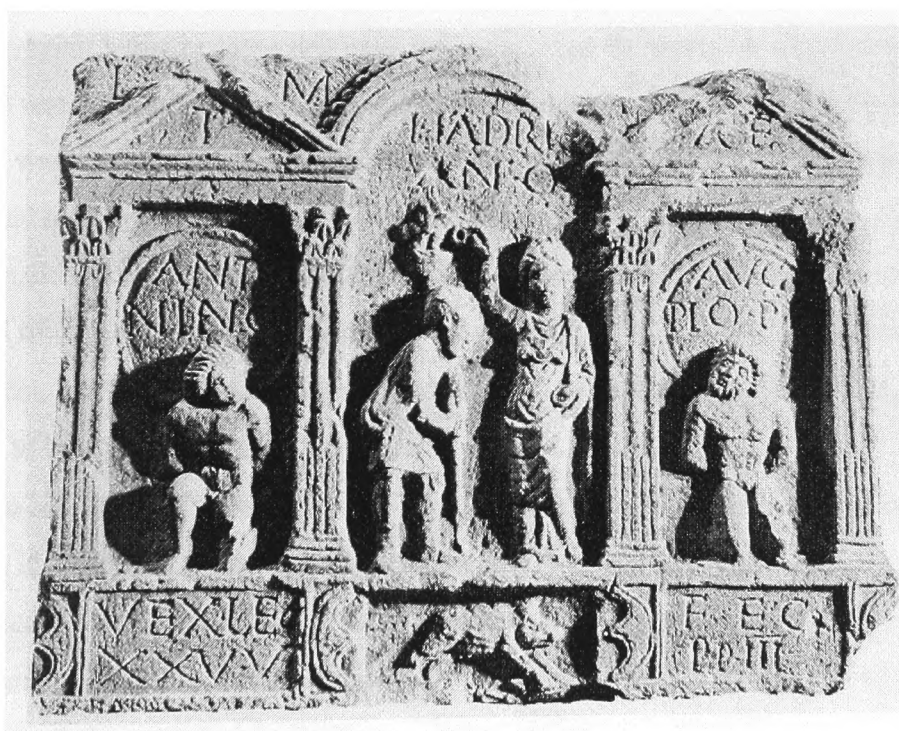
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<sup>2</sup> RIB I, 1995 edition, *addenda* and *corrigenda*, R.S.O. Tomlin, p.771.

**Fig.12: Two distance slabs from the the Antonine Wall.**



RIB 2198 (Photograph CSIR)



*Britannia* i 1970, 309 no. 19.

Distinctive letter forms include the V-shaped crossbar on the A, which is peculiar to some of the inscriptions from the Antonine Wall (Fig.12),<sup>3</sup> and the form of G in which the upright became a curl, a feature which seems to have been favoured in the third century, although it is found earlier. The angular letter O is a late form which occurs on only one inscription in this group (334), dated AD 255-60. Pronounced serifs, an unusual form of the letter L and the unusual reversal of non-ligatured R are all features of a very ornate Antonine slab from Corbridge (1148). Distinctive serifs are also favoured by the masons who cut RIB 665 and 1163. Complex and elaborately devised ligatures become more common in the third century, when lengthy texts and imperial titles made greater demands on the skill and ingenuity of the stonecutters.

Spelling irregularities occur in 10% of the second century inscriptions and 32% of the third century inscriptions (Table W 11). The third century figure includes two civilian inscriptions. The spelling irregularities on the second century stones can almost all be explained as errors by the mason or mistakes in copying a draft. *ANIONINO* for *ANTONINO* (1147) and *LOLII* for *LOLLI* suggest misreading of a draft (Fig. 13). When copying letter by letter it is easy to lose sight of the word. A mistake in the imperial name is odd, however, and it is possible that the stonecutter could not read what he was cutting. The omission of the title *PIO* in RIB 2205 is probably a case of accidental oversight when passing on to the abbreviation for *Patri Patriae*. *PEP* for *PER* is another careless mistake but it could have been rectified (2193). The tablet dredged from the Tyne at Newcastle is curious (1322 - Fig.13). It is fine-grained, crisply cut, has traces of scored guidelines and shows no evidence of weathering. It appears to be a very fine piece of epigraphy and yet it contains at least five errors. *Vexilatio* has been cut with only one L, although the spacing would allow two; it looks as if two might have been marked originally but perhaps one was removed before cutting because of second thoughts. *Conrbuti* is an unlikely abbreviation of *contributi* and its masculine ending cannot agree with *vexilatio*; *duobus* is also ungrammatical, masculine for feminine. *PR.P* is a faulty abbreviation for *pro praetore*, which requires *PR.PR* and *EX* has been variously explained as a preposition

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<sup>3</sup> RIB I 2197-9, 2206, 2208, *Britannia* i 1970, 309 no.19.

**Fig. 13: Building inscriptions showing type E features.**



RIB 1322 Dedication slab dredged from the River Tyne. A.D. 155-9.

*Imp(eratori) Antoni/no Aug(usto) Pio p(atr)i/ pat(ri)ae vexil(l)atio/ leg(ioni) II Aug(ustae et leg(ioni)/ VI Vic(trici) et leg(ioni)/ XX V(aleriae) V(ictrici) con(t)r/(i)buti ex Ger(maniis) du/obus sub Iulio Ve(ro) leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) p(raetore).* (See RIB I addenda et corrigenda for alternative readings)



RIB 1147 Dedication slab from Corbridge.

*[Imp(eratori)] T(ito) Aelio Anionino/ [Au]g(usto) Pio II co(n)s(uli)/ [sub] cura Q(uiti) Lolii Urbici/ [leg(ati) A]ug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) leg(io) II Aug(usta) f(ecit).*

or possibly a rather unusual abbreviation of *exercitibus* in the dative.<sup>4</sup> The excellent state of preservation must mean that the inscription was protected from the elements, perhaps because it was displayed in a shrine; it was found with the altars to Neptune and Oceanus (1319, 1320). The unusual number of errors, however, tempt the suspicion that it was not displayed for very long or perhaps not at all.

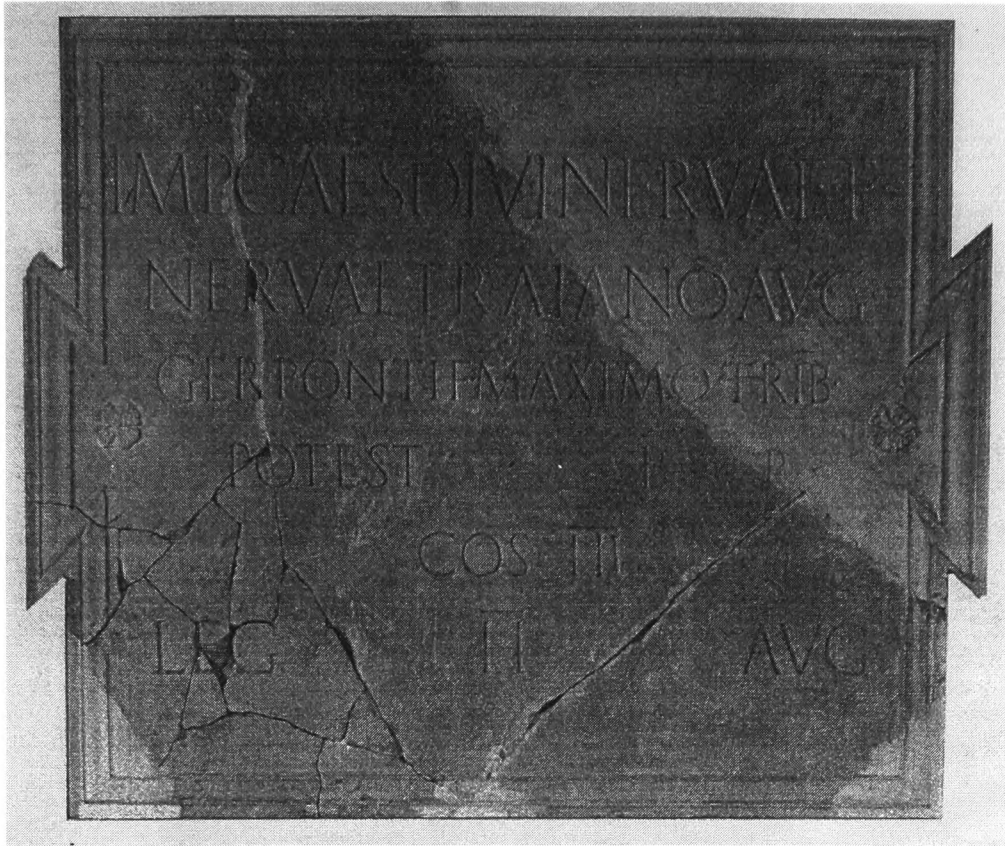
The divergent spellings in the third century inscriptions (Table W 11) could in some instances be genuine errors, for example, *restituerunt* with a singular subject (1738), which looks as if it could have been copied from an earlier inscription in which Elagabalus and Severus were the subject. There is, however, more evidence of spellings which reflect pronunciation, apparent in *baselicam* for *basilicam* (978), *patrie* for *patriae* (1235), *pref* for *praef* (1091) and *Cesari* for *Caesari* (179). There is also confusion over double consonants and uncertainty about proper names, *opressa* for *oppressa*, *Vangonum* for *Vangionum* (1234) and *Sunicorum* for *Sunucorum* (430).

The study of honorific building stones is largely a study of second and third century military epigraphy at its best (Fig. 14). The civilian examples from Caerwent (311), Wroxeter (288), and Brough-on-Humber (707), were perhaps all produced by masons with military training. The inscription recording the rebuilding of the procuratorial head quarters at Combe Downe in Somerset was found only 1½ miles from Roman Bath where civilian masons are known to have worked (179). Unfortunately only a fragment survives of an inscription from the *vicus* at Housesteads (1616), but the rough lettering contrasts with the epigraphy from the fort. A similar contrast can be seen between the altar set up by the *vicani Vindolandesses* at Vindolanda (1700) and military examples. Dating both these civilian inscriptions is a problem but it is interesting to note that in neither case do skilled military masons seem to have been employed

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<sup>4</sup> RIB I *Addenda et Corrigenda*, p.782

**Fig. 14: Two examples of honorific building inscriptions.**



RIB 330 Trajanic commemorative slab from the legionary fortress at Caerleon. (CSIR)



RIB 2139 Distance slab from the the Antonine Wall. (CSIR)



**Fig.15: Functional building inscriptions.**



RIB 1821 Carvoran (After A. Birley 1979)



*JRS* xlvii 1957 226 no.3, Caerleon (CSIR)



RIB 1708 Vindolanda (After Wallis Budge 1907).

## Functional and commemorative building stones

The vast majority of building inscriptions are associated with Hadrianic or Antonine building programmes in the north, or with later repairs to these structures. A smaller number come from forts, fortresses and other installations elsewhere in Britain. Their practical purpose was to record the military unit or civilian body responsible for a particular section of the work; this implies an overall system of planning, checking and quality control calling for further written records which have not survived. References to building parties working on a bath-house and officer's residence are found in the Vindolanda tablets.<sup>5</sup> A building stone from the wall of the fort at Vindolanda, near the west gate, is evidence of the training of new recruits there: *Tirones probati.....*<sup>6</sup> Such record keeping was essential to the efficiency of Roman military administration. The fact that re-used building stones are sometimes found upside-down in Roman structures was perhaps a way of indicating that these were no longer relevant. Building stones only need to record basic legible information and additional artistic features are fairly infrequent. Occasionally only numerals are recorded, believed to be batch, or sequencing numbers.

**Table W4: Functional and commemorative building inscriptions - lettering and decoration.**

	<u>Military</u>	<u>Civilian</u>	<u>Military and Civilian</u>
Lettering: A/B	22 6%	0	22 6%
C	148 40%	6 46%	154 40%
D	146 40%	7 54%	153 40%
E	31 8%	6 46%	37 10%
Numerals only	9 2%	0	9 2%
Ansations	83 23%	2 14%	85 22%
Peltas	7 2%	0	7 2%
Decoration	47 13%	0	47 13%
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TOTAL (surviving)	368	13	381
Lost	89	1	90
TOTAL	457	14	471
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<sup>5</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II*, 155, 156).

<sup>6</sup> *Britannia* iii 1972, 354 no.13.

**TableW5: Decorated functional building stones (nos. as in RIB; square brackets denote lost inscriptions)**

Lettering A/B	Ansations	Peltas	Patterned/cable borders	Wheels/circles/rosettes	Leaf/tendrill decoration	Wreath/circular panel	Legionary emblem/vexillum	Victories/deities	Graffito motif	Location
339, 344, 349	339, 340, 344, 349	337?		340			337, 340			Caerleon
421	421									Tomen-y-Mur
467	467			467						Chester
		592	592							Ribchester
855	852	855	852	852, 855	855		854		871	Maryport
880										Beckfoot (Cumbria)
									1005, 1008	Cumberland quarries
		1019		1019						Cumbria
1093		1093				1093	1093	1093		Lanchester
1154, 1159, 1163, 1164, 1167	1163				1159	1159, 1164, 1167	1154, 1156, 1167	1164		Corbridge
							[1284]	[1284]		High Rochester
		1343	1341	1343			1341, [1342], [1344]			Benwell
	[1358], 1374, 1387			1374, 1387	[1358]		[1358]			Benwell / Rudchester
						1410				Rudchester / Halton Chesters
1428		1428	1428		1428	1428				Halton Chesters
									1491	Chesters

Lettering A/B	Ansations	Peltas	Patterned/ cable borders	Wheels/ circles/ rosettes	Leaf/ tendrill decoration	Wreath/ circular panel	Legionary emblem/ vexillum	Victories/ deities	Graffito motif	Location
						1645	1645?			Housesteads/ Gt Chesters
							[1707], 1708, 1710			Vindolanda
1816, 1820		1816, 1818?	1818, 1820	1818, 1820					1821	Carvoran
1966, 1967, 1968										Birdoswald / Castlesteads
	2001		2001?	2001						Castlesteads
	2032	2035	2032, 2035?	2032						Stanwix / Burgh-by- Sands
	2054		2054?							Drumburgh / Bowness-
						2061				Bowness on Solway
							2077			Hadrian's Wall
	[2138]		[2138]	[2138]			[2138]			Cramond
	2156				2156					Castlecary
2171	2171									Bar Hill
2180		2180	2180							Near Auchendavy
	2184						2184			Auchendavy
2203		2203		2203	2203		2203			Near Duntocher
						2209		2209		the Antonine Wall
									Brit ix, 104	Piercebridge

(W 5 continued)

Table W4 summarises lettering and decoration types for functional and commemorative building stones. The percentages are based on the number of surviving stones. The lettering is usually plain and sometimes crudely cut. Skilful *ordinatio* is not important on simple stones with a brief text. Many inscriptions must have been prepared and cut on the spot when work was completed but some of the decorative features perhaps indicate centralised production. The Antonine distance slabs are clearly the work of skilled masons and appear to have been cut in advance with space left to add the distance. In the case of RIB 2199 this was perhaps painted on later or might have been omitted altogether. A record of decorative features on the more elaborate stones can be seen in Table W5. Some of these are classified as commemorative tablets in RIB and closely resemble honorific inscriptions. The main distinction between RIB 2203 and 2204 from the Antonine Wall is that the latter bears a dedication to the emperor but the former does not; both serve to commemorate an achievement. This could be a function of even simple building stones. Military efficiency in checking and controlling production is one consideration but the unit engaged in building would have the satisfaction of putting its name to the work. In the case of one quarry worker, Apol(1)onius Daminius, it was of course dissatisfaction : *nolui* (1952). Individuals rather than centuries, cohorts or legions are named on about thirty of the building and quarrying inscriptions. Occasionally, in addition to a literate inscription, there is a personal emblem, probably used as an additional form of identification, such as a shrew mouse (1812 - Fig.15), or a bird (1491); there might also be a good luck charm in the form of a phallic symbol.<sup>7</sup>

A certain proportion of centurions' names occur on more than one stone. These are recorded in Table W6 below, with observations on whether they were written by the same hand (see also Figs. 16 and 17). It is impossible to know who actually wrote the inscription marking any particular piece of work but, in theory, the centurion could delegate the task to any literate member of the working party. The skills involved are the same as for producing a very simple religious dedication. The list contains forty four examples of names appearing on two or more stones. The writing appears to have been done by different hands in perhaps nineteen cases, and by the same hand in

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<sup>7</sup> *Britannia* ix 1978, 104 no.10.

perhaps twenty cases. There can be no absolute certainty about this because the writer could vary his style according to the tools at hand, texture of the stone or even on a whim, which perhaps accounts for different forms of one letter, particularly A or E, appearing within the same text. One man could produce quite different results when writing on separate occasions. In cases where the inscriptions appear to have been cut by a different hand, there is generally also a change of location and therefore of date. When the centurial building party moved on to a new section of work, there could have been changes of personnel detailed for building duty, but perhaps several members of the group would be capable of inscribing the stone. Such basic literacy could have been a common skill among legionary recruits.

**Table W6: Centurions named on more than one building stone**

RIB	LOCATION	CENTURY	HAND	OBSERVATIONS
351 [352]	Caerleon Caerleon	VALERI MAXIMI VALER(I) MAXSIMI	x (?)	Different spelling
401 [1347] 1376	Tretower (Breckn) Benwell Hadrian's Wall (Walbottle)	PEREGRINI	x (?)	Lengthened P, R in 401 - cognomen not rare and lettering not very different
421 422	Tomen-y-Mur Tomen-y-Mur	IVLI MANS(VETI) MAN(SVETI)	x	Different form of A and 422 appears very crudely cut.
441 1659	Holt Hadrian's Wall (Cawfields)	RVFI SABI(NI)	x	different form of A, B.
423-27	Tomen-y-Mur	PERPETVI	✓	Distinctive P, R E and some serifs.
469 470	Chester Chester	ABVCINI	x (?)	470 in taller, slimmer capitals.
1009 1010	Cumb. Quarries Cumb. Quarries	MERCATIVS	✓	Same form of M, R; slant of letters; size reduces towards end of word.
1309 1654	Hadrian's Wall (Wallsend) H W (Hstds-Cawfields)	FLORI	x	Different form of L, R.
1345 1346 1402	Benwell Benwell Rudchester	ARRI	✓ ✓ x (?)	Same form of A, R in 1345-6 but different in 1402.
1356 1357	Hadrian's Wall (Denton Hall) Hadrian's Wall (Denton Hall)	IVLI RVFI	✓	Same well-formed letters and the I is shorter at the end of Rufi.
1362 1363	Hadrian's Wall (Denton) Hadrian's Wall (Denton)	VAL(ERI) FL(AVI)	✓	Same ligature and form of F.
1365 JRS liii 1963 161 no. 8c	Hadrian's Wall (Denton) H W (Willowford Bridge)	AEL(I) DIDA(E) DIDA	?	JRS not illustrated
1368 1567	Hadrian's Wall (Denton) H W (Carrawburgh)	AVIDI RVFI	x (?)	Different form of A and 1567 uses ligatures.
1440 2081	H W (nr. turret 25a) Hadrian's Wall (?)	CAECILI CLEME(NTIS)	x (?)	Different abbreviations Cho/Coh, different forms of A, E L and centurial sign.

Table W6 cont.

[1447] 1649 Brit iii 1972 354 no.12	Hadrian's Wall (Brunton) H W (Hstds-Cawfields) H W (Black Carts)	POMPE[II] RVFI POMPII POM RVFI PRJN PRIMI	x (?)	Different form of E and P. Brit. not illustrated
1473 1501	Chesters H W (Chesters-Carrawburgh)	NAS(...) BA(SSI) NA( ) BASSI	x	Different form of A, S, B.
1475 1476 1570	Chesters Chesters H W (Carrawburgh-Hstds)	CAECILI PROCVL(I) CAECIL(I) PROCV(LI) CAECILI PROCLI	✓ ✓ x	1570 has different spelling, a more positive curve on the C and does not use a small O.
1499 1681 [1506] 1859 1861 Brit xii 1981 380 no.18	Hadrian's Wall (nr. Chesters) H W (Hstds-Gt Chesters) H W (Chesters-Carrawburgh) H W (Willowford) H W (Willowford) H W (Greenhead turr 46)	LOVSI SVAVIS	} ✓ } ✓ ?	All rather crudely carved. Same ligature COH but different forms of A.  Brit. not illustrated. (Perhaps same hand as 1499 but differently spaced - R.S.O.T.)
[1508] 1678	H W (Chesters-Carrawburgh) H W (Cawfields quarry)	LIBER(ALIS)	?	1508 lost.
1564 1565	H W (Carrawburgh-Hstds) H W (Carrawburgh-Hstds)	AVIDI	✓	Same form of A
1572 1668 Brit iv 1973 329 no.8 Brit xviii 1987 369 no.11	H W (Carrawburgh-Hstds) HW (nr. Cawfields) H W (Black Carts)  H W (Willowford)	GELLI PHILIP(PI)  GELLI PILIPPI  G PILIPPI	x  ?  ?	Different form of G, L and centurial sign.  Different spelling
1575 1937	Hadrian's Wall (nr. m. 36) H W (nr. Birdoswald)	FLORIANI	x	Diff. form of F, L, R and ligatured AN.
1632 1646 1674	Hadrian's Wall (nr. Hstds) H W (Hstds-Cawfields) H W (Hstds-Gt Chesters)	IVLI CANDID(I)	x ✓(?) ✓(?)	1632 is very much cruder
1647 1857 [1849]	H W (Hstds-Cawfields) Hadrian's Wall (nr. m. 48) H W (Carvoran-Birdoswald)	OLC(...) LIBONIS LIBONIS	✓ ✓ ?	Same ligature, Coh, centurial sign and tall slim capitals.
1652 1860 1862 Brit viii 1977 432 no. 27	H W (Hstds-Cawfields) Hadrian's Wall (Willowford) Hadrian's Wall (Willowford) Hadrian's Wall (Greenhead)	COCCEI REGVLI	✓ ✓ ✓ ?	Same form of G, L, R, C. Brit. not illustrated (diff. format, G resembles 1862 but not L; however REGVLI is similar to 1860- unusual E - R.S.O.T.)
1661 1662	H W (Hstds-Cawfields) H W (Hstds-Cawfields)	VERI	✓	Same form of R.
1664 1812	HW (East Cawfields) Hadrian's Wall (nr. Carvoran)	FLAVI NORICI F NORICI	✓(?)	Same ligature, Coh.
1669 1758	H W (nr. Cawfields) Hadrian's Wall (nr. m. 44)	MAXI(MI)	✓	Cross-bar of A placed low in both but different centurial sign.
1675 [1768] JRS liv 1964 178 no. 5c	H W (nr. Cawfields) H W (Gt Chesters-Carvoran) H W (Willowford Br. t. 48b)	SOCELLIANA SOCELLI	?	One lost; JRS not illustrated.
1677 1762	H W (Cawfields quarry) H W (Mucklebank turret 44b)	IVLI FLORENTINI	?	1762 fragmentary
1679 1854	H W (Cawfields quarry) H W (Carvoran-Birdoswald)	CALEDON(I) SECUN(DI)	x	Differnent form of A,S,N & centurial sign. Use of ligatures in 1854.

Table W6 cont.

1682 [1766]	H W (Haltwhistle Burn Hd) Hadrian's Wall (Walltown)	VAL(ER)I MAX(IM)I	?	1766 lost. (Not identified with Val. Max. of 351, 352)
1757 1764	Hadrian's Wall (nr. m. 44) Hadrian's Wall (Lowtown)	SIICCI	✓	Same form of E, C.
1760 1771	Hadrian's Wall (nr. m. 44) H W (nr. Walltown quarry)	MAR DEX(TR)I	✓(?)	Similar M, A but different E.
1761 [1853] 2083	H W (Gt Chesters-Carvoran) Hadrian's Wall (nr. Foultown) Hadrian's Wall (?)	VALERI VERI	x (?)	Different forms of A, L, R.
[1765] 1846	H W (nr. Walltown) Hadrian's Wall (nr. Thirlwall)	MVNATI MAX MVN(AT)I MAXSV(M)I	✓(?)	1765 is lost but forms of M and N look similar if the drawings are accurate although 1846 has ligature.
1769 1867 468	H W (nr. Walltown quarry) H W (nr. Willowford Bridge) Chester	FERRON(I) VEGETI  FERRO(N)I	✓ ✓ x (?)	1769 & 1867 look similar in all letter forms but 468 has a different centurial sign and an odd ligature.
1770 [1811] 1855	H W (nr. Walltown quarry) Hadrian's Wall (nr. Carvoran) H W (Carvoran-Birdoswald)	CL(AVDI) AVGVSTANI	x	Different L, A, G, and centurial sign.
[1815] [1931] [1431]	Hadrian's Wall (Carvoran?) H W (nr. Birdoswald)	HORTENSIANA	?	All lost.
1858 2084	H W (Gilsland nr. m. 48) Hadrian's Wall (?)	VESVI RVFI	x (?)	Different spelling
1868 1930	H W (Harrow's Scar-m. 49) H W (nr. Birdoswald)	PROBIANA	✓ (?)	Same form of B but different A and centurial sign.
1869 2085 [1415] [JRS liii 1963 161 no. 9]	H W (nr. Birdoswald) Hadrian's Wall (?) H W (nr Harlow Hill, m. 16) H W (Old Wall nr. m. 59)	CASSI PRISCI	?	2085 is fragmentary and two are lost.
[1970] 2016	H W (Birdoswald-Castlestds) H W (Old Wall nr. m. 59)	IVLI TERTVLLIANI	?	1970 lost
[1972] [1973] [2021]	H W (Birdoswalds-Castlestds) Hadrian's Wall (Lanercost) H W (Bleatarn nr. turr. 60a)	CL(AVDI) PRISCI	?	All lost.

✓=same hand; x= different hand; ?= uncertain; square brackets indicate lost inscriptions.

The legionary building stones associated with rebuilding the turf wall between milecastles 49 and 54 have been identified by Professor J C Mann.<sup>8</sup> They have distinctive three-pointed stops, squarish capitals with serifs and all have a good sculptural quality suggesting that they come from the legionary workshop and were possibly cut by the same mason (1916, 1934, 1938, 1966-68). These building stones are comparable to the distance slabs from the Antonine Wall and are unlike the informal centurial stones, which mark much of the work on Hadrian's Wall.

<sup>8</sup> J.C. Mann, *Britannia* xxi, 1990, 289-92.



**Fig.16: Centurions named on more than one building stone - examples possibly in same hand.**



RIB 423



RIB 424



RIB 425 (all Tomen-y-Mur)

·APRO·FANATIMMO  
 CON·VIBVS  
 OFICINA·MERCATI      MERCATIUS·FERNI

RIB 1009

RIB 1010

(both Cumberland quarries)



RIB 1345



RIB 1346

(both Benwell)

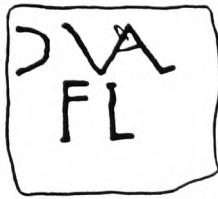


RIB 1356



RIB 1357 (Hadrian's Wall, Benwell-Rudchester)

Fig. 16 cont.



RIB 1362



RIB 1363 (Hadrian's Wall, Benwell-Rudchester)

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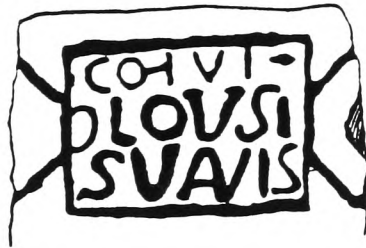


RIB 1475

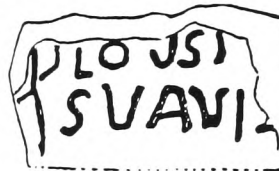


RIB 1476 (both Chesters)

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RIB 1499 (Hadrian's Wall, near Chesters)

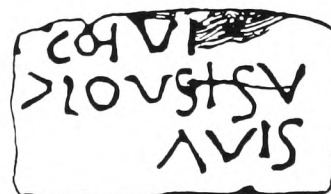


RIB 1681 (H W, Haltwhistle Burn Head)

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RIB 1859



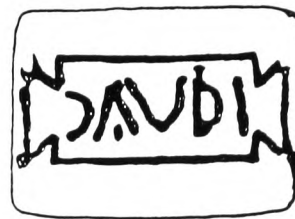
RIB 1861 (Hadrian's Wall, Willowford)

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Fig. 16 cont.

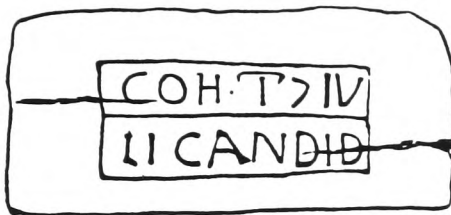


RIB 1564

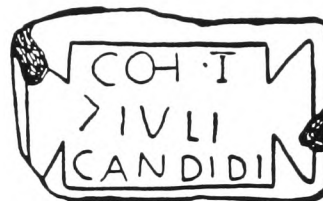


RIB 1565 (H W, Carrawburgh-Housesteads)

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RIB 1646 (H W, Housesteads-Cawfields)



RIB 1674 (H W, Housesteads-Gt. Chesters)

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RIB 1647 (H W, Housesteads-Cawfields)



RIB 1857 (H W, near milecastle 48)

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RIB 1652  
(H W, Housesteads-Cawfields)



RIB 1860  
(H W, Willowford)



RIB 1862  
(H W, Willowford)

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Fig. 16 cont.



RIB 1661



RIB 1662 (H W, Housesteads-Cawfields)

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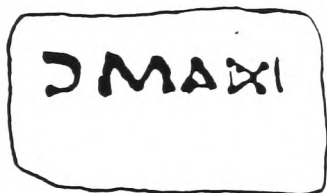


RIB 1664 (H W, East Cawfields)



RIB 1812 (H W, near Carvoran)

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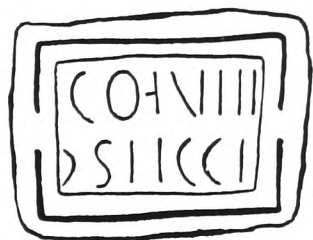


RIB 1669 (H W, near Cawfields)



RIB 1758 (H W, near milecastle 44)

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RIB 1757 (H W, near milecastle 44)



RIB 1764 (Hadrian's Wall, Lowtown)

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Fig. 16 cont.



RIB 1760 (H W, near milecastle 44)



RIB 1771 (H W, near Walltown quarry)



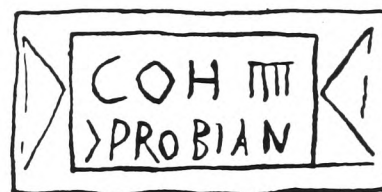
RIB 1769 (H W, near Walltown quarry)



RIB 1867 (H W, nr Willowford Bridge)



RIB 1868 (H W, milecastle 49)



RIB 1930 H W, near Birdoswald)

**Fig.17: Centurions named on more than one building stone - examples possibly showing different hand.**



RIB 421



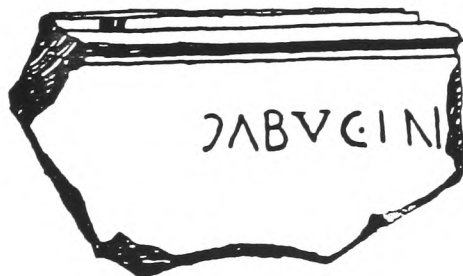
RIB 422 (both Tomen-y-Mur)



RIB 441 (Holt)



RIB 1659 (Hadrian's Wall, Cawfields)



RIB 469



RIB 470 (both Chester)

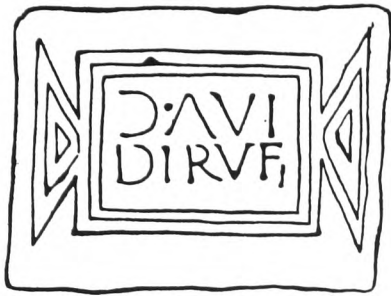


RIB 1346 (Benwell)



RIB 1402 (Rudchester)

Fig. 17 cont.



RIB 1368 (Hadrian's Wall, Denton)



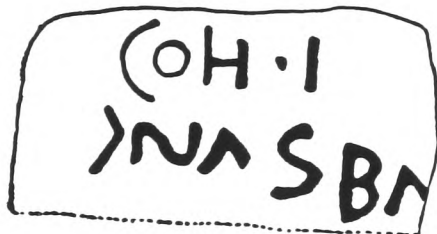
RIB 1567 (Hadrian's Wall, Carrawburgh)



RIB 1440 (H W, near turret 25a)



RIB 2081 (Hadrian's Wall?)



RIB 1473 (Chesters)



RIB 1501 (H W, Chesters-Carrawburgh)



RIB 1475 (Chesters)



RIB 1570 (H W, Carrawburgh-Housesteads)

Fig. 17 cont.



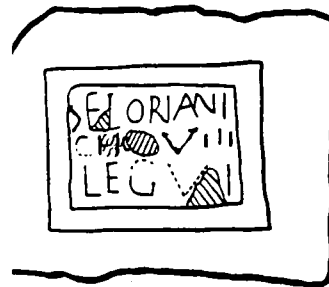
RIB 1572 (H W, Carrawburgh-Housesteads)



RIB 1668 (H W, near Cawfields)



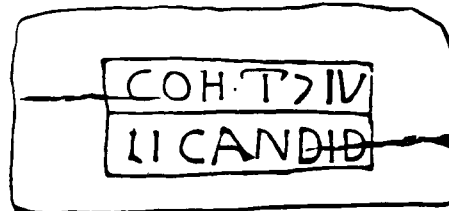
RIB 1575 (H W, near milecastle 36)



RIB 1937 (H W, near Birdoswald)



RIB 1632 (H W, near Housesteads)



RIB 1646 (H W, Housesteads-Cawfields)



RIB 1679 (H W, Cawfields quarry)



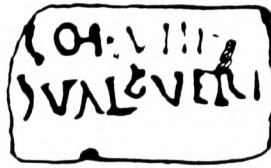
RIB 1854 (H W, Carvoran-Birdoswald)



Fig. 17 cont.



RIB 1761 (H W, Gt. Chesters-Carvoran)



RIB 2083 (Hadrian's Wall?)

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RIB 1770 (H W, near Walltown quarry)



RIB 1855 (H W, Carvoran-Birdoswald)

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RIB 1858 (H W, near milecastle 48)



RIB 2084 (Hadrian's Wall?)

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**Fig.18: An illiterate stonecutter?**



RIB 721 Ravenscar (Antiq. J. xxxii 1952)  
*Iustinianus p(rae)p(ositus)/ Vindicianus/ magister/ turr(e)/m (et) castrum fecit/ a so(lo).*

The texts of building stones are so short that few spelling irregularities are to be expected (Table W 11). The tendency in spoken Latin to shorten the pronunciation of the word cohort, *cohors*, to “cors” is indicated by the abbreviation to *Cho* rather than *Coh*, but the aspirate is kept at least in the written form. Other linguistic developments are apparent including changes in vowel sounds (439, 1162, 1846) and loss of final M (1016). One clear example emerges of an illiterate stonecutter who must have been working from a draft which he read with difficulty and understood not at all (Fig 18). This resulted in a reversed D for CI, S for G, B for IS and miscopying of *turrem* and *fecit* (721). The stone is from the Roman installation at Ravenscar on the east coast of Yorkshire, and probably dates from the end of the fourth century. The civilian building stones recording work done by British tribes in repairing Hadrian's Wall also appear to be of late date, possibly fourth century; they show uncertainty about the written forms of the tribal names (1672-3, 1843-4).

## MANUFACTURING

Manufactured goods from Roman Britain bear a range of production marks, some of which indicate literacy skills at least on the part of the person producing the trade mark. The craftsman who manufactured the goods could, of course, apply his trade mark in the form of a stamp without being literate himself. Most manufacturers' marks are produced by stamping, moulding or branding; it is much rarer to find a personal signature in the form of an incised or engraved inscription. Most surviving examples come from potters or brick and tile makers who used both literate and illiterate "signatures" and trademarks. The illiterate "signatures" are marks made with a finger or fingers on wet clay; they often take the form of an arrangement of semi-circles or sometimes a mark that could be a single letter.

Makers' marks are a useful form of advertising and a guarantee of quality in ancient and modern manufacturing industry. Although there is no necessity for a craftsman using a professionally made die to be literate himself, it is possible that a certain level of literacy was sometimes an advantage for craftsmen using shared facilities, to help them distinguish their works. More than one potter might share a kiln batch for example. There must always be the expectation that somewhere in the distribution network the production mark will be read and perhaps lead to new orders or repeat orders. The marks are primarily functional, not decorative and there must be a reason why a literate trade mark was preferred to a symbol which might have served the same purpose.

A list of references for the manufacturing marks considered here can be seen in Table W1 (Catalogue p. 54). In the text which follows all references to items published in RIB I and II are given in brackets as numerals only. It is proposed to deal with them under the following headings:

1. Stamps and moulded inscriptions on metal goods.
2. Makers' marks on wood and leather.
3. Stamps on fired clay.
4. Production marks written by hand.
5. Miscellaneous dies, marks and references to manufacturing.

## 1. Stamps and moulded inscriptions on metal goods.

### Metal ingots:

The origin of many stamped metal artefacts from Roman Britain is not known, but most of the ingots found here are of British manufacture. Some of the late silver ingots, which were subject to state control and used as imperial donatives, could have been produced in British workshops. The stamps are similar in style to an example from Trier, which has been punched directly onto the finished ingot (2402.9). The lettering of the Ulpianus stamp from Canterbury is less distinct and could possibly have been cast in the mould.<sup>9</sup> Honorinus (2402.4), Isas (2402.6-8), Patricius (2402.11) and Ulpianus (2402.12) could have operated official workshops supplying silver ingots from Britain. By analogy with coins, *EX OFF*..... suggests an official workshop and in RIB II 2402.9, *TR PS* resembles a coin control mark. Perhaps late fourth and early fifth century hoards of silver, which sometimes bear graffiti recording the weight, were destined to be cast into ingots.

The eight stamps on copper ingots from North Wales bear the names of private lessees working the mines of Parys mountain on Anglesey and Great Ormes Head, Llandudno. The stamps vary in shape and design, whereas the stamps on the late silver ingots so far discovered are all rectangular with two or three lines of text. Those on the copper ingots have a less professional appearance but they all read left to right and so must have been produced by retrograde dies. Five are recorded with raised letters (2403.1-5); four have ligatures. The stamp of the partnership at Rome owning mining concessions is countersigned *NATSOL* which is perhaps an abbreviation of the manager's name (2403.3). One ingot which required three extra lumps of copper to make up the weight has been stamped on each additional piece of metal (2403.1). This sort of concern with accuracy perhaps serves as a reminder of the detailed records which would probably be kept of transactions with approved suppliers

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<sup>9</sup> C.M. Johns and T.W. Potter, The Canterbury late Roman treasure, *Antiquaries Journal* lxx, 1985, 312ff

Lead pigs bear both stamps and moulded inscriptions. The moulded inscriptions could have been achieved by pressing a large wooden die into black sand at the bottom of the mould, or it is possible that clay moulds were made with the inscription cut into the leather-hard clay.<sup>10</sup> Additional incuse stamps could be applied to the sides of the pigs after casting, perhaps as part of the checking procedure. Early pigs of lead have the imperial name moulded in the face, indicating state control of output from the mines. Private lessees continued to mark their lead in exactly the same way. The lengthy inscription of Publius Rubrius Abascantus is made from an expertly made mould; it has ligatures, small letters and stops and includes the spoken Latin form *Lutudares* for *Lutudarensis* (2404.51). Two other Derbyshire pigs were corrected after casting by adding a crossbar of a T (2404.59) and the first stroke of a V (2404.60) with a cold chisel.

An iron die found in London is designed to be used with a hammer to make an incuse impression of the letters *MPBR*, believed to be an abbreviation of *Metallum Provinciae Britanniae* (2409.26). It is not known what sort of metal it was used to stamp and no impressions of this die have been discovered. However a *procurator metallorum* in London probably supervised mining activity in Roman Britain and so use of the die on silver, lead or tin seems possible.

#### Metal artefacts:

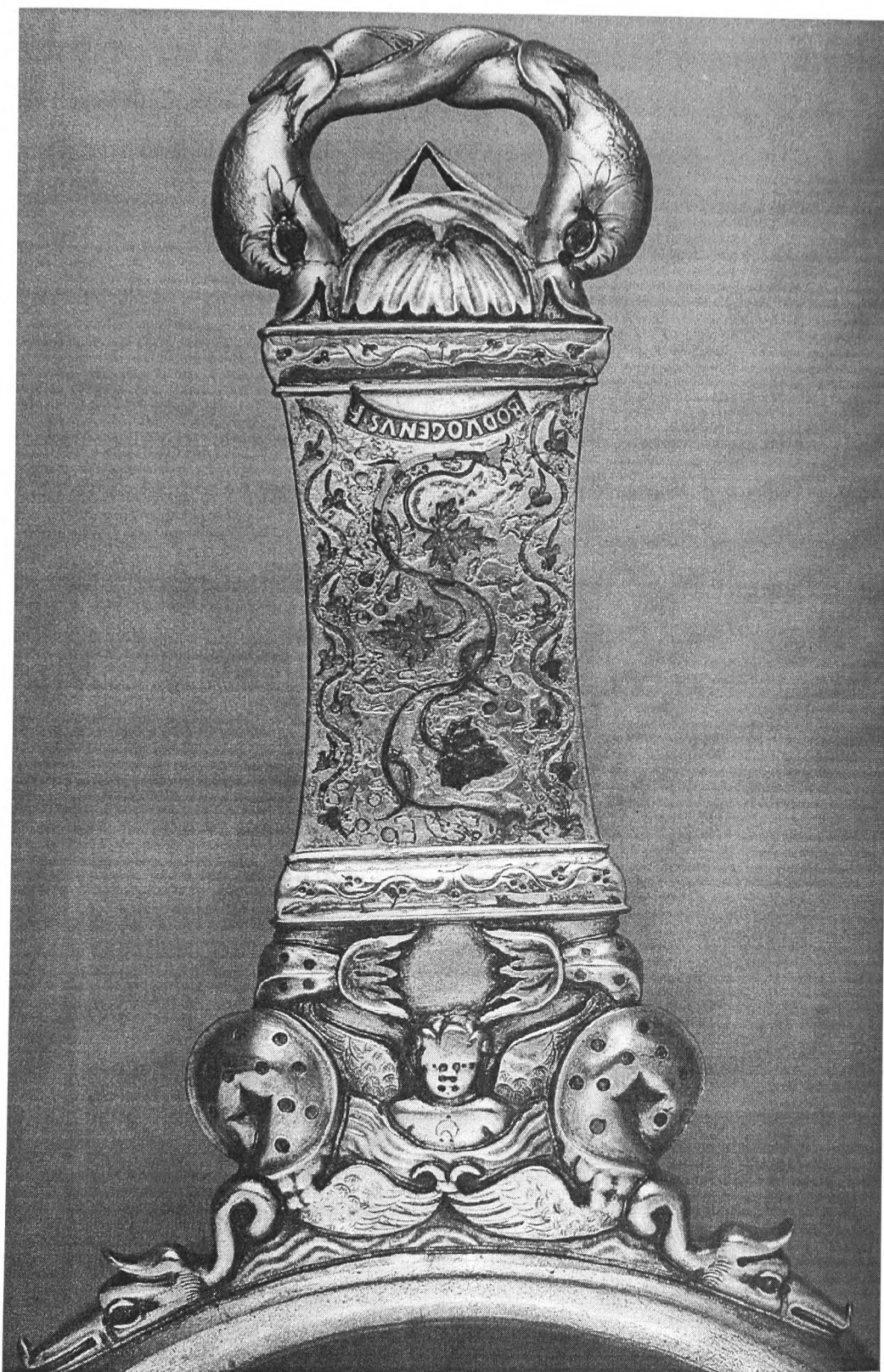
The place of manufacture of metal ornaments found in Roman Britain is not always known. The vast majority of finds have no stamp or signature at all. Of the marked wares, a few may have originated in Britain. There is a tendency to suppose that the finer pieces of bronze and jewellery were probably imported, but this is not necessarily the case. H. E. M. Cool has argued convincingly that luxurious gold and enamel jewellery was being produced by Romano-British craftsmen in the second century A.D.<sup>11</sup> Finding signed British-made wares is problematic; the gold handle from Dumfries and Galloway, stamped *Helenus fecit*, does not help and is, in any

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<sup>10</sup> R.F. Tylecote, *Metallurgy in Archaeology*, E. Arnold 1962, 88-9.

<sup>11</sup> *Britannia* xvii, 1987, 231ff.

**Fig. 19: An inscribed bronze *trulla* from the Fenland.**



RIB 2415.11 Bodvogenus f(ecit) (After M. Henig 1995)

case, lost. It is possible that a goldsmith working at Malton might have expected his slaves to read notices, although the author and the purpose of the inscription from the workshop there remains obscure (712). The discovery of a Celtic name provides little evidence because it could be British or Continental Celtic; Boduogenus, the maker of a bronze *trulla* found in the Fenland, is a case in point (2415.11 - Fig 19). He could be a British craftsman,<sup>12</sup> or the vessel could be a Gaulish import. Brooches present similar difficulties. Since the manufacture of fine jewellery continued in Britain before, during and after the Roman occupation, it seems possible that some manufacturers might have started to sign their wares during the Roman period, but evidence is not readily available.

Bronze-smiths are attested on a few statuettes; their marks are incised or punched rather than stamped. Glaucus signed the base of a statuette which Simplicia dedicated to Mars Corotiacus (213). Since Simplicia is a fairly common provincial name and Corotiacus implies native associations, it is possible that Glaucus was working here. He has a Greek name and so he could have been a freedman or immigrant. Both he and Celatus, who made a bronze statuette for the Colasuni (274), could have been absorbed into the community of British craftsmen during the period of the occupation. Cintusmus, who made a bronze ansate plate for a dedication to Silvanus Callirius found at Colchester, has a Celtic name which could indicate British or Continental origin (194). There can be no certainty that these craftsmen made their own inscriptions, but it seems likely that they did.

Tools and implements are perhaps more certain to have been produced in Britain. Local manufacture of such goods would be a necessity in most sizeable communities. The invading forces would initially have brought some of their own craftsmen but would soon look for local suppliers. In such a situation some tool-makers probably found it advantageous to stamp their wares, as did makers of mortaria. An interesting range of stamps, reading *P BASIL F*, and incorporating a human figure, appears on knives from London (2428.5-8); Bonos, inscribed on a stilus from London, retains the

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<sup>12</sup> This view is expressed by A. Birley (*The people of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1979) and by M. Henig (*The art of Roman Britain* Batsford, 1995).



os ending common in some Celtic areas (2428.9). Dubnus, a craftsman from Catterick has a Celtic name (2433.4) and Olondus (2428.4), a knife-maker from London, has an unattested name that could be Celtic (2428.9). Celtic names do not of course prove that these craftsmen were British, but it is possible. The maker of lead brine-pans from Cheshire was probably local. The moulds were made with a retrograde letter N and one pan has a retrograde S formed from a C (2416.2,3). The craftsman who made the mould for a portion of a lead casket from Bishop Norton also seems to have been inexperienced or possibly illiterate; the Fs have been inverted and the words are incorrectly divided by the spaces (2416.7 - see note). Unless more evidence comes to light regarding workshops and distribution, little can be said about these craftsmen.

## **2. Makers' marks on wood and leather.**

Wooden barrels provide most of the examples in Britain of inscriptions made by craftsmen working in wood. This is almost entirely thanks to the chance preservation of barrel staves, sometimes re-used to line Roman wells. Since, in most cases, the wood has been shown to be of Continental source,<sup>13</sup> it follows that primary inscriptions, whether of coopers or of suppliers, were probably put on at source before the contents were exported to Britain. Only secondary inscriptions, if recognised, are likely to have been written here, when barrels were re-used or re-built from second-hand staves. Three branding irons are recorded in RIB II which could have been used to mark wood. All have retrograde letters to produce an orthograde stamp. Two have handles splayed for striking with a hammer (2409.17,23), but the third does not, suggesting that it probably had a different function (2409.34).

Leather and leather goods were required in large quantities by both the civilian and military population. Tanners,<sup>14</sup> footwear manufacturers and tent makers all stamped their wares, probably as an indication of quality. Owners sometimes added their own names. Makers' marks can take the form of simple trade marks, such as the series of

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<sup>13</sup> RIB II Fasc. 4, p.1.

<sup>14</sup> M. Rhodes, Inscriptions on leather waste from Roman London, *Britannia* xviii, 1987, 173-81.

rosettes on the sole of a child's shoe from London (2445.44), or a name like *GELLI* (*Officina*), which appears on a leather fragment from Caernarvon (2445.4), or they can be a little more unusual like the series of very professional-looking stamps found on a lady's slipper from Vindolanda (2445.6) or the elaborate cruciform stamp found at both York and Vindolanda (2445.9).

### 3. Stamps on fired clay.

#### Military and municipal tile stamps:

The products of legionary tile works in Britain are found within an 80km. radius of Caerleon, base of the Second Legion, in the vicinity of York, base of the Ninth and Sixth Legions and in North Wales and around Holt and Chester, base of the Twentieth. Tile kilns on Hadrian's Wall were also used by legionary detachments serving on the northern frontier. Most commonly the stamps have raised letters and are the orthograde impressions of retrograde dies cut in wood and applied to hardening clay. At a given tilerly several dies were probably in use at any one time and, since all were hand-cut, there are distinct variations; location and additional legionary titles can help to indicate date. Occasionally a metal die was used, producing incuse letters (2459.1, 2). The purpose of stamping the products of military and municipal tileries was perhaps to guard against theft rather than to guarantee quality.

Some of the earlier stamps of *Legio II Augusta* are thought to be of early to mid second century. Features include an ansate frame, clear, well-formed capitals, superscript bar over the numeral and ligatured *AV*. Simpler versions do not have ansations or ligatures and some produce a retrograde impression.<sup>15</sup> Errors occur such as letters cut orthograde in an otherwise retrograde text (2459.36,63) and letters omitted e.g. *VG* for *AVG* (2459.44); *AG* occurs only rarely as an abbreviation of *Augusta* and could perhaps reflect speech patterns (2459.45,62).<sup>16</sup> Later versions of the stamp show less formal lettering.<sup>17</sup> Examples of late second or third century date

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<sup>15</sup> see G.C. Boon, *Laterarium Iscanum*, 37-7, Class A i-iv.

<sup>16</sup> Boon, Class A xv, A xix.

<sup>17</sup> Boon, Class A xvi-xxii and Class B, C, D.

tend to have a G with a short downward sloping tail rather than a true upright and some have an L with a sloping bar instead of a horizontal (2459.54, 58). Letter size is also more irregular in late stamps.

Stamps of the Sixth and Ninth Legions have features and errors similar to those of the Second. None of the stamps so far found looks quite as professional as the early ansate stamps of *Legio II Augusta*. Tile stamps of the Twentieth Legion sometimes have decorative features, a palm branch (2463.10), a denticular surround (2463.31), various ligatures of the title VV or rare additional information such as the name of the centurion (?) in charge of the tiler, *sub Logo pr(incipe)* (2463.58), or a consular date, (AD167), *tegula(m) A(ulus) Vidu(cius) f(ecit) V(ero) ter consule...*(2463.59).

Auxiliary tile stamps usually give only the name of the unit but a Hadrianic *tegula* from Maryport also supplies a personal name, *Coh I Hispa(norum) Indutius f(ecit)* (2474). *Classis Britannica* stamps sometimes have an inverted ligature of BR which looks like a design feature rather than an error. They also come in a variety of shapes, circular, elongated and rectangular. One circular stamp has a central wheel motif (2481.99). Some of the civic tile stamps from Gloucester bear the names of magistrates of the local *ordo*, the *duoviri iure dicundo*, elected annually to deal with legal matters (2487.1-23), and the *quinquennales*, appointed every five years to take care of the census (2488.1-4). All the Gloucestershire stamps recorded in RIB II read orthograde and are incuse. Many have serifed letters, ligatures and the impressions look quite crisp; they could have been impressed with metal dies.

#### Stamps of private tile-makers:

Private tile-makers are evidenced by stamps from many locations throughout the province, with particular concentrations around Lincoln and in Gloucestershire. They perhaps handled mainly civilian orders and stamped their wares, as other craftsmen did, for reasons of advertising and guaranteeing quality. Military influence seems certain because the manufacture of bricks and tiles was virtually unknown in Britain before the invasion. The stamps are usually quite simple, giving a single name, abbreviated names or three letters, thought to represent the *tria nomina* of the

proprietor of the tiler. The inscriptions occur as stamps in relief and incuse. Most of the examples from Gloucestershire are incuse, like the civic stamps from the *colonia* at Gloucester. The *TPF* series have serifs and stops and were perhaps made with a metal die (2489.26). Some of these, in common with the *LVL* series from Lincoln, have an additional fourth letter, thought to indicate a particular workshop within a large tiler (2489.45). If this is the case, the purpose could have been to check output from different groups of workers, which might have affected their pay. Occasionally a pattern made with the finger in wet clay is found on tiles which have subsequently been stamped. It appears that workmen could have marked their tiles with finger patterns and then a certain proportion of the tiles were stamped by someone in authority, who was perhaps checking on production standards and output.<sup>18</sup>

The design of tile stamps is generally simple but some *tegulae* from London bear a very complicated monogram of *TECULAR*, thought to be an abbreviation of *tegularinae* (2489.13). Much more interesting designs appear on relief-patterned tiles, mainly from locations in southern Britain. The patterns are thought to have been produced using carved wooden rollers or blocks. A few incorporate inscriptions (2490.1-7), of which by far the most complex is a three-line text, believed to have been carved onto a wooden roller. Fragments of box voussoir tiles bearing this inscription have been found at Plaxtol and Darenth villas in Kent. The words *Cabriabanu(s) farbicavi* seem to be written in the same bold letters whereas *parietalem*, which is inverted and retrograde, looks almost as if it were squeezed in as an afterthought to complete the “pattern”. The effect is quite a distinctive pattern of repeated script, casually written, in a very natural hand with no attempt at epigraphic precision (2490.6).

#### Mortaria:

The enormous demand for mortaria and coarse pottery which followed the Roman occupation of Britain must have presented very attractive prospects for potters from *Gallia Belgica* and Britain. Some potters supplied mortaria for the British market

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<sup>18</sup> A, McWhirr and D. Viner, Production and distribution of tiles in Roman Britain, *Britannia* ix, 1978, 364-7.

from established businesses in northern Gaul (Table W7). Before the end of the first century thriving potteries, making mortaria, had developed around Colchester and St. Albans, to be followed by developments at Hartshill, Mancetter, Wilderspool, Doncaster, York and Corbridge to name only a few. A list of potters' names and their workplaces can be seen in Table W7.

The tradition of stamping more expensive items, requiring more skill in production, must have been known through trade contacts before the invasion. A clay die of Matugenus, father of Albinus, a leading Verulamium potter, has been found with kiln waste at Brockley Hill (2409.22), a die of Mossius has been found at Hartshill (2409.25) and a die of Saturninus survives at Corbridge along with impressions it produced on mortaria rims (2408.31). These dies appear to have been made by cutting letters into leather-hard clay so that when pressed onto a mortarium rim the stamp would have raised letters. The dies of Matugenus and Saturninus give an orthograde impression but that of Mossius produces a retrograde impression. The method for making these dies must have been fairly simple, using materials to hand in the pottery. Whether professional die-cutters were employed remains an open question. Clearly, whoever cut the die needed a degree of literacy, whereas the craftsman who applied the stamp did not. During the period in which mortaria were being stamped in Roman Britain, the Mancetter and Verulamium potteries stamped all their wares.<sup>19</sup> The potter, Sarius, who operated at Mancetter, Rossington Bridge and then at a site in Scotland, probably near Glasgow, used the same good die at all three sites. It is decorated with wheat-ears. This perhaps implies that there were several copies of the one die. A find from the Judean desert suggests that pottery dies could be cut in wood but such items would be unlikely to survive in Britain.<sup>20</sup>

The potter Doinus, who worked at Brockley Hill c AD 75-105 probably used many dies in his working life. These small, clay items were perhaps easily lost or broken and relatively easy to replace. Several of his stamps survive and they show evidence

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<sup>19</sup> K.F. Hartley, personal communication.

<sup>20</sup> Benoit, Milik and De Vaux, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, Oxford 1961, Vol.II, fig. 12 no.9 and plate 9 no.26.

**TABLE W7: POTTERS EVIDENCED IN INSCRIPTIONS FROM ROMAN BRITAIN.**

NAME	KILN SITE	DATE
Q. VALERIVS SE-BIJI?	Northern Gaul	c 55-85 AD
BR. IX. SAT?	"	"
BVCCVS/BVCVS	"	"
MARTIALIS	"	"
MOTTIVS BOLLVS	"	"
ORBISSA	"	"
ORGIL(...)	"	"
PAVLLVS	"	"
PRASSO	"	"
SVMMACVS/SVMACVS	"	"
VERECVNDVS I	"	"
Q. VALERIVS VERANIUS	Northern Gaul	c 65-100 AD
Q. VALERIVS ESVNERTVS	"	"
Q. VALERIVS SVRIACVS	"	"
T. IVLIVS AFER	"	"
BORIEDO	"	"
CACVMATTVS	"	"
CASSARIVS	"	"
GRACILIS	"	"
LITVGENVS I	"	c 65-100 AD
LITVGENVS II	"	"
LOSSA	"	"
C.IVLIVS PRI(scus)	"	"
VASSONVS	"	"
C. IVL. ATTICVS	Colchester? Gaulish?	c 55-85 AD?
CRICIRO	Colchester	c 55-100 A.D.?
CYNOPE (Cunopectus)	"	c 160-200 AD
DVBETAVS/DVBITATVS	"	c 140-200 AD
C. ATTIVS MARINVS	"	c 55-100 AD
SEVERVS	"	"
SEXTI VALERII (5)	"	"
SEX. VAL. C.F	"	"
<b>TMH</b>	"	"
MESSOR	"	c 140-160 AD
Herringbone patterns	"	c 110-140 AD
ALBINVS (son of Matugenus)	Verulamium area: Brockley Hill, Radlett, Lugdunum?	c 60-90 AD
AREN(tius?/tiacus?)	"	c 110-140 AD
AVDVRDIC	"	c 80-110 AD
BRVCIVS/BRVCCIVS	"	c 70-100 AD
CANDIDVS	"	c 90-105 AD
CASTVS	"	c 85-105 AD
CILLV(s?) /CILVS	"	c 95-135 AD
DEVALVS/DIVALVS	"	c 80-100 AD?

Table W7 cont.	(Verulamium area)	
<b>DOCCAS</b>	..	c 85-105 AD
DOINVS	..	c70-110 AD
DRICCIVS	..	c 95-135 AD
GISSVS	..	c 100-140 AD
IVNIVS I	..	..
LALLAIVS	..	c 90-130 AD
<b>C ATTIVS MARINVS</b>	..	c 95-105 AD
MARTINVS I	..	c 70-110 AD
MATVGENVS	..	c 70-100 AD
MELVS	..	c 95-135 AD
MORICAMVLVS	..	c 70-110 AD
OASTRIVS	..	c 65-95 AD
OVIDU(s)	..	c 110-150 AD
(Q. RVTILIVS) RIPANVS	..	c 65-95 AD
ROA	..	c 110-150 AD
SATVRNINVS I	..	c 100-130 AD
SECVNDVS	..	c 65-95 AD
SOLLVS	..	..
<b>TMH</b>	..	c 110-140 AD
VICTORO(?)	..	c 100-145 AD
BRVSCIVS	Hartshill / Mancetter	c 140-170 AD
CICV(ro/rus?)	..	c120-160 AD
<b>DOCCAS</b>	..	c 100-125 AD
GRATINVS	..	c 120- 160 AD
ICOTASGVS	..	..
IVNIVS II	..	c 140-170 AD
IVNIVS LOCCIVS	..	c 135-165 AD
LOCCIVS PRO...	..	..
LOCCIVS VIBIVS	..	..
<b>C ATTIVS MARINVS</b>	..	c 105-125 AD
MAVRIVS	..	c 160-190 AD
MINOMELVS	..	c 135-165 AD
MOSSIVS	..	c 135-175 AD
PARIACVS	..	c 120-160 AD
<b>SARRIVS</b>	..	c 100-130 AD
SENNIVS	..	c 160-190 AD
Unstamped wares		3rd & 4th centuries
AVSTINVS	Wilderspool	c 100-165 AD
AMEN(us)	..	..
BRICO /BRCO	..	..
C.C.M.	..	..
DECANIO	..	..
DECMITIVS?	..	..
DOCILIS? III	..	..
D. I. S. / L. D. B.	..	..
MIMIC/MIMICIV?	..	..
OVID	..	..
NANIECO	..	..
Herringbone patterns	..	..
Unstamped wares	..	..

Table W7 cont.

CEN?	Rossington Bridge(Doncaster)	c 135-170 AD
CDCR?	"	"
DICCIA	"	"
IVNIVS	"	"
<b>SARRIVS</b>	"	"
SECVNDA	"	"
SETIBOGIVS	"	"
VIRRINIVS	"	"
Illiterate trade marks	"	"
AESICO	Lincoln / South Carlton	c 140-170 AD
ATEPACIVS	"	c 100-150 AD
BILICEDO	"	c 140-190 AD
Q. IVSTIVS CICO	"	c 100-140 AD
Q. IVSTIVS CRESCENS	"	c 100-140 AD
CVPITVS	"	c 140-170 AD
VOROLAS	"	c 140-170 AD
AGRIPPA	Vicinity of York	2nd century
DIVICTVS	"	c 150 AD
MERCATOR	"	c 130-180 AD
METILIVS	"	2nd century
MITTIVS	"	"
MVCO	"	c 130-170 AD
SARVS	"	c 100-140 AD
A. T-	"	2nd century
VITALIS V	"	c 120-180 AD
JLV? LI	"	2nd century
GENIALIS	Yorkshire	c 100-140 AD
NATOR	Aldborough	c 95-140 AD
NACOL	"	"
ANAVS	North of England	c 160-180 AD
FELICIO	"	"
MARCVS	"	c 140-180 AD
MASC (Mascelio?)	"	c 120-160 AD
Herringbone patterns	"	c 140-160 AD
Unstamped wares	Crambeck, E. Yorks	4th century
AXCHA?- Illiterate group of potters?	Wroxeter	c 120-160 AD
ERVVIS	Caerleon	c 120-160 AD
AESVMINVS	Norfolk	c 140-160 AD
INGENV	"	2nd century
MANSVETVS	"	"
RESPECTVS	"	"
CAMVLACVS	Norfolk / E. Midlands	2nd century
CARMANVS	"	"
SOBIV-	"	"
Illiterate potters	"	"



Table W7 cont.

BARO	Midlands? North?	c 160-200 AD
MARCELINVS	Midlands	c 130-190 AD
JARTETVMVS	"	"
VIRAPIVS	"	c 140-160 AD
CONRILVS	Nene Valley	c 140-160 AD
SIMILIS	"	"
VARINNA	"	"
Unstamped wares	"	3rd & 4th centuries
VEDIACVS	Northamptonshire	c 140-160 AD
Unstamped wares	Oxfordshire	2nd-4th centuries
VERECVNDVS II	Soller, Kr. Düren	c 150-200 AD
BELLICVS	Corbridge	2nd century
CVDRENVS	"	"
SATVRNINVS	"	"
SVLLONACVS	"	"
AVSTINVS	Eden Valley	c 120-160 AD
DOCCILIS/EILIS/ELIS	"	"
BRIGIA	Scotland	2nd century
CICV	"	"
EMI(...)	"	"
INVOMANDVS	"	"
<b>SARRIVS</b>	"	"
Herringbone (incuse)	"	"

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**Bold type** Potters known to have migrated to different sites within Britain.

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of a deterioration in the quality of the lettering over a period of about 30 years. His early stamps are quite clear and literate, whereas later ones have poor lettering and dubious spelling.<sup>21</sup> Doinus is not the only potter whose stamps display this phenomenon; late stamps of Matugenus, Albinus and Sollus are also poor. This cannot be attributed to literacy or illiteracy on the part of the potter named, because if he could write his name at the beginning of his career, he should have been able to write it at the end. Katharine Hartley<sup>22</sup> points out that poor quality dies in the Verulamium potteries coincided with a deterioration in the quality of their mortaria in the second century. This was at a time when Mancetter and Hartshill potteries were producing superior goods and increasing their trade. About A.D. 105. Gaius Attius Marinus and Doccas had left the Verulamium area and moved to the potteries at Mancetter and Hartshill (Table W7). This could have been in response to increased demand for mortaria in the forts of Wales and the North. It is possible that various attendant craftsmen also made the move, including some experienced die-cutters. Perhaps the kilns around Verulamium were left in the hands of less skilful craftsmen serving mainly a home market. The names of established potters, who were perhaps no longer working because of age, death or retirement, could have been retained and copied for a while by successors who were less competent at making dies.

A literate production mark was regarded as necessary by some producers of mortaria in Roman Britain. The precise function of this mark is not entirely certain. It could have been connected with production or marketing. Kevin Greene<sup>23</sup> points out that three types of production mark can be found on Gaulish *terra sigillata* of the first and second century A.D: a mould-maker's mark usually written freehand in the wet clay of the mould, sometimes giving a retrograde impression on the pot; a stamp of the workshop owner, often appearing in the decoration; a stamp of the individual craftsman who finished the bowl, appearing on the rim of the vessel or inside it. He also comments on the fact that late Roman derivatives of *terra sigillata* are not stamped. He suggests that gradual decentralisation of production led to much smaller

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<sup>21</sup> S.Castle, A kiln of the potter Doinus, *Arch. Journal* , vol 129, 1972, 69ff, fig 5 p77

<sup>22</sup> in S.S. Frere , *Verulamium Excavations 1972*

<sup>23</sup> *Roman Pottery*, British Museum Press, 1992, p.57.

industries in which name stamps were not needed to differentiate output from workers or workshops.

Concerning the production marks noted by Kevin Greene, it seems to me that, since the mould maker's signature was usually covered by the footrim, it can only have been intended to be read at the workshop. The name of the man who made the vessel could have been relevant for checking output and quality at the workshop or it could have been a form of advertising in the marketing system. The most likely significance of the stamp of the owner of the pottery would appear to have been outside the factory as a guarantee to customers, or for identification at a kiln site if one kiln served several workshops.

The peak period for stamping mortaria in Roman Britain is also the first and second centuries A.D. Demand for mortaria is closely linked to military expansion, although not all the customers need be in the army. If the stamps were only intended to be read within the workshop, there is at least an indication that a literate mark was preferred by some potters to an illiterate trade mark and there must have been an expectation that colleagues or superiors would read it. In the case of poorly applied or poorly written stamps it is difficult to see how they would be recognised anywhere other than the workplace. If, however, the stamps were intended to be read outside the workshop, somewhere in the distribution system, the expectation seems to be that recognition of a name would lead to increased business, either through orders from individual customers or from dealers.

The stamps might have served some purpose in connection with organised distribution through *negotiatores*. Direct evidence for *negotiatores* dealing in mortaria in Roman Britain is lacking, but the distribution of finds suggests organised marketing via waterways and military supply routes. Written records were almost certainly a necessity if military contracts were involved. However it was managed, in a competitive market the stamps could have been functional in ensuring correct dispatch and payment. Producers' stamps are found on metal ingots, lead pigs, bricks and tiles, all of which were supplied to military or civilian authorities at some time.

Mortaria apparently were no longer stamped in the third and fourth centuries, although production continued in potteries near Oxford, in the Nene Valley, and in East Yorkshire. The market must have been very different at this time. The period of major military expansion in Britain was over and was followed by consolidation and defence against northern tribes and foreign raiders. Forts were maintained in Wales, the North of England and along Hadrian's Wall, but perhaps large military orders had ceased. If distribution was mainly through smaller civilian outlets, stamps might not have been considered necessary. If they were of any use at all, they had to be read, and if there was no expectation that this would happen, then there would be no point using a literate stamp. In the first century A.D. mortaria production was a new skill to be acquired by British potters keen to break into a lucrative new market. Military potters and immigrants from Gaul would help to introduce new skills, just as military brick and tile-makers introduced their craft. These people would pass on the tradition of stamping wares. Production skills continued to be handed on to subsequent generations but the art of die-making seems to have been deemed non-essential and largely disappeared, apart from a few trade marks.

#### **4. Production marks written by hand**

Graffiti were added in the course of production of metal, wood, leather and clay items. Incised letters occur on copper ingots from North Wales, although their significance is not fully understood (2403.7, 9-11); weights were scratched onto lead at Caerwent after it was cast (2404.26-7); corrections were made to moulded lead pigs from Derbyshire (2404.59-60). Articles of silver have weights incised on them or recorded in punched dots. The weights recorded on vessels in the Mildenhall treasure may refer to the individual vessel (2414.10) or to a group of vessels, perhaps collected for bullion (2414.7, 8). A secondary graffito appears on a section of lead water pipe from Chester. It could have been added at the time of a repair; a small area of pipe was made smooth to take the graffito, *PRIVIS / ATICVRTO* (2434.4). Incised marks on wooden barrels found in Britain were probably made by the original coopers and tanners in the country of origin; the oak stave from Bar hill could be an exception but

the incised name *IANVARIVS* is perhaps a mark of ownership rather than production (2442.9).

The two incense burners from Carrawburgh have incised inscriptions not stamps. Both have a cursive form of the letter B and the similar forms of E, N and A. One is inscribed rather awkwardly on nine small panels with a retrograde S and faulty letter order, but the other, which is written on four larger panels, appears to have been accomplished with ease and confidence; both were probably written by the potter, Saturninus, who wished to dedicate them to Coventina and say that he made them himself.

RIB II records 160 graffiti made on tiles before firing, excluding the acephalous, uncertain and undeciphered examples. About 40% of these (2491.1-66) give information that seems directly relevant to making storing and counting tiles. At least two records are actually in sentence form, *fecit tubu(m) Clementinus* (2491.1), *Primus fecit X* (2491.3); others could be, but the texts are incomplete (2491.4, 5, 8?). One brick is inscribed with a list of items produced, pila bricks, voussoir flue-tiles and box flue-tiles (2491.2). Seven tiles are inscribed with a date which is perhaps relevant to the drying process (2491.9-15). Numerals, taken to be batch totals, are scratched onto the flat surface of some tiles, perhaps intended to be read when tiles were left to dry. Tally marks on the edges of tiles seem intended to be read when the tiles were already stacked. Most of the other inscriptions are taken to identify the tilemaker. Some are just personal marks, drawn with the finger, others are personal names or initials. A list of at least twenty-seven personal names occurs on a brick from Binchester. It is written in fourth century cursive and most of the names are in the genitive but the significance of this is not understood (2491.78). Another list of at least six names was found at Caerwent. These are in second century cursive and are all in the nominative, each followed by a number thought to indicate units produced.<sup>24</sup> Other lists may exist but are less well preserved (2491. 101? 105?).

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<sup>24</sup> *Britannia* xxiv 1993, 321-2, no. 30, fig. 9.

A certain proportion of the graffiti written on bricks and tiles appear to have no direct association with the manufacturing process. These are the alphabets, fragments of verse, salutations and Christian symbols. A smooth unhardened clay tile is an extremely inviting surface to inscribe; it is not unusual today to find graffiti left in new cement or concrete. The alphabets, greetings and snatches of verse could, of course, indicate some instruction in literacy taking place at the tiliary, but they could equally well reflect an irresistible temptation to mark a smooth surface. Illiterate marks also occur and accidental ones made by the feet of children and animals.

The tools needed to inscribe drying tiles would be very basic, a stylus, a pointed stick or in one case a tilemaker's comb (2491.3). The metrical fragments all appear to have been written with confidence by practised hands, three in capitals (2491.146-7) and one in cursive script, possibly of early second century date (2491.148). Some of the alphabets, in contrast, look as if they have been inscribed with difficulty and might well be the efforts of beginners (2492.136, 138, 142). The spelling in some of the graffiti reflects common pronunciation, *tegla* for *tegula* (2491.7), *cortis* for *cohortis* (2491.96), *Austalis* for *Augustalis* (2491.147). There is also one example of the omission of a final M in *tubu* (2491.1).

Mortaria, if marked at all, are usually stamped. It is rare to find a graffito or a painted inscription (*dipinto*) as a production mark. Sennianus, at *Durobrivae* (Chesterton) used a painted inscription, apparently as his maker's mark, but the text is not fully understood. The graffiti on mortaria are mainly of military origin but there are no overtly military stamps on mortaria from Roman Britain. Some of the surviving military graffiti indicate the users and not the maker of the mortaria: *centuriae Iusti Superi* (2496.2) and *....contub(e)rnio Messoris* (2496.3); the name *Valirius Marials* from Caerleon could conceivably be that of a user not a maker. A scribe who misspelt *Valerius Martialis* could also have used a nominative instead of a dative (2496.6). Regular production of mortaria does not appear to have been a function of military potteries; graffiti indicating intended destination perhaps suggest special orders. *Tamesubugus*, a civilian potter from Oxford, as well as having an interesting

Celtic name, possibly cognate with the name of the river *Tamesa/is*, chose to punctuate his inscription with stops between syllables (2496.4).

A few other pieces of coarseware bear graffiti that could reveal the names of British potters. Among these are Livius at Cirencester (2501.13), Severianus at Caerleon (2502.22), Victor at South Shields (2502.25). Vitalis at Rushden, Northamptonshire (2502.26) and Vitalus at Wilderspool (2502.27). The position of the inscription on the grey jar from Corbridge, which bears relief decoration depicting a smith-god, strongly suggests that *Alletio* is dative, a dedication to a Celtic smith-god of that name, rather than nominative, the name of the potter.

Graffiti written in the course of production shed more light on literacy among craftsmen than stamps can. Each one is composed and written individually and so there is good evidence that some workers in tileries and potteries were literate. Surviving inscriptions are unlikely to provide a representative sample of potential literate output. Currently available examples reveal learners who appear to be practising the alphabet, those who can write lines of verse, possibly from memory, men who can write greetings and simple sentences to record what they have made. Some of the skills displayed go beyond basic literacy, that is beyond learning the alphabet and writing phonetically. There is no reason to suppose that surviving samples indicate the upper limit of the workers' literate capabilities.

##### **5. Miscellaneous dies, marks and references to manufacturing.**

Archaeological evidence from Roman Britain includes dies for stamping mortaria and tiles, branding wood and marking ingots; most of these have been discussed above. The largest remaining group of dies for which a use has been discovered are those believed to have been for stamping bread. In communal living conditions, with shared cooking facilities, it is easy to see that bread-stamping might have been adopted to ensure that everyone received the appropriate rations. Sample loaves in the Roman Legionary Museum at Caerleon show that the dies work very well. Carbonised loaves from Pompeii are evidence that bread stamps were also used in

civilian bakeries (National Museum, Naples). Most of the bread stamps from Caerleon and Chester are of lead (2409.4, 5, 7, 10, 11) but clay could also be used (2409.3? 6?). All have retrograde letters to produce a forward impression; most have recessed letters so that the writing was raised on the loaf. In an environment in which names were scratched on personal equipment and labels, written on duty rosters and reports, listed in savings accounts by the *signifer*, inscribed on building stones and the name of a military unit was stamped on a batch of bread, reading names must have been a commonplace skill.

The clay die from the *vicus* at Malton, which could have been used for stamping pottery, is the only one which preserves the name of a die-maker, *cela<i>vi Vali(rius) Valentinus*, inscribed around the sides. The face of the die would give a retrograde impression of *Mogunti O(fficina?)*. No impressions of this die have been found, so its precise purpose is unknown, but, whatever it was, it seemed worthwhile employing a die-maker and he recorded his contribution, although he does not appear to have been a particularly efficient exponent of his craft (2409.24).

A stilus tablet from London has a possible reference to boat-building (2443.16) and the Vindolanda tablets mention a brewer called *Atrectus*<sup>25</sup> and leather production at Catterick,<sup>26</sup> where archaeological evidence confirms production. These references shed no light on the producers themselves, but hint at a need for literacy in large scale industrial and related entrepreneurial activity. If potters marked their wares, clothing and blanket makers and suppliers of commodities might have used some form of trade mark, but no evidence survives.

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<sup>25</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 182

<sup>26</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 343.



## TRADE AND COMMERCE

Inscriptions relating directly to trade and commerce in Roman Britain remain few; some, unsupported by other evidence, defy reasoned interpretation and leave room only for conjecture. Material considered here comes from the Vindolanda tablets, tombstones, religious dedications, lead sealings, oculists' stamps and graffiti on coarse pottery (Table W 1 - Catalogue p. 54). In general, inscriptions made on imported goods in the country of origin have been excluded from the present study.

### Evidence from Vindolanda.

Discovery of the Vindolanda tablets has provided some enlightening references to military trade and commerce in Roman Britain at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century A.D. One group of five documents, mostly lists and accounts, was found in the period 4 level of the *praetorium* dated to A.D. 104-20 (*Tab. Vind. II*, 180, 181, 182, 343, 344). Four of these relate to the supply of goods and commodities to the army; two are written in the same hand (180, 181) by a man who identifies himself as, a foreigner, *hominem trasmarinum*, in a draft petition, which he has written on the back of one of the accounts (344). It is possible that civilian traders could have instigated this group of accounts, and the same claim could be made of other similar documents from different locations and different excavation levels at Vindolanda (184, 186, 192, 207, 309). It is not surprising that such records should be stored at the fort and, since surviving archaeological evidence comprises records which were discarded in antiquity, it raises the question of how much more material was destroyed in clearing-up operations, and how much more has been lost over the centuries. Accounts and lists and record-keeping seem to be an inevitable feature of military organisation.

If the lists were all written by military personnel and filed in a military record office to keep account of dealings with an entirely illiterate body of traders, then the traders would be in a vulnerable position. The requirements of the Roman army generated so much business for local suppliers and foreign merchants that, over time, it is highly probable that, even in relatively new provinces, merchants would become attuned to

military record keeping. They would hardly be likely to leave themselves disadvantaged through the inability to keep written records.

Pinpointing civilian merchants who wrote or employed their own scribes to write accounts is not easy but detailed analysis of language by J. N Adams has led to some helpful suggestions.<sup>27</sup> He has demonstrated the orthographic correctness of the military scribes, characterised by their avoidance of mis-spellings that result from established speech patterns of all classes, for example omission of final **m**, omission of **h**, and the use of **e** to represent the diphthong **ae**. This orthographic correctness contrasts with the style of some of the texts thought to have been generated by civilian entrepreneurs. In particular the Octavius letter (*Tab. Vind. II*, 343) is full of colloquial language, including four instances of **e** for **ae** and only one correct use of the diphthong. Octavius also has one hypercorrect form, *mae* for *me*, uses *nissi* for *nisi* and some of his grammatical forms are colloquial. Three examples, of genitives ending in **e** instead of **ae** occur in letter 186, along with a very unusual phonetic mis-spelling, *Februar-* for *Februar-*. Adams considers 186 and 343 to be special cases in which educated scribal practice has not obscured natural speech patterns. He suggests that they do not have the same origins as the bulk of the Vindolanda material. It could be that their colloquial style points to the work of the traders themselves or of their civilian scribes who were not as well educated as the military ones. The closing greeting in Octavius' letter is in the same hand as the main text and so he perhaps wrote the letter himself. A detailed discussion of the linguistic features is contained in Adams' paper and a list of spelling irregularities can be seen in Table W 11.

The Celtic (?) name, Gavo, appears in two of the tablets concerned with merchandise. In both it is spelt *Gavvone* at the beginning of the account but *Gavonis* at the end. The uncertainty is phonetically inspired. His account lists mainly woollen items, blankets and clothing (*Tab. Vind. II* 192, 207). Two of the words he uses for blanket / covers are in fact latinised Celtic words, *bedocem* / *tosseas*. This fact, combined with his Celtic name, suggests that he might have been a Celtic merchant, possibly even

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<sup>27</sup> The language of the Vindolanda Tablets, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, 86-134.

British. Dealing with such suppliers provided one route by which new words entered the Latin language and Latin words were borrowed by the Celts.

Evidence that literate communication went on between military personnel and civilian traders in Roman Britain at the start of the second century rests on these few tablets from Vindolanda (180-2,343-4,184, 186,192, 207, 309). Octavius addresses his letter to Candidus who could be the same man whose name appears in 180 and 181, thus providing a further link between this group of accounts. The strongest evidence that civilians are writing to military personnel is found in the language of the Octavius letter and tablet 186 contrasted with that of texts written by military scribes, references to Celtic woollen goods in Gavo's account and the fact that a supplier of wheat refers to himself as a foreigner, *hominem trasmarinum*. It does not amount to proof but is strongly suggestive that the literate milieu included military and civilian. If this is accepted as a possibility, then it might not be too unreasonable to envisage a situation in which civilian merchants left copies of their accounts at Vindolanda and also kept copies themselves.

#### Evidence from tombstones and religious dedications.

An individual's participation in literate activity is not, of course, confined to only one field. Literate merchants probably set up religious dedications, wrote advertisements, had tombstones made for members of their family and perhaps deposited curse tablets as well as using their literate ability to deal with their business and personal affairs. Present evidence does not link any particular person to a combination of these activities but foreign traders who settled here are perhaps represented by M. Verecundius Diogenes from Bourges, who died at York (RIB I, 678), Philus the Sequanian, who is depicted on his tombstone at Cirencester wearing a hooded, woollen cloak (RIB I, 110), Salmanes who buried his son at Auchendavy (RIB I, 2182) and Barates, the Palmyrene who buried his Catuvellaunian wife at South Shields and later died at Corbridge (RIB I, 1065, 1171). The verse dedication to the *Matres* from Bowness-on-Solway makes an explicit reference to a profitable venture, implying that [Ant]onianus was a trader, possibly with Ireland. His dedication is

extremely literate, indicating a high level of education and familiarity with Virgil's Eclogues. L. Viducius Placidus was clearly a wealthy and successful merchant who engaged in trade between York and the Rhineland in the third century.<sup>28</sup> M. Aurelius Lunaris was probably a merchant too. He dedicated an altar to *Toutela Boudig(a)* or possibly *Toutela Bou(r)dig(alensis)*, a deity who protected Bordeaux, before setting out from York and then set it up in Bordeaux in A.D. 237. Relief on the altar depicts a boar, which was perhaps the emblem of York, and a male deity believed to be a personification of the Garonne. It emphasises the close trading connections between York and the Garonne.<sup>29</sup> Such successful merchants are likely to have employed scribes and engaged in much literate activity of which no evidence survives.

#### Labels and lead sealings.

The miscellaneous lead sealings from Roman Britain are likely to include some from civilian sources, possibly merchants (2411.243-310). However, without any evidence about the sort of goods to which they were attached, they can reveal little about trading links. Some of the initials could represent the *tria nomina* of private individuals but expansion is not usually possible. One unusual sealing from London has the word *TERTINI* written clockwise round a globular amphora. It has close parallels at Lyon where many sealings of civilian merchants have been found. The packages would also bear labels stating their destination. Some sort of registration system might have applied and baggage-handlers, hauliers and perhaps customs officials might have required written information en route.

#### Oculists' stamps.

About thirty oculists' (*collyrium*) stamps have now been discovered in Britain. The distribution and significance of oculists' stamps in Britain and other provinces have been the subject of papers by Vivian Nutton,<sup>30</sup> George Boon<sup>31</sup> and Ralph Jackson.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Britannia* viii, 1977, 430 no.18.

<sup>29</sup> P. Courteault, An inscription recently found at Bordeaux, *JRS* 1921, p.101-7. Courteault cites C. Juliane, *Histoire de la Gaule*, who claims that *ebor/ebur* (apparent in *Eboracum*) might be a Celtic word for boar, analogous to Germanic *eber*, but D. Ellis Evans (1967) gives *eburo* - yew.

<sup>30</sup> *Epigraphica* xxxiv, 1972, p.16-29.

<sup>31</sup> *Britannia* xiv, 1983, p.1-12.

<sup>32</sup> *Britannia* xxi, 1990, p.275-283.

Vivian Nutton's suggestion that they were used by itinerant doctors or oculists, who were organised into *collegia* is attractive. Central production of some remedies could account for the concentrations of stamps in some towns in *Gallia Belgica*: Reims (15), Rouen (14), Naix (11), Bavai (9). Market towns and shrines associated with healing seem likely centres. Obtaining supplies of ingredients would also be easier if production was centralised. George Boon points out that six stamps of Q. Iunius Taurus have turned up at continental sites, five of them at Naix. They name fifteen different preparations with one duplicate. He could have been supplying salves to several itinerant practitioners.

The present work is not concerned with the medical aspects of eye diseases and their treatment, but rather with the stamps themselves and their production and function. It is uncommon to find personal names occurring on more than one stamp and none of the names on British stamps is found on continental examples. They are believed to be the names of inventors or providers of the remedies rather than of the doctors who administered them. The stamps would be applied to the remedies when they were produced. Fairly large-scale production of some remedies has been suggested and Pliny mentions preparations that could be bought: *facta iam pridem emplastra et collyria*.<sup>33</sup>

The majority of the stamps from Roman Britain have a fairly professional appearance. All but two have been correctly engraved retrograde; the exceptions are the stamp from Littleborough which is partially retrograde (2446.29) and the one from Ireland which appears to have a retrograde C cut instead of a D at the beginning of *diamysus* (2446.28). Most of them have clear, squarish capitals; many show the use of guidelines, serifs and ligatures and some have stops. They were evidently intended to give a clear impression which could be read by someone with medical knowledge. The language is specialised and is unlikely to have been aimed at the general public, although some sufferers might have read them.

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<sup>33</sup> N H xxiv, cap 11.

The British stamps are mainly from towns or rural sites; only three come from military locations. Since the names on them are not duplicated on the Continent they could be evidence of local producers in Britain. It is not possible to say, from available evidence, whether production was small scale for immediate dispensation, for example on a rural estate, or larger scale for sale to several itinerant practitioners. Medicaments marked with one stamp could have had quite widespread distribution but there is no way of gauging this. Producing the remedies was clearly a specialised business, just as the treatment of ailments was specialised, but the two activities need not have been carried out by the same person. The producer needed to stamp his goods whereas the doctor might only have needed to read the stamps and choose the correct remedy; the doctor would only need to own a stamp if he also invented remedies or bought recipes and made them up himself. Finds of stamps with surgical instruments suggest that some doctors did this.<sup>34</sup> Gaius Valerius Amandus and Gaius Valerius Valentinus were perhaps related or two freedmen in business together producing salves. Both names appear on one stamp from a rural site at Biggleswade in Bedfordshire. They, or a practitioner making up their remedies, have written orthograde graffiti on the upper and lower faces of the stone to speed up selection of the correct side of the stamp. The informal lettering of these additional notes contrasts with the lettering of the stamps themselves (2446.2).

The preferred materials for making oculists' stamps found in Roman Britain are described as green steatite or soapstone (7 examples), green schist (3 examples), and various "green stones" (4 examples). Other materials include Purbeck marble, fine limestone, various fine-grained grey stones, white china clay and jasper. There has been no systematic scientific analysis of composition to try to discover the origins of these materials. The stamp from Colchester, believed to be of Purbeck marble, is almost certainly of British manufacture (2446.8). The third edge of this stamp is unfinished and the lettering seems to reflect the fact that the surface is harder to inscribe than most of the other materials used. The green steatite / soapstone is fine-grained and soft, point 1 on Mohs 1-10 scale of hardness,<sup>35</sup> and quite easy to engrave

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<sup>34</sup> V. Nutton, *Epigraphica* xxxiv, 1972, p.25.

<sup>35</sup> D.G.A. Whitton and J.R.V. Brooks, *Dictionary of Geology*, Penguin 1972.

This type of material was used in Britain to make moulds for casting bronze weapons and tools in the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Many of the moulds have been found near the mountainous regions of the North-West where supplies of these minerals might have been obtained. It would seem possible that suitable materials for oculists' stamps could have been obtained in Britain during the Roman period, but no scientific research has been done to prove this. Quite small quantities were required and whoever produced the medicaments must have had access to materials for the stamps as well as the medical ingredients.

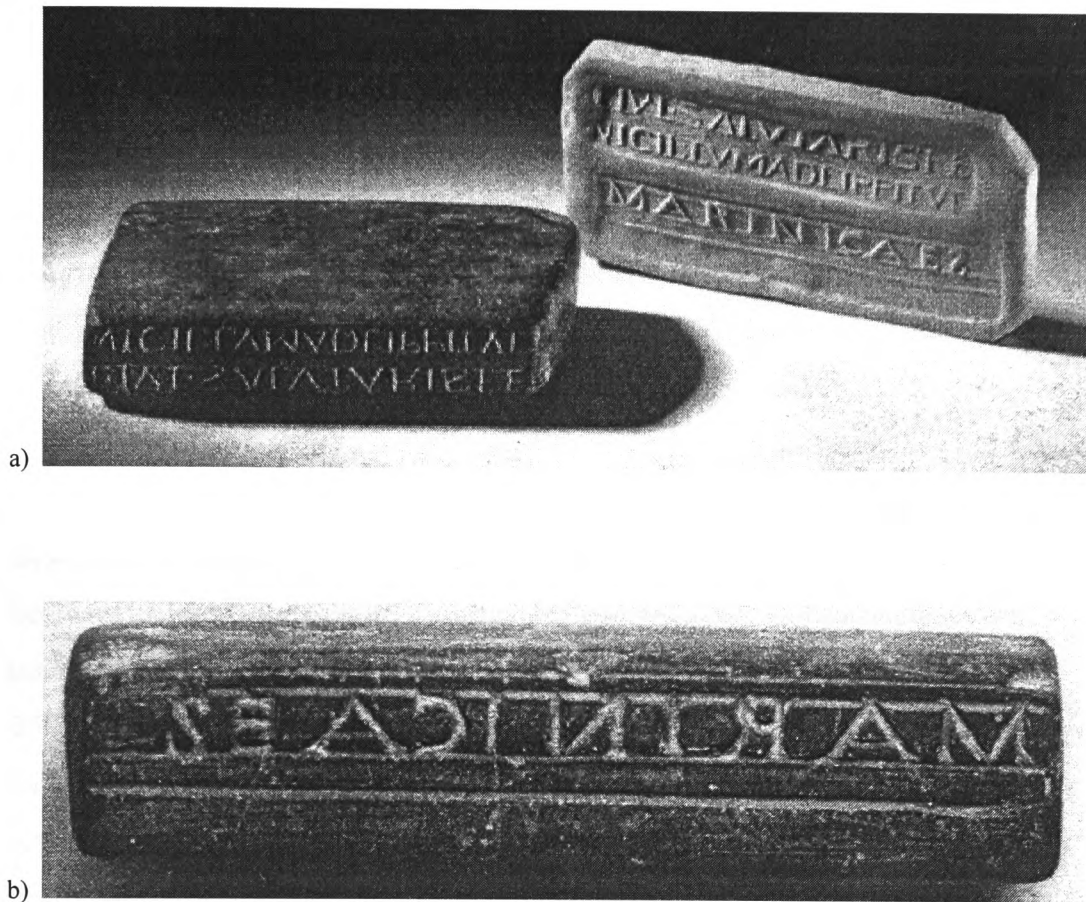
The lettering on most of the British stamps looks quite professional and the spelling is generally accurate (Fig. 20). Ligatures and abbreviations are not noticeably standardised. *Stactu* and *melinu* on the stamp from Lydney could be abbreviations rather than evidence of loss of final consonant in pronunciation. The same stamp has two different abbreviations of *collyrium* (2446.9). It is possible that whoever engraved the stamps had some understanding of the content. If the engraver had no knowledge at all of the medical terms many more errors and irregularities might be expected. Secondary use is apparent for three stamps: the white china clay example from Watercrock in Cumbria has been cut down from a larger original and engraved with just a name, *P. Clodi* (2446.3); the stamp from Cambridge has a worn inscription reading *L. Iul(i) Salutaris penicillum ad lippitud(inem)* and a crisper inscription in different lettering reading *Marini caes(arianum)* (2446.22 - Fig.20); the stamp from Caistor-by-Norwich has been cut down from a larger original and retains only a name, *P. Anic(ii) Sedati* on one edge with another inscription deliberately erased. These alterations seem to suggest that stamps were handed down to different practitioners and perhaps re-inscribed when old remedies became unavailable or were superseded by something better.

Oculists' stamps are rarely found on military sites;<sup>36</sup> none has been found in the forts along Hadrian's Wall and only one in Scotland from Tranent, near Inveresk (2446.12). A strength report of the First Tungrian Cohort at Vindolanda gives evidence of

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<sup>36</sup> V. Nutton, *Epigraphica* xxxiv, 1972, 16-29.

**Fig. 20: A *collyrium* stamp from Castle Hill, Cambridgeshire.**



*Britannia* xxi 1990 276. a) *L. Iul. Salutaris pe/nicillum ad lippitud(inem)*  
b) *Marini caes(arianum)*.

soldiers suffering from inflammation of the eyes.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps military doctors bought ready made supplies of eye salves, stamped elsewhere by suppliers, or used preparations that were marked in some other way; it seems unlikely that military cases were allowed to go untreated when oculists are attested in civilian locations in Britain.

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<sup>37</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 154.



### Graffiti on coarse pottery.

Imported amphorae were valuable containers which were re-used for a variety of purposes.<sup>38</sup> Secondary inscriptions in the form of graffiti give some indication of how the vessels were re-used. There are records of capacity, weight, value and the occasional indication of content. Most of these are incised numerals only and provide no evidence of literacy among shop or tavern keepers who might have been selling the goods. Occasionally the letters M and S are found as abbreviations of *modii* and *sextarii* ((2494.46) and there may be an additional ownership mark but it need not be contemporary with the numeral (2494.44). Indications of content are very few: three inscriptions, scratched after firing, record wine, one of which has a dubious spelling *VINN?* (2494.97); a graffito from Perthshire is written in Greek characters and could refer to a preparation of wine and horehound which was used for chest complaints (2494.94). Coarseware vessels other than amphorae bear similar graffiti. Weights are recorded, including the weight of a jar empty and full (2503.11) and contents are described, such as honey (2503.3), peas (2503.5) and possibly coriander seeds (2503.1). Painted inscriptions can also be informative, but survival rate is low and many might have been applied in the country of origin rather than in Britain, for example, the recent find at Caerleon of the neck and shoulder of an amphora with a dipinto which probably refers to raisin wine: *AACII PERPRIMUM*. A second dipinto on this fragment indicates that it belonged to or was destined for *Legio II Augusta*.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> RIB II p.33, introduction, S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin.

<sup>39</sup> *Britannia* xxv, 1994, 311 no.92.

## ADMINISTRATION.

Inscriptions selected here for their connection with military and civil administration in Roman Britain are listed in Table W1 (Catalogue p. 54). It is inevitable that epigraphic material will sometimes provide information relevant to more than one function and the aim is to keep repetition to a minimum by focusing on the primary function of the inscription and dealing only briefly with incidental detail.

### Evidence from Vindolanda:

The army's daily routine of checking that personnel and equipment are all present and correct is evidenced by the *renuntium* reports (*Tab. Vind. II* 127-153). Twelve of these were found close together in the Period 3 level (AD 97-103) and their disposal suggests that office space was being cleared of out of date material. The reports are very formulaic with few variations in format, but all seem to have been written in different hands, suggesting that the *optiones* and *curatores* wrote them as they needed them, rather than using a *pro forma*. Those that are more or less complete seem to have been written and signed by the same hand. The usual format is:

date (day and month)  
*renuntium* + name of cohort in genitive  
*omnes ad loca qui debunt et impedimenta*  
*renuntiavit / renuntiaverunt* + name(s)  
*optio / curator(es)* + century

The only spelling variations are a preference for the form *inpedimenta* in some reports (145, 146, 152), an accidental omission of **n** in *renutium* (136), one instance of *chortis* for *cohortis* (127) and evidence of substandard Latin in the six instances of *debunt* for *debent*, which must also have occurred in many of the fragmented texts. This change of conjugation is seen by J.N Adams as a feature which crept into an exemplar and then persisted because it was standard form at the time. He cites a parallel example from an unpublished text, *habunt* for *habent*.<sup>40</sup> Since the *renuntium* reports are so short and so regular in format, it seems possible that those who wrote them relied on

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<sup>40</sup> J.N. Adams, *The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets*, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, p.103.

memory rather than always following an exemplar. This could explain the few spelling variations but it also implies that the use of *debunt* instead of *debent* was well established. The junior officers involved had to adapt the close of the report according to circumstances. It is not known where the reports were written; it could have been inside the fort or wherever parties of men were working in the vicinity. Bowman and Thomas comment on the quality of the writing in only a few texts: The writing in 135 is described as “of good quality”, 139 “a good regular hand”; 147 is written in “large elegant script”; only 150 is described as “crude”.

Tablets 154, 156, 160 and 164 are examples of more general reports. Three of these give the date (day and month only). The first (154) is a strength report of the First Cohort of Tungrians dated May 18th. It was prepared for the prefect, Iulius Verecundus, perhaps for inclusion in his camp log. The hand is described as a competent Old Roman Cursive. It summarises the number of men who are away on duty at Corbridge and London, those sick and wounded and those present and available for active service; the importance of such information to those in command cannot be in doubt. A report dated April 27th. records men engaged in various workshops and another for March 7th. probably relates to routine building duties. Tablet 164 appears to be an intelligence report on the local natives.

It is not known who prepared these reports but the language contains several features common in the military texts from Vindolanda:<sup>41</sup> the use of a second declension singular locative ablative, *Londinio*, *officio Ferocis*; correct retention of the diphthong *ae*, for example in *praefectus*, and of the *h* in *coh(ortis)*; contraction of *ii* to *i*, exemplified by *in is* for *in iis/eis*, *Coris* for *Coriis*. The intelligence report (164) not only refers to the natives as “British” rather than making any tribal distinction, it also uses an apparently disparaging diminutive, *Brittunculi* which is only attested in this text.

Applications for leave of absence were made formally, by letter, to the prefect. The standard formula used at Vindolanda for such a request was *rogo domine* (name)

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<sup>41</sup> Adams op. cit.

*dignum me habeas cui des commeatum*. The names of a few applicants have been preserved but their status and the reasons for the requests are uncertain. The place where leave is to be spent is specified in two texts: *Ulucium(?)* (174) and Corbridge (175). One letter deviates from the normal word order but otherwise uses the same manner of request (175). It is not apparent from the surviving examples whether they were written by the applicant himself or by an officer or by a clerk.

The need for written communication to deal with relatively minor as well as more important administrative detail is clear from the range of correspondence which has survived at Vindolanda. The largest group of letters belongs to the archive of Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the Ninth Cohort of Batavians. His correspondents are mainly equestrian officers; there are also two centurions, two or perhaps three decurions and one addressee who could be of senatorial status, perhaps a legionary legate (225). Letters which do not belong to the Cerialis “archive” represent the correspondence of other prefects (295, 345), a legionary *aquilifer* (214), an *optio* and a decurion (300).

Routine matters of organisation are the subject of many of the letters: arranging supplies and transport, sending and receiving information or articles via messengers. Curtius Super (*optio* ?) writes to Cassius Saecularis about buying or selling barley and seems to suggest that Saecularis should act as go-between, or possibly as interpreter. This hints at communication with the natives (213). The centurion, Clodius Super, is concerned about clothing in his letter to the prefect, Cerialis (255). Three texts deal with transporting lime and stone and providing waggons for some other purpose, but the names of the correspondents have been lost (314-316). Caecilius Septemher has sent something via a cavalryman to his fellow prefect Cerialis (252), and Celonius Iustus, also a prefect, used a decurion called Atto as his messenger and awaits his return (345). Cerialis writes to someone called Felicius (Felicio?) requesting him to come to Vindolanda the following morning. He cannot have been too far away and the message must have been delivered fairly swiftly. The closing greeting includes the date to avoid any confusion about “tomorrow morning” (242). All these texts reflect very routine activity around the fort. Notes had to be sent for matters which could be quickly dealt with by telephone today. Writing was absolutely essential to

the smooth running of the administration; the army could not have fulfilled its function efficiently unless it had junior and senior officers who were literate, plenty of well-trained scribes, and well organised means of delivering letters.

A more formal type of communication is represented by a letter of commendation written by a prefect Claudius Karus, on behalf of a man named Brigionus (?); he asks Flavius Cerialis to commend him to the *centurio regionarius* at Carlisle (250). Cerialis also writes to Crispinus, who could be a legionary legate or a laticlave tribune, asking him to use his influence with the governor (225). A draft petition of a formal complaint about mistreatment was written by a civilian trader (?) on the back of an account of wheat supplies. He appears to have been flogged by a centurion and has been unable to have his case dealt with by the other centurions, the prefect or the *beneficiarius*. This letter looks as if he might be making an appeal to the governor or possibly the emperor since the word “majesty” is used (344).

Administrative and personal letters from Vindolanda show that normal practice was for a scribe to write the main part of the letter and for the person in whose name it was sent to add a closing greeting in his own hand. The scribes could be working from a draft or taking dictation; in one of the letters from Cerialis a dictation error *et hiem* was corrected to *etiam* (234) and his letter to Crispinus is believed to be a draft written in his own hand (225). On the evidence of handwriting, several draft copies are thought to be the work of Cerialis himself. The drafts have no opening or closing address and there are alterations and words crossed out. Some of the closing greetings are very affectionate, even in quite routine letters; *vale mi Felici (?) karissime* (242); *valeas domine frater carissime et ....issime* (255). The opening greeting in the letter from the legionary *aquilifer*, Vittius Adiutor, is particularly warm and friendly: *Cassio Saeculari fraterclo suo plurimam salutem*.

The language of the scribes at Vindolanda shows correct, conservative orthography. Their training led them to avoid several common mis-spellings influenced by the pronunciation of the day. One symptom of this is the dictation error *et hiem* for *etiam*; the aspirate was commonly dropped in speech and could not have been heard here

since *etiam* was intended. The scribe none the less included the **h** in his spelling of *hiem* (234). The contrast between the educated Latin of the military scribes at Vindolanda and the colloquial language of some of the people believed to have been civilian traders has already been discussed. Flavius Cerialis' Latin is sophisticated with complex sentence structure and educated phraseology. He is believed to have been a Batavian commanding recruits from his own country. His linguistic ability indicates that he was well educated. His father could have received citizenship from Petillius Cerialis after the suppression of the Batavian revolt of A.D.69-70. If so, he might have sent his son to a good provincial school to receive a Roman education. Adams gives a full and valuable discussion of the language of the Vindolanda tablets<sup>42</sup> and spelling irregularities are listed in Table W11 at the end of this chapter.

#### Military diplomas:

The epigraphic quality of the diplomas themselves does not form part of this study since they were not produced in Britain; they bear a declaration that they were copies of a bronze tablet set up in Rome. Their value to the serving soldiers and veterans who received them must have been in the grant of citizenship to themselves and an existing wife or, if unmarried, a future wife and any existing children. This applies to diplomas issued before A.D.140 (RIB II 2401.1-8); thereafter existing children were not included in the grant of citizenship (RIB II 2401.9-13).

The diplomas from Britain were issued to serving soldiers with 25 years service (2401.1-3) and to veterans with 25 or more years service who had received an honourable discharge (2401.5-10, 12, 13). It is not certain whether veterans automatically received a diploma or bought them if they chose; finds are fairly rare and so perhaps the latter is the case. Possession of a diploma does not indicate literacy on the part of the owner. It does, however, suggest that he was involved in a way of life in which documentation was important. Even if he could not read well, a bronze tablet verifying his status as a Roman citizen and the status of his children was probably a treasured possession. Owners of diplomas found in Britain include Reburus, a Spaniard, serving as a decurion in *Ala I Pannoniorum Tampiana* (2401.1),

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<sup>42</sup> op.cit. - *JRS* lxxxv 1995.

Mansuetus, a Treveran infantryman with *Coh. II Delmatarum* (2401.8), Amandius, an infantryman with *Coh. I Tungrorum* at Vindolanda (2401.9) and a soldier from Gloucester who served with *Coh. I Fida Vardullorum* (2401.12). The fact that they retained their diplomas, and some apparently stayed in Britain after their discharge, highlights an aspect of the romanisation process. The offspring of veterans were useful for future recruitment to the army and perhaps played a part in civic affairs. Men who had served for 25 years in the Roman army were bound to have adopted some Roman ways. Their descendants would contribute to the development of the mixed culture of Romano-British society. The Latin language would perhaps endure here and if literacy were an advantage, there would be people willing to find or provide a means of acquiring it.

#### Milestones:

About 110 milestones are recorded for Roman Britain. They have been listed chronologically with some additional information in Table W8 (p. 187). The most important information written on Roman milestones in Britain is the name of the emperor and in the vast majority of cases this is the only epigraphic message. There is only one reference to road improvements: *vias in ruinam vetustate conlapsas restituit* and that stone is now lost (2228). Three milestones mention the civilian authority responsible for maintaining the road and setting up the inscription: one was set up a mile along the Fosse Way from Lincoln by *R(es)p(ublica) Lindensis* (2240); another was found near Kenchester and has a reference to *R(es)p(ublica) C(ivitatis) D(obunorum)* (2250); the third was found in 1982 at Brixworth, Northamptonshire, *R(es)p(ublica) B(elgarum) P(osuit)* (Fig. 21).<sup>43</sup>

Most milestones from Roman Britain are of third century date; they bear evidence of the power struggles and upheavals of the period, of Britain's allegiance to the Gallic Empire under Postumus and Tetricus and of the rapid changes which followed. The majority of British milestones give the imperial name in the dative implying an active expression of allegiance on the part of those involved in administration and passive acceptance by the emperor. Only a few stones have the emperor's name in the

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<sup>43</sup> *Britannia* xvi 1985, 324 no.3.

**Fig. 21: A milestone set up by the *Respublica Belgarum*.**



*Britannia* xvi 1985 324 no. 3     ....JE AVG R(espublica) B(elgarum) P(osuit).



nominate which might suggest that he took an active interest in maintaining the road system; this could have been the case with Hadrian and Septimius Severus. There is a shortage of milestones for the period of relative stability under Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius whose reigns produced plenty of official epigraphy in other connections. Early milestones could, of course, have been cut down for re-use and the primary inscriptions might have been lost altogether. In times of rapid change, it seems that milestones would serve as useful reminders of the régime which collected the taxes and paid the army.

The lettering on British milestones tends to be rather crude, although the effect of weathering should not be underestimated here. Initial preparation of the surface to be inscribed is not generally as good as for other official epigraphy. The milestone to Antoninus Pius, from Cramond, has a prepared ansate panel and fairly competent lettering (2313) and a milestone of Constantine I from the line of the Stanegate is fairly neatly inscribed within a rectangular panel (2303). Some of the cylindrical stones might have been turned in a workshop but, for the most part, milestones are so large that they must have been handled as little as possible and many were perhaps inscribed *in situ*.

Secondary use is apparent in several cases, evidenced by: the removal of one set of imperial titles to be replaced by another (2241, 2297, 2301); upending the stone and inscribing the other end (2273/4, 2291/2); adding a new name on a different face of a stone, as at Port Talbot in West-Glamorgan where three sides of a milestone have been inscribed to Gordian III, Licinius and joint emperors (?) Diocletian and Maximian (2252, 2253, 2256); overwriting the primary inscription with a new name as in the replacement of Florian by Probus at Bowes (2280) or even re-writing the same name (2237).

Spelling irregularities are indicated by an E in the lettering column of Table W8 and are listed in Table W11. They are mainly due to masons' errors and confusion about proper names. The quality of the lettering and the number of errors suggest that the best craftsmen were not available for this work. In view of the size of some of the

**Table W8: Roman Milestones.**

<u>Date AD</u>	<u>Emperor</u>	<u>RIB I</u>	<u>Near/at</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Letter ing</u>	<u>Shape</u>
41-117	(No milestones recorded for Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva or Trajan)					
117-138	Hadrian	2244*	Leicester	?	C	cyli <sup>nd</sup>
		2265*	Llanfairfechan.	nom.	CD	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2272*	Lancaster	dat.	C	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
138-161	Antoninus Pius	2313	Cramond	dat.	C?	cyl.+ans.pan,
161-180	Marcus Aurelius					
161-169	Lucius Verus					
176-92	Commodus					
193	Pertinax					
193	Didius Iulianus					
193-211	Septimius Severus	2266}	Llanfairfechan	nom.	CE	oval sect.
198-217	Caracalla	2266}	Llanfairfechan	nom.	CE	oval sect.
		2228?*	Bitterne	?	lost	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2264	Bangor.	?	lost	?
		2298	MC 17 H.W.	dat.	lost	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		<i>JRS</i> xlvii	Clwyd	dat.	?	tall,narrow.
208-211	Severus/Caracal./Geta					
209-212	Geta					
217-218	Macrinus					
218	Diadumenianus					
218-222	Elagabalus					
222-235	Severus Alexander	2299*	Stanegate	dat.	CD	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2306*	Mil.Way,H.W.	dat.	DE	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
235-238	Maximinus					
238	Gordian I					
238	Gordian II					
238	Balbinus					
238	Pupienus					
238-244	Gordian III	2222	Bitterne	dat.	lost	rect.
		2224	Bitterne	?	C	ellipt. section
		2234	Redruth, Cnwl	dat.	D	quad.
		2252	Port Talbot	nom.	DE	quad.**
		2269?	Ribchester	dat.	lost	tapered
		2289	Scalesceugh	dat.	D	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2294	Willington, Durh.	dat.	D	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2295	Lanchester	dat.	lost	?
244-249	Philip	2270	Lancaster	dat.	D	quad.
		2284	Appleby, Westm.	dat.	D	quad.
		2286	Old Carlisle	dat.	lost	octagonal
249-251	Decius	2263	Caernarvon	dat.	DE	quad.
		2268	Ribchester	dat.	lost	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .
		2271	Lancaster	dat.	CD	quad.
		2273	Castleford	dat.	D	cyli <sup>nd</sup> **
		2276	Aldbrough	dat.	CE	oval sect.
		2277	Aldbrough	nom.	C	oval sect.
		2278	Aldbrough	?	?	cyli <sup>nd</sup> .frag.

(Table W8 cont.)

251-253	Trebonianus Gallus+ Volusianus	2223	Bitterne	dat.	lost	rect.
		2230	Tintagel	dat.	DE	squ.
		2274*	Castleford	dat.	DE	cylind.
		2279	Greta Bridge	dat.	C	cylind.
253	Aemilian					
253-260	Valerian	2240*	Lincoln	dat	BC	cylind.
253-268	Gallienus					
258-268	Postumus	2232	Helston, Cornwl	dat.	D	rect. pillar
		2255	Margam	dat.	DE	quad.
		2260	Trecastle, Carm.	dat.	lost	quad.**
		<i>JRS liv</i>	Brougham	dat.	DE	quad.
268-270	Claudius II	2246?	Lichfield	?	?	frag.
268-270	Victorinus	2238	Chesterton	dat.	D	quad.
		2241*	Lincoln	dat.	D	quad.**
		2251	Pyle	dat.	DE	quad.
		2261	Trecastle, Carm.	dat.	D	quad.**
		2287	Old Penrith	nom.	lost	cylind.
		2296	Corbridge	dat	lost	?
270	Quintillus					
270-273	Tetricus	2224	Bitterne	n.+dat.	DE	elipt.section
		2225	Bitterne	dat.	DE	quad.
		2226	Bitterne	dat.	lost	recut squ.
270-275	Aurelian	2227	Bitterne	dat	lost	recut squ.
		2309	Stanegate?	dat.	D	?
275-276	Tacitus	2262	Carmarthens.	dat.	lost	?
276	Florianus	2235*	Chesterton	dat.	D	oval section
		2275	Castleford	dat.	D	cylind.
		2280	Bowes	dat.	D	cylind.**
276-282	Probus	2280	Bowes	dat.	D	cylind.**
		2300	Stanegate	nom.	D	rect.
282-283	Carus	2281*	Bowes	dat.	D	cylind.
		2282	Bowes	dat.	lost	cylind.
283-285	Carinus	98	Clanville, Hants	dat.	C	quad.
283-284	Numerian	2250*	Kenchester	dat.	DE	quad.
		2307	Mil.Way H.W.	dat.	DE	cylind.
284-305	Diocletian	2257	Neath	dat.	DE	rough pillar
		2256}	Port Talbot	dat.	DE	quad.**
		2311	Mil.Way H.W.	nom.	DE	rect.
286-305	Maximian	2256}	Port Talbot	dat.	DE	quad.**
		2301	Stanegate	dat	?	columnar**
286-293	Carausius	2291	Carlisle	dat.	D	cylind? **
293-306	Constantius Chlorus	2258	Brecon	nom.	D	quad.**
(305-306)	Fl. Severus Caes)	2229	Fosse/Ilchester	dat.	D	cylind.**
(305-306)	Fl. Severus+					
	Maximinus Daia Caesars)	2219	Rochester	dat.	D	irreg.
305-306	Constantius	2301	Stanegate	dat.	?	columnar**
305-311	Galerius	2293	Dere St.	dat.	D	cylind.
306-307	Severus					
309-313	Maximinus Daia	2254	Port Talbot	dat.	D	rect.
		2297?	Corbridge	nom.	D	cylind.**
		2301	Stanegate	dat.	D	columnar**
306-312	Maxentius					

(Table W8 cont.)

307-337	Constantine	2220	Worthing	dat.	C	?
		2233	Cornwall	dat.	D	rect.?
		2237(x2)	Cambridge	dat.	D/D	oval sect.**
		2242	Ancaster,Lincs	dat.	C	rect.
		2249	Kempsey, Worcs.	dat.	DE	rect.
		2267	Caerhun	dat.	CE	?
		2285	Brougham	dat.	CD	?
		2288	Hesket, Cumb.	dat.	lost	?
		2292	Carlisle	dat.	D	cylind?***
		2301	Stanegate	dat	?	columnar**
		2302	Stanegate	nom.	D	quad.
		2303	Stanegate	dat.	C	cyl.+rect.pan.
		2310	Carvoran	dat	CE	rect.
		JRS liv	Caves Inn	dat.	?	rect.
		308-324	Licinius	2231	Tintagel	?
2253	Port Talbot			?	DE	quad.**
(317-326	Crispus, son of					
	Constantine I, Nob.Caes)	2239	Ermine St?	dat.	D	rect.
337-340	Constantine II	2259	Brecon	nom.	D	quad.**
337-423	(No milestones recorded for Constans, Constantius II, Magnentius, Julian, Jovian, Valentinian, Valens, Gratian, Valentinian II, Theodosius, or Honorius)					

Name of emperor lost - 2236\*\* (Cambridge); 2243\* (Buxton); 2283\* (Kirkby Lonsdale); 2290\*\* (Carlisle); 2308 (Stanegate), 2314 (?) - *Bono Reipublicae Nato* ; *Britannia* xvi, 1985, 324 no.3\* (Wonston, Hants.)

- \* Additional information such as distance or authority responsible for setting up the milestone.  
 \*\* Stone recut for secondary inscription, or bearing more than one inscription.

stones it seems likely that someone might have been sent out with a draft to inscribe or re-inscribe a milestone where it stood. He would need to be fairly literate and able to copy. The spellings which probably reflect speech patterns, *Ag(usto)* for *Aug(usto)*, and *Ces(ari)* for *Caes(ari)* all belong to the late third and early fourth century, to the reigns of Tetricus, Licinius, Constantine I and Diocletian (2225, 2253, 2267, 2311). On other British milestones the diphthong *ae* is retained in the word *Caesari*. Changes in vowel sounds are also attested on official building stones of the third century but rarely.

#### Other inscriptions on stone:

The majority of official building inscriptions and religious dedications fall into the period from the reign of Hadrian to the reign of Diocletian. Some of these include the name of the provincial governor. Both types of inscriptions have been dealt with in

previous chapters and additional observations in connection with administration will be stated briefly. In building inscriptions the governor's name usually appears after the imperial titles and can be introduced using recognised formulae. The formulae which appear most frequently on about 66 British inscriptions naming the governor are listed below in Table W9.

The governor acted through the agency of his commanding officers but when a military inscription has the name of the governor in the nominative it seems to suggest that he had a particular interest in the work that was being commemorated, for example, rebuilding the bath house which had been destroyed by fire at Bowes (730) or setting up an altar to the *Genius* of the emperor and of the standards at High Rochester (1262). The dedication to Matunus, also from High Rochester, stated that Gaius Iulius Marcus (name erased) set up and dedicated the slab; perhaps the timing of this coincided with an official visit.

**Table W 9: Formulae for introducing the names of provincial governors.**

<u>No. of examples</u>	<u>Formula</u>	<u>Comment</u>
9	Name only-in ablative	Mainly in inscriptions of A. Platorius Nepos. 122-126 A.D. but see also RIB I 1335, 2298.
24	<i>sub</i> + name in ablative	The most frequently found formula from governorship of Sextus Iulius Severus to Ulpian Marcellus, 130-217 A.D; thereafter appears occasionally. (It occurs earlier on diplomas)
9	<i>sub cura</i> + genitive	On finds from Quintus Lollius Urbicus 138-142 A.D. - then passim.
7	<i>curante</i>	Appears first under Virius Lupus, 197-202 A.D. then passim.
5	<i>per</i> + accusative	2 examples from Chesters, (1465, 1467) - same mason? 2 from Lanchester (1291-2) - same mason? 1 from Caerleon (334).
2	<i>iussu</i> + genitive	Both of Alfenus Senecio, 205-8 A.D., at Bowes (740) and Risingham (1234)
3	Name in nominative	Religious dedications from Bowes (730), and High Rochester (1262, 1265)

Other provincial administrators attested on altars and building inscriptions include *beneficarii* of the governor (293, 1696), procurators (1234, 1462, 2132, 2066), and an imperial freedman, Naevius, who was *adiutor procuratorum*. Finds from London include the remains of the tomb of Julius Classicianus, procurator in A.D. 61 (12) and the corner of a slate panel which could refer to the chief legal administrator, the *iuridicus provinciae Britanniae*, but this is not at all certain (8).

At local level the work of cantonal councils is evidenced by several inscriptions. The Silures set up a commemorative inscription to Tiberius Claudius Paulinus, shortly before A.D. 220. at Caerwent (311 - Fig.22). The epigraphy is of good quality. The border around the prepared panel resembles those on several early third century inscriptions from Caerleon (326, 328, 331). It could be that the same craftsmen served the needs of the military and civilian communities of Caerleon and Caerwent. The dedication to Hadrian by the *civitas Cornoviorum* at Wroxeter is also expertly carved (288). Working parties from British tribes, undertaking repairs to Hadrian's Wall left building stones recording their presence. The function of these inscriptions is very different from the official epigraphy mentioned above; the lettering is not professional and there is vagueness about the spelling of tribal names (1672-3, 1843-4, 1962, 2022). It is impossible to know whether a civilian member of the party made the inscription or whether army officers organised the work and the inscriptions.

Organised activity on behalf of the inhabitants of *vici* is recorded on dedications at Old Carlisle (899), Housesteads (1616) and Vindolanda (1700). The altar to Vulcan at Old Carlisle was set up with money that had been collected from the *vicani*; the dedication at Housesteads seems to have required a decree of the villagers. The implications here are of meetings in which accounts had to be kept and records made of resolutions. In both these cases the only archaeological evidence is the end product, the dedication, but it hints at further literate activity. The quality of the epigraphy in 1616 and 1700 is rather poor. Neither inscription is datable but they are noticeably inferior to some of the military inscriptions from Housesteads and Vindolanda.

**Fig. 22: A commemorative inscription to Tiberius Claudius Paulinus set up *ex decreto ordinis* by the *respublica civitatis Silurum*.**



RIB 311 [Ti(berio) Claudio]/ Paulino/ leg(ato) leg(ionis) II/ Aug(ustae) proconsul(i)/ provinc(iae) Nar/<r>bonensis/ leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) provin(ciae)/ Lugdunen(sis)/ ex decreto/ordinis res/publ(ica) civit/(atis) Silurum. Caerwent, shortly before 220 A.D.

Individuals who held public office at local level have left records on their tombstones and on some public inscriptions. It is among this social élite that one might expect to find evidence of educated, literate Britons but the evidence does not allow such a claim. Marcus Ulpus Ianuarius, who presented a new stage to the villagers of Petuaria c.A.D. 140-144, looks a possible candidate (707). His citizenship appears to have been granted under Trajan either to Ianuarius himself or to his father. His Roman name does not suggest that he was a local Parisian and he could have been a veteran or a trader who settled there. Aurelius Senecio was a *decurio* of Lincoln. He is careful to include on his wife's tombstone the fact that she was a citizen of Lincoln, which might imply that he himself was not a native of the place (250). Flavius Bellator, a *decurio* of the *colonia* at York, was buried wearing his official gold ring, set with a ruby (674). No origin is given for him, which might imply that he was buried in his home town. His name Bellator could be a latinised form of a Celtic name. Marcus Verecundius Diogenes, a *sevir* and *quinquennalis* of the *colonia* at York, was, in fact, from Bourges in Aquitania (678). Flavius Martius, councillor and ex-quaestor of the *Carvetii* is recorded on a tombstone from Old Penrith (933) and a councillor of the *colonia* at Gloucester is attested on a plinth at Bath (161).

These people were all wealthy men who took on civic responsibilities and could afford a permanent memorial of their death and a public record of their munificence. It seems likely that they used Latin and engaged in literate activity in their daily lives. There can be no certainty that any were British by birth and, in any case, town dwellers were perhaps the most likely to be of mixed cultural background by the end of the second century.

#### Two stilus tablets and a seal:

A stilus tablet from London bears a branded circular stamp of the imperial procurator of the province of Britain, Unfortunately only illegible traces remain of a few lines of lettering on the inside (2443.2). A more recent find from London is a writing tablet, dated 14th. March A.D. 118, which refers to the sale of a five acre wood in Kent. It is a legal document which seems to deal with a formal inquiry into the ownership of the land. There is a very precise reference to the location of the wood by naming its



*pagus, civitas* and the position of its boundaries. Such precision is a reminder of the records which would be kept of property surveyed for the census.<sup>44</sup>

A bronze cuboid stamp from Kingscote, Gloucestershire, has pictorial representations on all six sides; only one bears an inscription, *Invictus Sol*, around a bust of Sol radiate; the inscription could indicate a date at the end of the third century A.D. (2409.19). The devices, Roma, Sol Invictus and Mars are all official in nature and the cube was found with a medallion which is believed to have been government property. On these grounds Martin Henig has suggested that this might be an official seal from an imperial estate.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> R.S.O. Tomlin, *Britannia* xxv, 1994, 302 no.4.

<sup>45</sup> *Antiq. Journal* lvii, 1977, p.320.

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION.

Apart from references in the Vindolanda tablets to travel and the transportation of goods (*Tab. Vind. II* 185, 314-6), there are some inscriptions from Roman Britain which seem to have been of practical use to the traveller or to those engaged in delivering goods and letters. These are found on labels, lead sealings, milestones and writing tablets (Table W1 - Catalogue p. 54). References in the text to inscriptions in RIB I and II are given in brackets as numerals only.

### Labels: (References are to RIB II)

All the legible labels which have been found from Roman Britain were attached to packages with a military destination. Most of the 23 examples are of lead, but one is of bone and one of bronze. Four of the inscriptions are made with punched letters (2402.2-4, 12); the rest are graffiti, most of which have capital letters but some are cursive (2410.8, 15? 17?). When both sides of the label have been inscribed it has been turned over in such a way that the hole for attachment remains on the left. The packages must have been carried on carts or by baggage animals which were carrying various goods to the forts. Labels usually name only centuries, cohorts and centuries or cavalry regiments. The location of these cannot have been in doubt. The items were perhaps being transported from military stores, less probably from local suppliers, or perhaps equipment was being moved following troop movements. Sometimes weight or value appears on the label. One example from Usk seems to have been attached to a parcel for the shoe-makers (2410.13) and another from Chester specifies delivery by baggage animal (2410.8).

### Lead sealings:

Imperial and military campaigns, provincial and civic administration often entailed the movement of luggage and equipment which needed to be identified en route. Labels might be attached to indicate destination but lead sealings were often used to indicate the origin or the owner of the goods in transit. They are found, sometimes in large numbers, at destinations where the parcels were collected or unpacked and the sealings must have assisted in the sorting and distribution process. The information on them is minimal, abbreviated names and emblems. Fifteen sealings from South

Shields show the heads of Severus, Caracalla and Geta. They were probably stamped on packages of supplies for the Severan campaigns into Scotland; the imperial busts show clearly who owned the goods and the inscription *AVGG* is of secondary importance (2411.1-15). Imperial sealings are believed to have ensured exemption from import duty which might be the prime significance of another Severan example from London (2411.19). Later imperial sealings are thought to be associated with the expedition of Constans to Britain in A.D. 342-3 (2411.22-3), and perhaps with other British expeditions later in the fourth century (2411.25).

Provincial sealings bear the emblems of the provinces. *Britannia Sanc(ta)* is depicted on one example from London (2411.33); the emblem of a bull and the inscription *P(rovinciae) B(ritanniae) I(nferioris)* occurs on a sealing from York (2411.); a stag and the abbreviation *P(rovinciae) BR(itanniae) S(uperioris)* appears on one from Combe Down in Somerset (2411.37); a fourth century sealing from the Thames waterfront at Billingsgate is thought to have been impressed with the seal of the taxation office at Arles where 2½% duty was paid on goods entering Gaul; it may have been attached to produce imported from the Mediterranean.

Because of the large number of sealings that have been found there, Brough-under-Stainmore, on the road from York to Carlisle, might appear to have been a major collection point for military supplies and equipment. However there is always a possibility that large concentrations of sealings are a fluke of survival, and they could perhaps have been part of a collection intended to be melted down. Legionary and auxiliary sealings have been found there in large numbers; they turn up at other northern sites but not in such concentrations. The sealings of the Second Augustan Legion are mainly rectangular and some have *exp(edivit)* stamped on the reverse. The lettering on the example from Caerleon resembles that of the early tile stamps from there. Sealings of the cavalry *alae* are mostly round or oval and often have the abbreviated name of a decurion on the reverse, Sealings of auxiliary cohorts are mostly oval; occasionally they have ligatures and some feature the abbreviation *TVD* which is thought to represent *tutudit*, meaning struck or stamped (2411.218-234).

Palms, crosses, crescents, stars and swastikas are found on seals of *Coh. II Nerviorum* which also display some interesting figures and birds (2411.111-142).

### Milestones:

Inscriptions on Roman milestones are not primarily concerned with the practicalities of travel. They are a reminder that the emperor was the ultimate provider of the road system which was necessary to his administration but this information is not helpful to a traveller who wants to know how far he has come or work out how much further he must go. Very few of the 110 milestones from Roman Britain record distance. They would stand at intervals of one Roman mile on the main roads out of major towns and could therefore be counted but the distance is rarely inscribed; if it is, it is given from and not to a place. The three Hadrianic milestones from Roman Britain and both milestones of Severus Alexander give a distance but thereafter it seems to be a rarity. The number of miles could, of course, have been painted on but it seems strange to record a permanent feature such as distance in paint, when the names of emperors who changed frequently were carved in stone. A summary of Romano-British milestones recording distance is given in Table W10.

**Table W10: Romano-British milestones recording distance.**

<u>RIB I</u>	<u>Distance in Roman miles:</u>	<u>Measured from:</u>	<u>Date:</u>
2235	1	Chesterton (Durobrivae)	Florian AD 276.
2241	14	Lincoln (to Littleborough ?)	Victorinus AD 268-70.
2243	4	Brough-on-Noe	?
2244	2	Leicester	Hadrian AD 119-120.
2265	8	Caerhun	Hadrian AD 120-121.
2272	4	Lancaster?	Hadrian AD 119-138.
2274	22	York	Gallus & Volusian AD 251-253.
2283	53	Carlisle?	?
2299	14	Corbridge	Severus Alexander AD 222-229.
2306	18	Corbridge?	Severus Alexander AD 222-229.

### Writing tablets:

Most of the writing tablets from Vindolanda do not contain a place name in the address written on the back. They are letters which were being sent within a fairly restricted locality, carried by people making routine trips to the fort, and only the

names of the sender and recipient were necessary, This applies to military and personal correspondence. Thus Clodius Super addresses his letter to Flavius Cerialis: *Flavio Ceriali praef(ecto) a [C]l[od]io Supero* (Tab. Vind II 255); Claudia Severa uses the same style of address to the wife of Cerialis: *Sulpiciae Lepidinae Cerialis a S[e]vera* (Tab. Vind. II 291) and correspondence between slaves shows the same pattern: *Candido Genialis praef(ecti) a Severo.....i servo* (Tab. Vind. II 301). When a place name is required in the address a locative expression is used. This applies to all the examples discovered from Roman Britain to date. Chrauttius' letter to Veldeius (Veldedeius?) is addressed: *Londini Veldedeio equisioni co(n)s(ularis) a Chrauttio fratre* (Tab. Vind II 310). Locative ablatives are sometimes used: a fragment found at London reads *Londinio* (RIB II 2443.7) and part of a tablet from Carlisle gives two possible locations for the recipient, *Trimontio aut Lugu(v)a[l]io* (RIB II 2443.10); the latter is a good indication that the place name is, in fact, the destination and not the place from which the letter was sent. A fragment of a letter, evidently sent from abroad, is addressed *in Brita(n)nia* (RIB II 2443.5). The lack of more precise detail in these addresses implies that official messengers were being used to deliver letters, and possibly other items, to a pre-arranged destination where a name would suffice to find the recipient. The personal touch is apparent. Messengers might be colleagues or in the personal service of the sender and might deliver letters on behalf of other known associates. The address is an instruction for the person carrying the letter. If he was delivering letters to several different recipients it seems reasonable to suppose that he could read the addresses provided.

## BUSINESS AND LAW

The world of business and law must have generated a large amount of documentation in Roman Britain but present evidence is just a few fragments (Table W1). Many unpublished fragments of stilus tablets must be of a legal nature but they remain undiphered or perhaps undecipherable. A private business matter seems to be the subject of the letter from Rufus son of Callisunus to Epillicus in London. The names contain Celtic elements and the writing is in clear Old Roman Cursive, of perhaps first or second century date, but the nature of their business is uncertain (RIB II 2443.7)

The most important legal document which has come to light in recent years is undoubtedly the wooden stilus tablet from London relating to the sale of a five acre wood in Kent. The implications that the land had been thoroughly surveyed and records made for the census before March A.D. 118. have already been mentioned above. The expression *cum ventum est in rem praesentem* indicates the start of a legal enquiry into the ownership of the property.<sup>46</sup>

Fragments of two more stilus tablets from London might have been inscribed with the names of witnesses to legal or business affairs (2443.9, 18); the latter example has a groove which would take the seals of the witnesses. A third example from London, bears part of a legal *affidavit* sworn in the reign of Domitian, A.D. 86-96 (2443.11) and a fourth seems to be part of a legal deed of loan or purchase (2443.15); this also has a wide groove for the seals of witnesses. A document from a Roman villa at Chew Stoke in Somerset has legal formulae relevant to the sale of property and paralleled in a Transylvanian triptych.<sup>47</sup>

The formal nature of such texts is evidence of the professional services which were required for such transactions. Witnesses were not necessarily highly literate since they only applied their seals to documents in which their names were written by

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<sup>46</sup> R.S.O. Tomlin, *Britannia* xxv, 1994, 302, no.34. See also in J. Bird ed., *Interpreting Roman London*, Oxbow Monograph 58, 1996 p 208.

<sup>47</sup> RIB II 2443.13 note, CIL iii p.944 no. VIII.

scribes. Lawyers and their staff had to be literate but buyers and sellers of property did not; like the owners of military diplomas, however, they accepted the need for correct documentation, and were thus taking part in literate activity.

## Table W11: WORKING LIFE - SPELLING IRREGULARITIES

### 1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).

#### **Building and quarrying:**

##### Functional:

RIB I	439	Cesoniana	for	Caesoniana
	1162	pie	for	piae (gen.)
	1649	Pompii?	for	Pompei
	1818	pref	for	praef
	1846	Maxsu	for	Maximi

##### Honorific - third century:

RIB I	179	Cesari	for	Caesari
	430	Sunic(orum)	for	Sunucorum
	905	praf?	for	praef
	978	baselicam	for	basilicam
	1091	pref	for	praef
	1235	patrie	for	patriae

#### **Manufacturing\*:**

RIB II	2402.4	offe(cina)	for	officina
	2409.24	cela<i>vi	for	caelavi
	2409.24	Vali	for	Valerius
	2409.24	Moguntius	for	Mogontius
	2459.45, 62	Leg Ag (retro)	for	Leg Aug (?)
	2465.1	Ale Sebusi.	for	Alae
	2491.2	cuniati	for	cuneati
	2491.96	milis	for	miles
	2491.96	prima	for	primae
	2491.96	Sunicor	for	Sunucorum
	2491.108	Sevirus?	for	Severus
	2491.150	civitatis Corieltauvorum	for	Corieltauvorum
	2496.6	Valirius	for	Valerius

#### **Trade and commerce:**

RIB II	2446.4	diaglaucaem (h)	for	diaglaucium
	2446.10	crysomaelinum (h)		chrysomelinum
	2446.10	delicta	for	delecta?
	2446.17	collyrium	for	collyrium
	2446.19	dealebanum	for	dialibanum

##### *Tabulae Vindolandenses II (TV II)*

TV II	181	balniatore	for	balneatore
	182	exungiae	for	axungiae
	184	sagaciam	for	sagaceam
	186	cervese (x2)	for	cervesae (gen.)
	186	porcine	for	porcinae (gen.)
	207	sagacias	for	sagaceas
	343	arre	for	arrae
	343	que	for	quae
	343	illec	for	illaec
	343	male	for	malae
	343	mae (h)	for	me
	346	contibernales	for	contubernales



**Administration:**

TV II	260	lubentissime	for	libentissime
RIB I	2225	Ag.	for	Aug.
	2226	Aesuvio (h)	for	Esuvio
	2253	Ag.	for	Aug.
	2257	Ces.	for	Caes.
	2267	Ag.	for	Aug.
	2311	semper	for	semper
<i>JRS</i> liv,244, no.11		Postimo	for	Postumo

**Travel and transportation:**

RIB II	2411.37	Agus(ta)	for	Augusta
	2411.85	ale	for	alae

**Business and Law:**

RIB II	2443.11	Cesaris	for	Caesaris	(A.D. 84-96)
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2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I	1570	Procli	for	Proculi
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**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2409.9	Procleiani	for	Proculeiani
	2415.40	Maxminus	for	Maximinus
	2428.15	RegnF	for	Reginus fecit
	2491.7	tegla	for	tegula
	2491.8	teg?	for	tegulam
	2491.114	felicter	for	feliciter
	2491.147	Austalis	for	Augustalis

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II	215	corniclario	for	corniculario
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**Administration:**

RIB I	311	Lugdunensis (h)	for	Lugdunensis
TV II	214	fraterclo	for	fraterculo

**Travel and transportation**

RIB II	2410.12	Felci(s)	for	Felicis
	2443.4	Lugvalio	for	Luguvalio

3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2442.6	Galvisi	for	Calvisi?
	2489.14	tecular	for	tegarinae

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II	343	aliquit	for	aliquid
	343	quit	for	quid
RIB II	2446.11(c)	at	for	ad

**Administration:**

TV II	248	it quot	for	id quod
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**Business and Law**

RIB II	2443.15	petitionis	for	petitionis
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4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections (h).**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I	803	Traq	for	Thracum
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Honorific - third century:

(Table W11 cont.)

RIB I	1909	Tracum	for	Thracum
	1235	Partici	for	Parthici

**Trade and commerce:**

RIB II	2446.10(d)	crsoma(e)lin(u)m	for	chrysomaelinum
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**Travel and transportation:**

RIB II	2411.152-6	Tr(acum)	for	Thr(acum)
	2411.187-92	Tr(acum)	for	Thr(acum)

5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

RIB I	355	tesera(rius)	for	tesserarius
	1009	oficina	for	officina
	1566	vexilat(io)	for	vexillatio
	1658	Iulli Val	for	Iuli or Tulli?
	1952	Apolonius	for	Apollonius

Honorific - second century:

RIB I	1322	vexillatio	for	vexillatio
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Honorific - third century:

RIB I	179	opressa	for	oppressa
	605	Sebussian(ae)	for	Sebosianae
	1705	Britani(co)	for	Britanni(co)

**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2428.16	Titulim	for	Titulli m(anu?)
	2481.99	Clasis	for	Classis
	2491.114	Polio	for	Pollio
	2491.114	colegio	for	collegio

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II Doubling a consonant after a long vowel is standard practice with some of the military scribes at Vindolanda; those who do so are consistent (see J N. Adams *JRS* lxxxv, 1995). Numerous examples of *missi* for *misi*, *promissit* for *promisit*.

343	nissi (h)	for	nisi
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**Travel and transportation**

RIB II	2443	in Britania	for	in Britannia
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6. Loss of final consonant.

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

RIB I	1016	ara	for	aram
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Honorific - third century:

RIB I	1738	provincia	for	provinciam (regente)
	1912	in labe	for	in labem (conlapsum)

**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2463.59	tegula	for	tegulam
	2490.6	Cabriabanu	for	Cabriabanus
	2491.1	tubu	for	tubum

**Business and Law**

RIB II	2443.7	cura agas	for	curam agas
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7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

(Table W11 cont.)

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

RIB I	718	Sanqus	for	Sancus
	803	Traq(um)	for	Thracum
	1431	Hortesi	for	Hortensi
	1672	Lendinesis	for	Lendiniensis
	1673	Lendiniesis	for	Lendiniensis

Honorific - third century:

RIB I	605	conlabsum	for	collapsum
	747	dilabsum	for	dilapsum
	791	dilabsum	for	dilapsum
	979	conlabsum	for	collapsum
	1738	conlabsum	for	collapsum
	1912	conl(apsum)	for	collapsum

**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2444.51	Lutudares	for	Lutudarensis
	2460.92	Vit(rix)	for	Victrix
	2490.6	Cabriabanu(s)	for	Cambriabanus?

**Trade and commerce:**

RIB II	2446.19	inpetum	for	impetum
	2446.21	inpetum	for	impetum
TV II	181	emtis	for	emptis
	186	Masuetus	for	Mansuetus
	302	frensae (h)	for	fresae / fressae
	302	formonsa (h)	for	formosa
	344	trasmarinum	for	transmarinum

**Administration:**

TV II	127	inpedimenta	for	impedimenta
	344	trasmarinum	for	transmarinum

8. Various renderings of x.

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

RIB I	352	Maxsimi	for	Maximi
	1016	sexs	for	sex
	1846	Maxsu	for	Maximi

**Trade and commerce:**

RIB II	2446.25	Senis	for	Senex
TV II	181	vexsillari	for	vexillarii
	309	axes	for	axes
	343	vexsare	for	vexare

**Administration:**

RIB I	2224	Exsuvio (h)	for	Esvivio
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9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

RIB I	1858	Vesui	for	Vesuvi
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**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2491.147	Austalis	for	Augustalis
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**Travel and transportation:**

(Table W11 cont.)

RIB I	2225	Esuio	for	Esuvio
	2226	Aesuio	for	Esuvio
	2238	Piaonio	for	Piavonio

10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I	279	cho	for	cohortis
	340	cho	for	cohortis
	341	chor	for	cohortis
	468	chort?	for	cohortis
	579	chor	for	cohortis
	1309	chot	for	cohortis
	1440	cho	for	cohortis
	1500	cho	for	cohortis
	1772	cho	for	cohortis
	1937	cho	for	cohortis
	2032	astati	for	hastati
	2077	cho	for	cohortis
	2156	cho	for	cohortis

Honorific - third century:

RIB I	1235	hac (x2)	for	ac (hypercorrection assuming lost aspirate)
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Honorific - fourth century:

RIB I	1912	copert(um)	for	coopertum
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**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2491.96	cortis	for	cohortis
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**Trade and commerce:**

TV II	186	Februuaris	for	Februariis
	192	a Gavvone	for	a Gavone
	207	a Gavvone	for	a Gavone

**Administration:**

TV II	127	chortis	for	cohortis
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**Travel and transportation:**

RIB II	2411.121	ch	for	cohortis
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11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I	1154	vexillus	for	vexillum
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Honorific - second century:

RIB I	1462	Pertinace	for	Pertinaci (dat.)
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**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2491.147	dibus	for	diebus?
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**Trade and commerce:**

RIB II	2446.2	ad diathesis	for	ad diathesim
TV II	180	legionaribus	for	legionariis
	309	modiola (n.pl.)	for	modiolos (m.pl.)
	309	radia (n.pl.)	for	radios (m.pl.)
	344	valetudini	for	valetudine (abl.)
	346	subligariorum	for	subligarium (gen.pl. of subligar)

**Administration:**

(Table W11 cont.)

TV II	164	iaculos (m.pl)	for	iacula (n.pl.)
	263	equestre	for	equestri (abl.)
TV II	344	valetudini	for	valetudine (abl.)

12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.**Building and quarrying:**Honorific - third century:

RIB I	180	condedit	for	condidit
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**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2414.20	fict	for	fecit
	2456.12	feccit	for	fecit

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II	255	adprobasse	for	adprobavisse
	310	rescripsti	for	rescripsisti
	314	commodasti	for	commodavisti
	343	petissem	for	petiissem
	343	explesse	for	explevisse

**Administration:**

TV II	130, 134-5, 139, 145, 150.	qui debunt	for	qui debent (6 examples)
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13. Confusion over proper names.**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I	718	Sanqu	for	Sancus
	1672	Durtro	for	Durotrigum
	1673	Durotrag	for	Durotrigum
	1673	Lendiniensis	for	Lindiniensis?
	1711	vler	for	Valeriani?
	1822	Cassiain	for	Cassiani
	1845	Dumni	for	Dumnoniorum

Honorific - third century:

RIB I	605	Sebussian(ae)	for	Sebosianae
	1324	Vangon(um)	for	Vangion(um)

**Manufacturing:**

RIB II	2428.9	Bonos fe	for	Bonus fecit
	2465.1	Sebusi(anae)	for	Sebosianae
	2496.6	Marials	for	Martialis

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II	181	Ingenus	for	Ingenuus
RIB II	2446.11(a)	Ivenis	for	Iuvenis

**Administration:**

RIB I	2224	Exsuvio	for	Esvio
	2249	Canstaantiano	for	Constantino
	2250	Numoriano	for	Numeriano
	2263	Troiano	for	Traiano
	2306	Xenephonte	for	Xenophonte? (cf.2299)
	2307	Nuberiano	for	Numeriano
JRS liv, 224, no.11		Casiano	for	Cassiano
		Latiniano	for	Latinio

**Travel and transportation**

RIB II	2410.8	Setinus	for	Sextinus?
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14. Grammatical confusion / variations.

(TableW11 cont.)

**Building and quarrying:**

Honorific - second century:

RIB I 1322 *Duobus* for *duabus* in agreement with *Germaniis;con(t)ributi* agreeing with *vexi(l)latio*; *ex* = preposition or abbreviation of *exercitibus*?

Honorific - third century:

RIB I 1462 *Pertinace* (abl.) for *Pertinaci* (dat.)  
1738 *restituerunt* for *restituit* (emperor as subject).

Honorific - fourth century:

RIB I 1912 in *labe conlapsum* for *in labem conlapsum*.

**Manufacturing:**

RIB II 2404.1 Use of preposition *de* for *ab/ex*?

**Trade and commerce:**

Use of locative ablative of 2nd decl. nouns: TV II 185 *Isurio, Cataractonio*.  
343 *Cataractonio*

Colloquialisms: TV II 343 *rogo mi mitte*  
343 *non illos me accepto tulit*  
343 *fac mi mittas*  
Errors 215 *si qui for si quis*

**Administration:**

Use of locative ablative of second decl: TV II 154 *Londinio*  
154 *officio*  
155 *fabricis*  
250 *Luguvalio*  
Use of preposition with name of town: TVII 225 *a Vindolanda scribo*  
250 *a Bremetennaco*  
(Standard practice on milestones)

Error of case RIB I 2224 *Exsuvio Tetricus* - dative or nominative?  
2276 *Messius* - nominative for dative.

Singular for plural RIB I 2230 (*IMP C*)  
2266 (*IMP.P CAES*)

Plural for singular RIB I 2255 (*AVGG*)

**Travel and transportation**

Locative ablative RIB II 2443.7 *Londinio*  
2443.10 *Trimontio aut Luguvalio*

15. Errors by masons/craftsmen/scribes.

**Building and quarrying:**

Functional:

Correction RIB I 342 CHO Corrected to CoHO.  
1516 N cut over V in *Naso*?

Confusion about letter 402 last two letters of *Valentis*?  
468 Metathesis of ligatured letters ? *Chotr* for *Chort*?  
1009 + cut for x  
1166 *LEGXXX* cut for *LEG XX*  
1358 *EEC* for *FEC*?  
1498 *AELIIANI* for *AELIANI* - dittography.  
1500 *MAEFLLI* for *M.ATELLI*? or *MAECILI* recut?

Incorrect word division 279 centuriae VALV. IT for VAL.VIT.

Total confusion-illiterate mason 721 *VINDID*(retro)*ANVS* / *MAS*(for G)*B*(for IS)*I*(for T)*ER*  
*IVRRM EFCIT* - *Vindicianus magister turrem fecit*.

Honorific - second century:

(Table W11 cont)

Miscopied draft?	RIB I 1149	<i>Anionino</i> for <i>Antonino</i> ; <i>Lolii</i> for <i>Lolli</i>
Letter mistaken / omitted?	1322	<i>conributi</i> for <i>contributi</i>
	1332	<i>P</i> for <i>PR</i> ( <i>pro praetore</i> )
	1637	<i>Gaes(aris)</i> for <i>Caes(aris)</i>
	2193	<i>pep</i> for <i>per</i>
	2200	<i>victrics</i> for <i>victricis</i> ; <i>Pio</i> omitted from imperial titles
	2205	<i>Pio</i> omitted from imperial titles
Reversed letter	1148	<i>CVRA</i> with retro R - accident or stylistic feature?

Honorific - third century:

Letter inserted in error	RIB I 311	<i>Nar&lt;r&gt;bonens</i>
	791	<i>PERT</i> (ligatured) for <i>PER</i>
Letters erased in error	333	<i>ET</i> erased from <i>AUG ET SEPTIMIVS</i> in error for <i>GETA</i> .
Copying error?	978	<i>EEL</i> for <i>FEL</i> .

**Manufacturing:**

Retrograde letters in an orthograde text RIB II: 2402.6-8; 2402.10; 2406, 2403.31; 2416.2; 2416.3; 2428.5; 2433.16; 2460.60; 2460.61; 2467.1; 2489.14.

Orthograde letters in a retrograde text RIB II: 2459.36; 2459.63.

Letters inverted RIB II: 2414.8; 2416.7; 2463.14,34,35; 2481.78; 2489.2; 2489.79-88.

Letters omitted RIB II: 2403.6 (corrected); 2459.44; 2459.50; 2459.33; 2491.146 (*recte bi* for *recte tibi* by haplography?); 2496.3.

Letters transposed RIB II: 2459.25; 2490.6; 2491.81.

Extra letter RIB II: 2409.24; 2460.61.

Confusion about letter? RIB II: 2402.4? 2433.13 (*Tar Antiphaneos* for *Par Antiphaneos*?).

Letter carelessly cut RIB II: 2463.47; 2460.33.

Incorrect word division RIB II: 2416.7.

**Trade and commerce:**

Confusion about letter? RIB II: 2446.28 (retro C cut for D in *Diamysus*?).

Extra letter? RIB II: 2494.44 (*VINN* for *VIN(um)*?)

**Administration:**

Additional letter RIB I: 2249 (*ianvicto* for *invicto*, inverted A for V in *AVG* - mason obsessed with crossbars, ligatured AN where not needed - illiterate?)

RIB I: 2231 G (line I) in error - confusion about name?)

RIB I: 2274 E + ET ligatured for ET.

Letter omitted TV II: 136 (*renutium* for *renuntium*)

RIB I: 2276 (*PO* for *PIO*)

Letters transposed RIB I: 2224 (*IPM* for *IMP*)

RIB I: 2251 (*MC* for *C(aesari) M(arco)*)

Incorrect letter RIB I: 2263 *GA* for *CA(aesari)*

RIB I: 2310 (*IMR* for *IMP*)

Retrograde letter in orthograde text RIB I: 2263, 2276.

Correction TV II: 218, 317.

Text recut? RIB I: 2252 (*IMP* recut as *DNC*)

RIB I: 2256 (*MAXI* recut as *MARI/VRE*?)

Interlinear additions TV II 218, 317.

Dictation error TV II 234 (*et hiem* corrected to *etiam*)

Slip TV II 250 (*commendaret* for *commendarem*)

316 (*lepidem* for *lapidem*)

**Travel and transportation:**

Retrograde letter in orthograde text RIB II: 2411.70, 2411.145.

**Building and quarrying:**Functional:

RIB I 441 *GNAT* British Celtic aorist (= *fecit*)? -( Meid, *Etudes Celtiques* xviii, 1981, 115.)

**Trade and commerce:**

TV II 310 *tot tempus* for *tamdiu* (foreigner's Latin?)  
311 *inpientissime* - only known example of this negative form (*pientissimus* is common)

314 *primo mane* for *mane*

343 *in excussorio* for *in area* (neologism).

343 *coriationem?* abstract for concrete meaning leather goods?

*Britannia* xxvii 1996 300 no.1:

*infibulatoria* cloaks that fasten with brooches/?

*saga corticia* cloaks/covers made of bark?

**Administration:**

TV II 164 *Brittunculi* new diminutive.

225, 248 Use of old-fashioned spellings - *salvom*, *occassionem*, *quom*

316 *quem modum* + genitive - for *qualem?* *quantum?* *quot?*

344 *effundere* - used in sense of to pour (money) down the drain?

\* Records for manufacturing inscriptions do not include mortaria stamps.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS:**

**Military deceased**

**Civilian deceased**

## FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS

There are about 450 inscribed tombstones recorded from Roman Britain of which some 377 have been selected for the present study with a further 25 funerary graffiti. Examples have been chosen in which the texts are fairly complete or restoration is fairly certain. Very fragmentary, worn or lost inscriptions with uncertain texts have been excluded. The complete list can be seen in Table F1 (Catalogue p. 115).

Although funerary inscriptions are of great value to the study of the history of Roman Britain it is important to try to consider them in the context of known funerary practice in the province. The 450 surviving tombstones represent considerably less than two per year for the 350 years of Roman occupation. Finds of funerary inscriptions are rare, bearing in mind the thousands of Romano-British graves which have now been excavated. The number is proportionately much smaller in relation to the inevitable deaths in the province over a period of three and a half centuries. Even though surviving funerary inscriptions can only be a tiny fraction of what was there originally, it must still be conceded that setting up an epitaph as a lasting memorial to the dead was only ever a minority practice.

From the early fourth century A.D. some Roman cemeteries serving town and urban communities show an orderly layout with graves set in rows. Evidence for this can be seen at Poundbury, Dorset<sup>1</sup> and Ashton, Northants.<sup>2</sup> Management of such cemeteries must have involved marking the graves but there is no evidence to suggest that inscribed tombstones were used at these sites. If any form of written tribute appeared it was perhaps in some non-durable form but the likelihood seems to be that graves were marked in some other way.

At Lankhills, Winchester, regular layout of later burials is apparent but some of these cut into earlier graves. It has been estimated that all trace of an earlier burial might

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<sup>1</sup> D.E Farwell and T.I. Molleson, Poundbury Vol 2, The cemeteries, Dorset Nat. Hist. and Archaeol. Soc. Monograph 1993, 67-76.

<sup>2</sup> *Britannia* xv 1984, Sites, p.300-301.

M. Millet, Roman Britain, English Heritage, Batsford 1995, 126-7, Fig.83.

have disappeared in just over twenty years; this suggests that very little was done to mark the graves.<sup>3</sup> At Trentholme Drive, York, there is evidence that many graves were severely disturbed by later Roman burials so that there appears to have been no attempt to manage or organise the cemetery.<sup>4</sup> No surface monuments were found on this site whereas several epitaphs have come from cemeteries on the site of the railway station and the Mount at York.<sup>5</sup>

Present evidence indicates that the vast majority of the population of Roman Britain did not have any enduring grave markings, let alone a literate epitaph. Several studies have been made of grave goods and burial practice, including a recently published thesis by Robert Philpott entitled "Burial practices in Roman Britain A.D. 43-410".<sup>6</sup> It is possible to identify variations in funerary customs from grave contents and the style of burial but very little is known about surface indications except for a few tombs of the wealthy and surviving epitaphs in the Roman tradition.

The written memorials selected for this study will now be examined in the manner outlined in the introduction and used for religious dedications on stone in Chapter 3; information is required about the deceased, the commemorators, reason and style. The tombstones have been divided into two groups, military and civilian, based on the status of the deceased. Females and children are all counted as civilian although many, of course, have military connections. Military classification for males is generally based on a statement of military rank but but in a few cases military origin is inferred from location and style of tombstone.

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<sup>3</sup> Giles Clarke, *Winchester Studies 3 Pt ii, The Roman Cemetery at Lankhills*, Clarendon 1979, p119.

<sup>4</sup> L.P. Wenham, *The Romano-British Cemetery at Trentholme Drive, York*, HMSO 1968, p 34.

<sup>5</sup> R.F.J. Jones, *The Cemeteries of Roman York*, in P.V. Addyman and V.E. Black edd., *York Archaeol. Trust* 1984.

<sup>6</sup> *BAR Brit. Series 219*, 1991.

## MILITARY DECEASED

Of the 377 tombstones examined about 194 are known or almost certain to be those of serving soldiers or veterans, who are, of course, all adult males. They record the deaths of some 130 legionaries and 64 auxiliaries. As might be expected the ranks represented on tombstones differ from those found on religious dedications. Official religious epigraphy almost always bears the name of a senior officer, usually a prefect or tribune, whereas tombstones rarely do (cf Table R7 p. 37). This is partly because officers are bound to be outnumbered by those in the ranks, but also their period of command might only be 3-4 years before making a career move; regular soldiers posted to Britain might spend much, if not all, of their service in the province and settle here on retirement. Many stones record the deceased as *miles* but there are examples of *optiones*, *centuriones*, *equites*, *veterani* and *emeriti*. A summary of the ranks can be seen in Table F2. In the category labelled “other” there are legionary and auxiliary standard-bearers, including an *aquilifer* (RIB 292), a governor’s groom, *strator* (RIB 233), a special legionary emissary seconded to the governor’s staff, *speculator* (RIB 19), a doctor with an auxiliary cohort, *medicus ordinarius* (RIB 1618), a trumpeter, *bucinator* (RIB 1559), a member of the governor’s bodyguard, *singularis consularis* (RIB 1713) and clerks, *cornicularius* (RIB 1742), *actarius*.<sup>7</sup>

**Table F2: Roman Tombstones - deceased soldiers by rank.**

RANK	LEGIONARY	AUXILIARY	TOTAL
miles	44	6	50
coh/legion named but no rank	13	3	16
eques	7	14	21
optio	3	0	3
centurio/ordinatus	9	4	13
tribunus/praefectus	1	1	2
beneficiarius	4	0	4
emeritus/veteranus	18	8	26
other	13	10	23
rank lost/unknown	18	18	36
TOTAL	130	64	194

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<sup>7</sup> *JRS* liii, 1963, 160 no. 4.

Many of the legionary tombstones date from the early years of the occupation. Some are left by *Legio II Adiutrix* at Lincoln and Chester and *Legio IX Hispana* at Lincoln and York; there are also tombstones from sites of early military occupation such as Colchester, Cirencester, Gloucester and Wroxeter. The use of *Dis Manibus*, in full, as the opening formula and of *H S E* as the close is usually indicative of a first or perhaps very early second century memorial. The very formal nature of most legionary tombstones is apparent in the formulae used and the information supplied. Most legionaries have the *tria nomina* of Roman citizenship. Some use two Roman names; early examples might have a *praenomen* and *nomen* only, but by the end of the first century it was usual to also use a *cognomen*.<sup>8</sup> Later, in the third century, after the grant of universal franchise under Caracalla, the *praenomen* was often omitted; some citizens might use just a single name since there was no longer any need to advertise citizenship through nomenclature. Many stones also record filiation and origin both by tribe and home town with recruits recorded from Italy, Spain, Gaul, Noricum, Pannonia, Thrace, and Germany. Tombstones of auxiliaries are less likely to give details of origin; those which do are of early date and from centres which have produced legionary tombstones giving similar information (RIB 108, 109, 159, 101, 606). Table F3, below, summarises information on nomenclature, filiation and origin. Later tombstones do not usually give origins, probably because it was considered unnecessary once local recruitment became established for both legionaries and auxiliaries.<sup>9</sup>

There should be some British recruits possibly the descendants of veterans, named on some of the tombstones but likely candidates are few. Gaius Pomponius Valens, a legionary buried at London, probably in the first century, came from *colonia Victricensis*, Colchester.<sup>10</sup> Julius Vitalis, a *fabricie(n)sis* with *Legio XX* died at Bath; his tribal origin is recorded as the *Belgae* but, since *stipendiorum* is unabbreviated and the *H.S.E.* formula is used, this is perhaps an early tombstone, and he is probably not

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<sup>8</sup> A. Birley. *The people of Roman Britain* Batsford 1979, p 83.

<sup>9</sup> B. Dobson and J.C. Mann, *The Roman army in Britain and Britons in the Roman army*, *Britannia* iv, 1973, 171-205.

<sup>10</sup> *JRS* lii, 1962, 190 no.1.

of the British *Belgae* (RIB 156). Tadius Exuperatus, who died in Germany, is commemorated on his mother's tombstone at Caerleon; he appears to be the son of a legionary and a local woman (RIB 369).<sup>11</sup> Nectovelius, recorded on a tombstone from Mumrills was a Brigantian tribesman recruited to the Second Thracian Cohort (RIB 2142). Aelius Mercurialis, a *cornicularius*, was commemorated by his sister, Vacia, at Great Chesters; he could have been from a Romano-British family living in the *vicus* attached to the fort but there is no certainty (RIB 1742).

There is a tombstone from Housesteads commemorating five men and one woman, all with a single name and filiation (RIB 1620); it is grouped here with military tombstones although this is not absolutely certain since there is no mention of rank or unit for any of the deceased. The inscription seems to have been completed at one time by the same mason so they were all commemorated together, although they need not have all died at the same time. The names which appear on the stone are of mixed origins: one is Celtic, *Venocari (filio)*; two more are common in Celtic provinces, particularly Gaul, *Mansuetio, Senicionis (filius)*, four are Germanic (?), *Fersionis (filio), Alimahi (filio), Daili (filio), Rautionis (filius)* and the other two are fairly common Roman provincial, *Grato, Romulo*. The heir, *Delfinus*, who set up the monument is from *Germania Superior*. Since the deceased have Roman names but three of them appear to have a German father, and since the lettering on the stone looks quite late, probably third century, this group of people might have been inhabitants of a military *vicus*, perhaps the offspring of German recruits who had served here, married, brought up families and settled here on retirement. The style of nomenclature does not indicate Roman citizenship, which would have been extended to the offspring of veterans with 25 years service until about A. D. 140. A single name with filiation is a fairly standard form of nomenclature for non-citizens, particularly of German or Celtic extraction, but after the grant of citizenship to all who were freeborn, names are no longer such valuable clues.

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<sup>11</sup> V. Maxwell, *Soldier and Civilian: Life beyond the frontier*, - Eighth Annual Caerleon Lecture, Nat. Museum of Wales 1995.

Whether they use three names or two, the legionaries, almost without exception, bear recognisably Roman names which give little indication of origin. Lucius Ecimius Bellicianus Vitalis, however, a veteran of Legio XX, buried at Chester, has a Latinised Celtic name and could perhaps be British (RIB 495). Among the auxiliaries Roman nomenclature could have been adopted by recruits from various provinces, thus obscuring the picture, but there are more names which can be identified as Celtic, for example, *Cintusmus* (RIB 619) or German, *Hurmio Leubasni (filio)* (RIB 1619). Families, who had settled and become established in Britain, could have continued to use native names because of tradition or sentiment, rather than adopting Roman nomenclature, particularly when there was no incentive to display one's citizenship in the third century.

**Table F3: Military deceased : nomenclature, filiation and origin**

(A) LEGIONARIES AND LEGIONARY VETERANS

<u>Nomenclature</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Filiation only</u>	<u>Origin only</u>	<u>Filiation+origin</u>	<u>Neither</u>
3 names	60	0	15	30	15
2 names	35	1	6	9	19
1 name	0				
name lost/incomplete	35	0	5	6	24
TOTAL	130	1	26	45	58

(B) AUXILIARIES AND AUXILIARY VETERANS

<u>Nomenclature</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Filiation only</u>	<u>Origin only</u>	<u>Filiation+origin</u>	<u>Neither</u>
3 names	9	1	2	1	5
2 names	12	0	1	1	10
1 name	20*	10	1	3	6
name lost/incomplete	27	1	4	1	21
TOTAL	68*	12	8	6	42

\*RIB 1620 names 5 men and 1 woman, all with single name + filiation

### CIVILIAN DECEASED.

Some 170 tombstones are here classified as civilian but they include many set up for civilian relatives of soldiers or veterans. Fifteen of the inscriptions actually mention a military connection and in other cases it can be deduced. Since evidence to the contrary is largely lacking, most of the funerary graffiti are also taken to be civilian. About sixteen of the monuments record more than one death so that the number of deceased exceeds the number of tombstones and the overall figure is about 220.

Family monuments usually account for more than one deceased being named on a tombstone, for example at Ribchester where a *singularis consularis* commemorates his wife, son and mother-in-law, showing that he must have had a family base there, even if he was serving elsewhere (RIB 594). At Chesters a German set up a tombstone to his sister, wife and son (RIB 1483). There is no reason to suppose that family members commemorated on the same tombstone died at the same time and, since both the above examples are lost, it is impossible to say whether the names were all inscribed at the same time. If they were, the epitaph was perhaps set up after the latest death; it could have replaced an earlier memorial. In some instances a blank panel is left to be inscribed at a later date and occasionally this is never done, possibly because whoever was intended to be named there had moved on, or perhaps those who survived had ceased to have any interest in inscribed memorials, or perhaps there was no longer a mason in the area who could perform the task (RIB 295 Wroxeter; RIB 564 Chester). It is possible that occasionally an epidemic or an accident killed more than one member of a household; such speculation is tempting in the case of two young sisters, Restita and Martia, aged 7 and 3 respectively, who were buried by their parents at Chester (RIB 566) or in the case of three young boys, probably slaves, who also died at Chester (RIB 560).

The majority of civilian deceased bear only two names, most of whom are women named in the Roman manner. Those bearing only one name form the second largest group which includes many of the funerary graffiti from RIB II. Incomplete names are recorded separately. A summary of nomenclature, sex, filiation and origin is contained in Table F4 below.



**Table F4: Civilian deceased : nomenclature, filiation and origin**

<u>Nomenclature</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Filiation</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Fil+orig</u>	<u>Neither</u>
3 names	m	12	1	5	0	6
2 names	m	15	0	2	0	13
2 names	f	61	0	3	0	58
1 name	m	51	2	6	1	42
1 name	f	36	6	2	0	28
1 name	?	1	0	0	0	1
lost/incomplete	m	14	0	1	0	13
lost/incomplete	f	25	4	1	0	20
lost/incomplete	?	3	0	0	0	3
name omitted	f	2	0	0	0	2
TOTAL		220	13	20	1	186

There are two instances where the tombstone does not bear the name of the deceased: RIB 1174, which was set up at Corbridge by Iulius Primus for his un-named wife, *coniugi c(arissimae)* and RIB 1254 from Risingham, which was set up by Blescius Diovicus to his un-named daughter, *filiae suae*. Men bearing the *tria nomina* associated with Roman citizenship form a minority, all from highly romanised centres. The tombstones cover quite a wide date range. The remains of the first century monument to the imperial procurator, Gaius Iulius Alpinus Classicianus were found in London (RIB 12). Aulus Alfidius Olussa, an Athenian buried at London, was perhaps a first century trader, or could have been connected with the civil administration. The presence of the *H.S.E.* formula and voting tribe on his tombstone suggests an early date. He is also a rare example of a civilian who records an heir (RIB 9). The use of unabbreviated *Dis Manibus* perhaps suggests an early date for the burial of Titus Licinius Ascanius in London, but nothing more is known about him (RIB 14). Gaius Calpurnius Receptus, a priest of the goddess Sulis, is recorded at Bath. Lettering and ligatures perhaps point to a late second or early third century date for this epitaph (RIB 155). The tombstone of Gaius Valerius Victor at Chester, has a fine relief of the deceased and his wife (RIB 543). The infant Lucius Festinius Probus is also commemorated by his father at Chester (RIB 537). These are likely to be of second century date, since they were re-used in the third century reconstruction of the north wall. The memorials to a freedman, Marcus Aurelius [...], buried at Lincoln (RIB 249), and two young boys, Marcus Aurelius Eucarpus in London (RIB 10) and

Marcus Aurelius Igennus from Cirencester,<sup>12</sup> are probably late second or third century on the grounds of the imperial *praenomen* and *nomen*. Marcus Verecundius Diogenes, who originated from Bourges but became *sevir Augustalis* at York, clearly commissioned his own sarcophagus (RIB 678) and that of his wife (RIB 687), since they are a matching pair. The inscriptions contain no common formulae but if the husband was a *sevir* of *coloniae Eboracensis*, a title granted in A.D. 208 or 211, this points to a date in third century.<sup>13</sup> At Ribchester, Marcus Iulius Maximus, the six year old son of a *singularis consularis* is commemorated with his mother and grandmother (see above) but only the transcript survives (RIB 594).

Relatively few stones in this group give filiation or origin; only one gives both and that is from Lincoln. The opening formula has the full expression *Dis Manibus* followed, unusually, by *nomini Sacri*. No military rank is given for the deceased; he is just described as *Brusci filii, civis Senoni* (RIB 262). Among the other males with recorded origin are Greeks (RIB 9, 251, 955), a Sequanian from eastern Gaul who died at Cirencester (RIB 110) and an Italian recorded at York (RIB 677). Victor the Moor was the freedman of Numerianus, who was serving with *ala I Asturum* at South Shields (RIB 1064); Hermes from Commagene died at Brough-under-Stainmore (RIB 758); Barathes, the Palmyrene, was buried at Corbridge (RIB 1171) and Mettus, a Thracian, is recorded at Sea Mills in Gloucestershire. There is no reference to rank on his tombstone (RIB 136) and Anthony Birley suggests that he might have been a slave employed on a local *villa* or estate.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps some of the others were Gaulish or eastern traders.

The six women whose origin is recorded are: Rusonia Aventina, a lady from Metz on the Moselle whose tombstone was set up by her heir at Bath (RIB 163); Volusia Faustina who was a citizen of Lincoln and the wife of a decurion of that city (RIB 250); Regina, of the *Catuvellauni*, who was buried at South Shields and was the freedwoman and wife of the *vexil(l)arius* (?), Barathes (1065); two ladies who died at York, Verecunda *Rufi filia*, a Dobunnian tribeswoman from the Cirencester area,

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<sup>12</sup> *Britannia* iii 1972, 352 no.2.

<sup>13</sup> *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*, OUP 1983, Great Britain, Vol.I, Fasc. 3 no. 60.

<sup>14</sup> *The people of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1979, p 141.

whose husband has a Celtic name, Excingus (RIB 621) and Iulia Fortunata from Sardinia who was married to the *sevir Augustalis*, Marcus Verecundius Diogenes (RIB 687); a lady of the Cornovian tribe, centred around Wroxeter, who is shown seated and with her hair in long plaits, on her tombstone at Ilkley (RIB 639 - Fig.27).

As with military tombstones there are a few examples of a single name with filiation which seems, to denote non-citizens of Celtic or Germanic origin: *Grata Dagobiti fil(ia)* from London (RIB 22); *Philus Cassavi fili*, the Sequanian from Cirencester mentioned above (RIB 110 - Fig.27) and *Ahtehe fil(iae) Nobilis* from Corbridge (RIB 1180). There are also some single names which, at the moment, are unique to Britain<sup>15</sup> and could be British: *Tancorix* at Old Carlisle (RIB 908), *Rianorix* and *Spurcio* at Maryport (RIB 862, 863), *Cunorix* at Wroxeter<sup>16</sup> and *Cunovindus* from Northumberland.<sup>17</sup>

The status of the civilian deceased is usually expressed or implied in the form of family relationships. These have been summarised below in Table F5. For each person only the primary relationship has been taken into account, so that if someone is mourned as a husband and a father, only the relationship of husband has been counted here. The vast majority are women and children, many of whom must be the wives and offspring of soldiers or veterans, although this is only explicit in fifteen cases. In just a few cases some official capacity is mentioned. Most of these have been mentioned above in the discussion of citizens with *tria nomina* but in addition there are two local councillors: *decurio coloniae Glevensis* (RIB 161) and *senatori in civitate Carvetiorum quaestorio* (RIB 933), and Barathes who is described as *vexilarius* but with no mention of a military unit. He died at the age of 68 and so would have retired from the army by then, if he had ever served as a soldier. His precise occupation is uncertain. Anthony Birley suggests that he is a maker of ensigns,<sup>18</sup> whereas Frere and Tomlin feel he might have been some sort of non-

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<sup>15</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator, Dissertationes Pannonicae* III i 1983.

<sup>16</sup> *JRS* lviii, 1968, 206 no.8.

<sup>17</sup> *Britannia* ii, 1971, 292 no. 14.

<sup>18</sup> A. Birley, *The People of Roman Britain*, Batsford, 1979.

military standard-bearer (RIB 1171).<sup>19</sup> His wealth can be deduced from the quality of his wife's tombstone (RIB 1065).

**Table F5: Status of deceased civilians**

<u>Relationship/status</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Age group of children</u>			
		0-3 yrs	4-16 yrs	16+	age unknown
Son	27	(5)	(12)	(2)	(8)
Daughter	34	(6)	(15)	(5)	(8)
Husband	10				
Wife	43				
Father	1				
Mother	4				
Freedmen	4				
Slave	5				
Fosterchild	4	(1)	(1)	(0)	(2)
Information lost	18				
Status not given	39				
Status not given but					
Heir appointed	8				
Official capacity	7				
Other	15				
TOTAL	220				

Table F6, below, considers civilian and military deaths recorded at centres which have produced three or more fairly well preserved tombstones. Military status is based on statement of rank or occasionally on very strong likelihood, for example in the case of RIB 1620 and some tombstones from Chester. Where no military rank is stated civilian status is generally assumed although there are some doubtful cases. Only thirteen of the total of 377 inscriptions considered have not been assigned military or civilian status. The figures in Table F6 are based on the number of deceased not on the number of tombstones. Funerary graffiti are not included in this table.

In southern Britain, where early military occupation was succeeded by civil administration from the first century, only one centre, Colchester, has produced mainly military tombstones. At Bath there is more or less a balance between military and civilian epitaphs; this centre would have attracted many visitors hoping for healing at the sacred spring. Within the military zone the record of civilian deaths

<sup>19</sup> See RIB I, 1995 edition, *addenda et corrigenda*.

**Table F 6: Military and civilian deceased from centres with three or more fairly well preserved tombstones .**

CENTRE	MILITARY (adult male)	CIVILIAN total	(Civilian) adult male	(Civilian) adult female	(Civilian) children 0-16
London	7	11	5	4	2
Chichester	0	3	1	2	0
Cirencester	2	7	3	3	1
Bath	5	6	2	2	2
Colchester	4	2	2	0	0
Gloucester	4	0	0	0	0
LINCOLN	11	8	3	4	1
Wroxeter	5	3	2	1	0
CAERLEON	13	9	1	7	1
CHESTER	74	23	8	8	7
Ribchester	2	3	1	1	1
Templebrough	2	1	0	1	0
YORK	7	27	5	14	8
Greta Bridge	3	1	0	0	1
Brougham	1	3	1	1	1?
Maryport	4	8	4	2	2
Old Carlisle	2	2	0	2	0
Old Penrith	2	6	1	1	4
Carlisle	0	5	1	3	1
South Shields	0	3	1	1	1
Corbridge	5	5	1	1	3
Risingham	3	8	0	2	6
High Rochester	3	3	1	1	1
Halton Chesters	1	3	1	0	2?
Chesters	2	4	0	3	1?
Carrawburgh	3	5	1	2	2
Housesteads	8	2	0	2	0
Vindolanda	1	4	2	2	0
Great Chesters	2	3	0	1	2
Carvoran	1	5	0	5	0
Birdoswald	2	4	1	0	3
Castlesteads	2	1	0	1	0
Auchendavy	1	2	1	1	0

outnumbers military deaths at twelve centres; in nine of these cases the civilians are mainly women and children, presumably the families of soldiers. At York the relatively large number of civilians must reflect the thriving administrative and trading community there. There seems to be a concern among soldiers to set up lasting memorials to their wives and children. If the soldiers themselves were putting regular amounts of money into a burial fund, which would pay their own funeral expenses, it is quite natural that they would want to make the same provision for their families.

The setting up of expensive memorials to young children finds both contrasts and parallels in the known burial practice from various places in Roman Britain. There is some evidence to suggest that, in both Roman and native funerary practice, very young children, under about eighteen months, were often given a casual burial. Iron Age infant burials in ditches have been identified at sites in southern England at Rotherley, Gussage All Saints, Dorset,<sup>20</sup> and at Owslebury, Hampshire.<sup>21</sup> In the Roman period disposal of infants in ditches and pits continued, but there are also burials associated with houses and other buildings. Disposal within a dwelling is evidenced at St. Albans<sup>22</sup> and at Dorchester.<sup>23</sup> At Wroxeter an infant burial was found in a room of the bath basilica.<sup>24</sup> By way of contrast, there are about six epitaphs from Roman Britain to very young infants, including one on the sarcophagus of a baby girl of ten months, *Simpliciae Florentine anime innocentissime*, at York; her father was a centurion, who served with the Sixth Legion (RIB 690). Older children might be given a formal burial in a Romano-British cemetery, sometimes with more grave goods than adults in the same burial ground; there is evidence of this at Wall, Staffordshire and at *Margidunum*, Nottinghamshire, where there are larger amounts of pottery associated with the graves of children than in adult graves.<sup>25</sup> A parallel might be suggested in the grief expressed in some of the epitaphs to children, for example, *dulcissima proles*, in the verse epitaph to a child from Lincoln (RIB 265).

### **Commemorators of both military and civilian deceased.**

The status of commemorators is generally given or implied only in terms of their relationship to the deceased, although occasionally professional status is added, for instance the husband of Volusia Faustina, a citizen of Lincoln, was a decurion of the city (RIB 250). A son who was perhaps a decurion, this time of a cavalry unit at

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<sup>20</sup> R. Whimster, *Burial Practice in Iron Age Britain c700B.C. to A.D. 43*, BAR British Series 90, 1981, p.28.

<sup>21</sup> J. Collis, Owslebury, Hants. and the problem of burials on rural settlements, in R. Reece, *Burial in the Roman World*, CBA Research Report no. 22, London, p.26-34.

<sup>22</sup> R.E.M. Wheeler and T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium, a Belgic and two Roman cities*, Report of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London no.xi, 1936 p.138-9.

<sup>23</sup> RCHM Dorset Vol II, South East, 1970 p.572-3.

<sup>24</sup> K.M. Kenyon, *Excavations at Viroconium 1936-7*, *Archaeologia* 88, 1938, pp.138, 227 and Pl. LXVa.

<sup>25</sup> R. Philpott, *Burial practices in Roman Britain A.D. 43-410*, BAR Brit. Ser. 219, 1991. p232

Ribchester, set up a tombstone to his father (RIB 596) and another decurion is the heir on a tombstone at Chesters (RIB 1480). Two tribunes are recorded at Old Penrith (RIB 937) and at High Rochester (RIB 1291), each commemorating a foster child; a third tribune and his wife set up a memorial to their daughter at Chesters (RIB 1482).

Table F7 shows the relationship of the commemorators to both military and civilian deceased. In cases where a husband commemorates his wife or wife and children, a military connection can often be inferred from the find spot, for example at Caerleon (RIB 371-3), Chester (RIB 566), Brougham (RIB 785), Old Penrith (RIB 936), Housesteads (RIB 1621) and Castlesteads (RIB 2006) but the rank of the commemorator or his precise link with the army remains obscure. When soldiers are linked to wives or families on tombstones, the inscriptions are sometimes taken to be of third century date, when soldiers' marriages became legal. Datable epitaphs from Carnuntum, however, show that family connections were recorded much earlier.<sup>26</sup> The large number of soldiers who were commemorated by an heir is a reflection of the fairly large proportion of early military tombstones from Roman Britain. In the early stages of the occupation, when it was illegal for soldiers to marry and before settled communities had time to grow up around forts and fortresses, the normal practice was for soldiers and veterans to appoint an heir; this was a legal requirement. The heir would distribute legacies and pay any debts and then could claim anything that remained. Careful military record keeping is implied here. Such information must have been stored along with accounts of savings and contributions to burial funds. The heir is usually a fellow soldier but a wife is recorded as the heir on a military tombstone from Chester (RIB 505). On a civilian tombstone from Old Penrith the daughter of a councillor and ex-quaestor of the *Carvetii* is named as his heir (RIB 933).

When the commemorator on a military tombstone is described as *frater*, it is difficult to know whether he is a sibling or a fellow soldier. In the Vindolanda tablets the term

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<sup>26</sup> V. Maxwell, *Soldier and civilian: life beyond the ramparts*, - Eighth Annual Caerleon Lecture, Nat.Museum of Wales, Cardiff 1995.

*frater* is a commonplace endearment among soldiers. Of the five examples recorded on tombstones in Table F7, the memorial to a *decurio*, who died aged 40 at Binchester, was set up by his brother and joint heirs. This probably refers to a sibling since the brother and the deceased both have the name Nemonius (RIB 1039). Three more tombstones could arguably have been set up by fellow soldiers: for a young cavalry trooper who died aged 26 at Chester (RIB 557); for a legionary who served for seven years with *Legio II Augusta* at Caerleon (RIB 357) and for a Norican who died aged 30 at Halton Chesters and whose commemorator is described as *frater eius, duplicarius alae Sabinianae*. The fifth example, from Birdoswald is fragmentary (RIB 1920). The term *fratres* on a memorial to a soldier with *Legio XXII in Germania Superior* was clearly refers to his fellow soldiers: *fratres et contubernales.....pietate fecerunt.*<sup>27</sup>

**Table F7: Relationship of commemorators to the deceased.**

<u>Commemorator*</u>	<u>Commemorated</u>	<u>Deceased military</u>	<u>Deceased civilian</u>	<u>Deceased uncertain</u>
husband	wife	0	34	0
husband	wife+children	0	6	0
wife	husband	21	5	2
son/daughter	mother	0	3	0
son/daughter	father/parents	6	4	0
mother	child	0	6	0
father	child	0	18	0
parents	child(ren)	0	10	0
foster father	foster child	0	3	1
sister	sibling	1	3	0
brother	sibling/fellow soldier?	5	3	0
heir(s)	benefactor	48	8	2
freedman/men	patron	6	1	0
patron	freedman	0	2	0
deceased	self	1	2	0
none		36	57	0
named but status unknown		0	3	6
other		6	6	0
lost		68	29	2

\*Professional status given in 12 cases.

The relationships recorded on Romano-British tombstones are generally records of families closely involved with the civil or military administration; they are mainly

<sup>27</sup> CIL xiii 7292.



high-status burials of highly romanised families. Over 160 names of commemorators have been preserved. Table F8 provides a summary of the style of nomenclature. Only fifteen people bear the full *tria nomina* but the practice of using a *praenomen* virtually died out in the third century, except among the Roman senatorial aristocracy, who maintained this tradition into the fourth century.<sup>28</sup> Among those using the *tria nomina* in British inscriptions are Titus Tammonius Victor, who set up an epitaph to his wife at Silchester (RIB 87); only one other certain example is known of this rare *nomen* and that appears on a dedication to Hercules, also from Silchester (RIB 67).<sup>29</sup> At Bath, Lucius Ulpius Sestius is named as the heir to Rusonia Aventina, a lady from the canton of the *Mediomatrici* around Metz (RIB 163). Gaius Iulius Martinus whose name appears on tombstones to both parents at Caerleon, was the son of an aged veteran of *Legio II Augusta*, Iulius Valens (RIB 363, 373). At Chester, Gaius Valerius Iustus, *actarius*, of *Legio XX* set up a tombstone to his wife (RIB 507), Lucius Sempronius Probianus commissioned an epitaph for his infant son (RIB 537) and Gaius Asurius Fortis set up a memorial to his freedman (RIB 559). Several of the commemorators from York use the *tria nomina*: Quintus Corelius Fortis placed an elaborate monument with a verse inscription to his thirteen year old daughter (RIB 684); others include Gaius Aeresius Saenus who commemorated his wife, son and daughter (RIB 685), Julia Velve's heir, Lucius Aurelius Mercurialis (RIB 688) and Marcus Aurinius Simnus who records the death of his wife and her mother (RIB 689). These are all expensive tributes to the dead, set up by wealthy citizens.

Commemorators giving a single name mostly bear Roman names of which examples occur in other north-western provinces. It should be noted that Honoratus, a tribune commemorating a foster child at High Rochester, records only his *cognomen*, although he probably had an official *nomen*.<sup>30</sup> Excingus who set up a tombstone at York to his British wife, Verecunda *Rufi (fi)lia*, who came from the Cirencester area (RIB 621), has a Celtic name which is also found in Italy, *Gallia Narbonensis* and

<sup>28</sup> Benet Salway, What's in a name? - a survey of Roman onomastic practice from 700 B.C. - A.D. 700, *JRS* lxxxiv 1994, 124-45.

<sup>29</sup> There might be a third example represented by the abbreviation *TAMM* on a rim sherd of black burnished ware from Wanborough, Wiltshire (RIB 2503.421) but, so far, there are no examples from other provinces.

<sup>30</sup> For changes in onomastic practice see Benet Salway *JRS* lxxxiv 1994, 124-45.

**Table F8: Commemorators on Romano-British tombstones - style of nomenclature.**

<u>Commemorator</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Military</u> <u>Deceased</u>	<u>Civilian</u> <u>Deceased</u>	<u>Status uncertain</u>
3 names	m	2	13	
2 names	m	23	41	
2 names	f	10	20	
2 names + filiation	f	0	2	
1 name	m	12	34	
1 name + filiation	m	1	0	
1 name	f	6	9	2

*Gallia Lugdunensis*.<sup>31</sup> Among the names which, so far, are unique to Britain are: Annamoris the husband of Ressona; the wife's name also occurs in Pannonia. They appear to have buried their son at Brougham (RIB 784); Vidaris, the father of eighteen year old Crescentinus also buried at Brougham (RIB 785); Limisius who commemorated his wife and daughter at Old Penrith (RIB 936). Judging from the name of his wife, Aicetuos, and daughter, Lattio, Limisius might have been of Germanic origin but these are the only instances of these particular names. Lurio is certainly German; he buried his sister, wife and son at Chesters (RIB 1483). Mamma Vict(oris filia) was buried by her husband Baibius Duianus at Carvoran; both his names sound Germanic.<sup>32</sup>

### **Reason.**

Tombstones are visible proof that some Romano-British communities wished to honour the dead with a lasting memorial. It seems unnecessary to look further into the reason. However, sometimes the epitaph contains specific references to the feelings of the commemorators and wishes of the deceased. Established formulae provide the usual means of expressing feelings for the departed. Those used in the study group of 377 funerary inscriptions are listed below in Table F9. Age at death has not been given any special prominence in this study, since it is not particularly relevant to the language of epitaphs and the index to RIB I lists tombstones according to age groups

<sup>31</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator, Dissertationes Pannonicae* III i 1983.

<sup>32</sup> *JRS* lv 1965, 222 no.9.

of the deceased. Formulae for expressing age are discussed below under the heading “Style”. The more poignant verse epitaphs sometimes record the death of someone very young.

**Table F9: Formulae used to describe the deceased in funerary inscriptions of Roman Britain.**

<u>Formula</u>	<u>Instances</u>	<u>Formula</u>	<u>Instances</u>
coniugi karissimae/carissimae	12	coniugi (m) incomparabili	1
carissimae suae (wife? RIB 20)	1	coniugi (f) incomparabili	1
filiae carissimae	3		
sorori carissimae	1	coniugi sanctissimae	2
marito carissimo	2	puellae sanctissimae	1
coniugi pientissimae	3	socaere tenaci	1
sorori pientissimae	1	patri pientissimo et rarissimo	1
filio pientissimo	2	filie dulcissime	1
patri pientissimo	1	sorori pientissime et dilectissime	1
coniugi piissimae	1	sine ulla macula	1
matri piissimae	2	meritis eius	1
filio piissimo	1	ob merita	1
liberto bene merenti	1		
patrono bene merenti	1		
filio bene merenti	1		
marito bene merenti	1		
servo bene merenti	1		
libertis bene merentibus	1		

It is apparent that the most affectionate terms are applied to female relatives, particularly to wives mourned by their husbands. A degree of restraint seems to exist in references to departed males, except in the case of young children. Surviving epitaphs from Roman Britain lack the more emotional expressions such as *gemens*, *maerens* and *dolens* which occur on tombstones from other provinces. Verse epitaphs, of which there are five in the study group, are the most elaborate expressions of emotion; two recall grief at the loss of young girls, one a nine year old from Lincoln, (RIB 265) and the other thirteen year old Corelia Optata, who died at York (RIB 684).<sup>33</sup> The verse epitaphs of Titus Flaminius, the *aquilifer*, from Wroxeter (RIB 292) and Hermes of Commagene at Brough-under-Stainmore both address passers-by with words of caution. (RIB 758);<sup>34</sup> the latter is of course in Greek. The fifth example from Risingham is fragmentary (1253).

<sup>33</sup> cf verse epitaphs for young children at Mainz, CIL xiii 7002, Cologne CIL xiii 8410.

<sup>34</sup> cf CIL xiii 7070 (Mainz), CIL xiii 8355 (Cologne).

The expressed wishes of the deceased are apparent where there is reference to a will. If an heir has been appointed, the implication is that a will has been made but direct mention of a will occurs in only five of the tombstones studied (RIB 9, 108, 121, 201, 257). In all but one of these cases the deceased is a soldier. Various expressions can also be found to indicate that the dead person made his own funeral arrangements: *V(ivus) S(ibi) F(ecit)* (RIB 14), *M(onumentum) S(ibi) F(ecit)* (RIB 233), *priusquam obiret fieri iussit* (RIB 675), *haec sibi vivus fecit* (RIB 678), *her(es) faciundum curavit vivus sibi et suis* (RIB 688), *moritur[us] desider[avit pat]ris in tu[mu]lo*, (RIB 864), *tam sibi quam et filio suo posuit* (RIB 931).

### **Style.**

Lettering: Lettering on tombstones has been considered in the same way as lettering for religious dedications and other inscriptions on stone; the same categories A-E have been applied. Results are shown in Table F10. The percentages are given separately for military and civilian deceased. The figures show a slightly higher proportion of stones with very good lettering and also with poor lettering or spelling irregularities in the case of civilian burials. The number of inscriptions which combine poor quality lettering and spelling irregularities (i.e. a DE classification) is exactly the same for both groups: 9 military and 9 civilian. There is no real suggestion that better masons were employed to inscribe military tombstones than civilian ones or vice versa. Most of the epitaphs for both military and civilian deceased show some professional skill in the carving, but when compared to religious dedications, the figures for lettering type (Table F10) are closer to those for civilian and non-official religious dedications in the second study group (Table R9 p. 61) than to the figures for official military religious dedications in the first study group. This is perhaps to be expected, since non-official religious dedications and memorials to the dead both represent personal records, some of which might not have been produced by professional masons at all or could be the work of masons who did not have a high degree of military training.

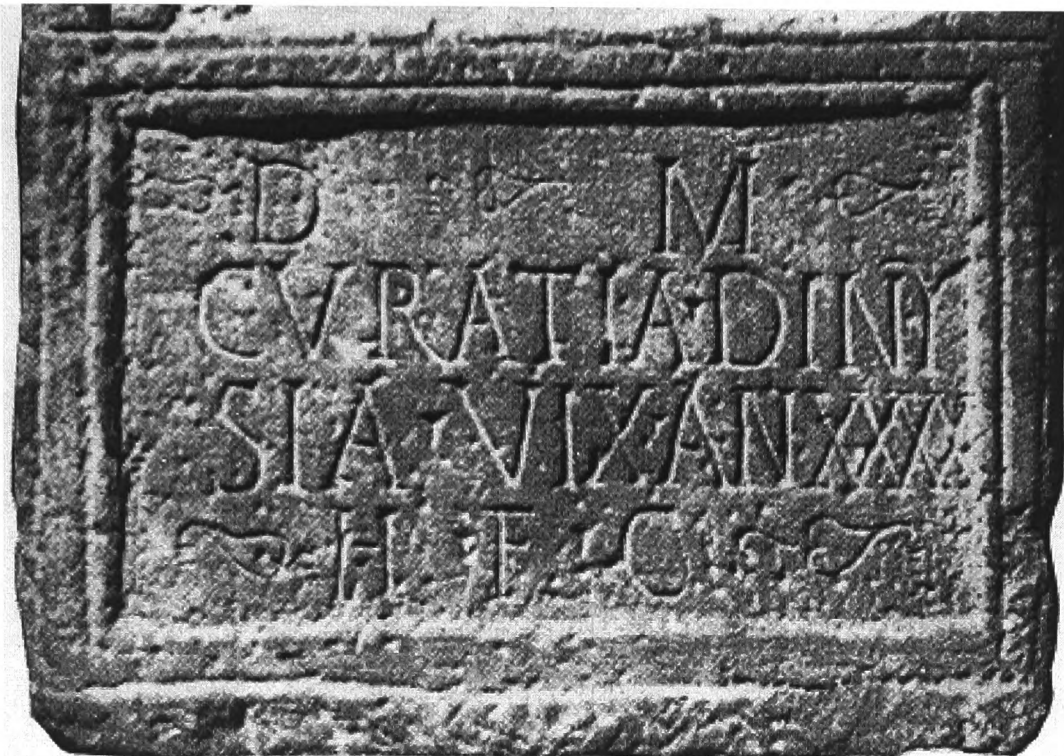
**Table F10: Funerary Inscriptions - Lettering.**

Type	<u>Military deceased</u>		<u>Civilian deceased</u>		<u>Military + Civilian</u>		<u>Unknown.</u>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<b>A-B</b>	6	<b>3%</b>	16	<b>10%</b>	22	<b>6%</b>	0
<b>C/BC</b>	143	<b>74%</b>	99	<b>58%</b>	242	<b>66%</b>	5
<b>D/CD</b>	13	<b>7%</b>	19	<b>11%</b>	32	<b>9%</b>	1
lost/worn	32	<b>16%</b>	36	<b>21%</b>	68	<b>19%</b>	7
Total	194	<b>100%</b>	170	<b>100%</b>	364	<b>100%</b>	13
E	59	<b>30%</b>	72	<b>42%</b>	131	<b>36%</b>	4

Variations in the quality of lettering seem attributable to location and date as well as to the civilian, military and social status of the deceased. The best quality lettering on funerary inscriptions comes from the larger, highly romanised centres such as London, Colchester, Bath, Chester, Lincoln and York. Wealthy families could obviously afford the best that was available and, where other information is lacking, a good quality funerary monument is generally taken as an indication of wealth and high social status. Table F11 shows the location and social or professional status, if known, of the people commemorated on the 22 inscriptions with A/B type lettering. No account is taken here of relief (Fig. 23).

A similar exercise was carried out for the 32 tombstones with poor lettering, classified as type D/CD (Fig.24). The results are shown in Table F12. A comparison of tables F11 and F12 demonstrates that most of the well-lettered stones are from highly romanised urban centres; several are of early date (RIB 12, 200, 201, 255). Many of those with poor lettering, however, come from the northern frontier where they are likely to be of second or third century date; some are probably later. Another noteworthy difference is that there is a high proportion of Celtic names on the stones with D/CD type lettering. Some of these are likely to be quite late, fourth or even fifth century (RIB 862, 863, 908, 1722, *JRS* lviii 1968 206 no. 8). Social or professional status is known for more people in Table F11 than in F12 but both contain people of high or fairly high status: a provincial procurator (RIB 12), a priest of Sulis (RIB 155), a local councillor's wife (RIB 250) and a legionary centurion (RIB

**Fig. 23: Tombstones with type A lettering.**



RIB 562

Memorial to Curatia Dinyisia from Chester.

*D(is) M(anibus)/ Curatia Diny/sia vix(it) an(nos) XXX/ h(eres) f(aciendum) curavit*



RIB 688

Memorial to Julia Velva from York.

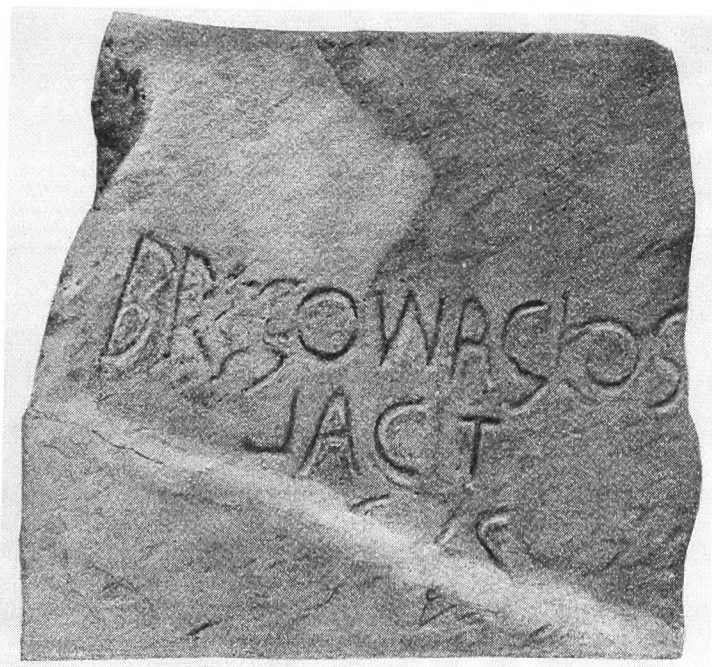
*D(is) M(anibus)/ Iulie Velve pientissi/me vixit an(nos) L. Aurel(ius)/ Mercurialis her(es) faci/undum curavit vivus/ sibi et suis fecit.*

**Fig. 24: Tombstones with type DE lettering.**



RIB 374

Tombstone of Julia Seneca from Caerleon



RIB 1722

Tombstone of Brigomaglos from Vindolanda.

**Table F11: Funerary inscriptions with type A-B lettering.**

<u>Location</u>	<u>Social/professional status known</u>	<u>Status uncertain</u>
London	RIB	RIB
	11 Fl. Agricola, mil. Leg. VI Vict	10 M. Aur. Eucarpo
	12 G. Iul. Alpini Classiciani, proc(uratoris)provinc. Britanniae	14 T. Licini Ascani
		16 Valeri Amandini
		22 Grata Dagobiti fil(ia)
Canterbury		41 ...V]lpiæ fil[ia
		43 ...]erna (aged 14)
Bath	155 G. Calpurnius Receptus sacerdos deae Sulis	
Dorchester	188 ...] Carino, civi Romano	
Colchester	200 M. Favonius Facilis, c(enturio) leg. XX	
	201 Longinus Sdapeze Matygi f(ilius) (?) duplicarius ala prima Tracum	
	205 Ar[...re[...Val[...coh I Va[...	
Lincoln	250 Volusia Faustina, c(ivis) Lind(ensis), wife of decurion.	
	255 G. Saufeio, militi legio(nis) VIII	
Brecon Gaer	403 Cand[idi....equis alae] Hisp(anorum) Vett(onum) CR	
Chester		519 M. Apronio
		562 Curatia Dinysia
York		682 Aeliae Aeliana
		688 Iulie Velve
		692 Deciminae Decimi filia
Risingham		1251 Aur(elia) Quartilla (aged 13)

200) in F11, and two legionary centurions (RIB 509, 670), an auxiliary centurion (RIB 858), a *beneficiarius legati legionis* (RIB 505) and the son of a tribune (RIB 1919) in F12. It seems then that people of high social rank are not always sure to have well executed funerary monuments; other factors must have been at work and much must have depended on the availability of skilled craftsmen at a particular time or place.



**Table F12: Funerary inscriptions with type D/CD lettering.**

<u>Location</u>	<u>Social/professional status known</u>	<u>Status uncertain</u>
Gloucestershire	RIB	RIB 123 (name lost - inscription worn) 133 Iul. Ingenuilla 136 Metti nation(e) Geta
Lincoln	256 L. Semproni Flavini, mil(i)t(i)s leg. VIII	
Caerleon		374 Iulie Senice
Chester	479 Q. Valerius Fronto, miles leg. II Ad. 483 .....] leg. II Ad. 488 Gabinius Felix, miles leg. II Aug. 498 G. Iulius Quartus, mil. leg. XX 505 Titinius Felix, b(eneficiarius) leg(ati) leg. XX 508 Q. Vibius Secundus, miles leg. XX 509 .... equo] pub(lico) c(enturio) - 4 legions	
York	670 Aur. Supero, cent(urioni) leg. VI	
Aldborough		710 Felicule
Maryport	858 I]ul. Marinus, ordin[atus	862 Rianorix 863 Spurcio
Old Carlisle	907 Mae[lo]nius S[ec]undu[s], equi[s] ale Au[g] sesq(uipticarius)	908 Tancorix mulier
Corbridge		1181 Ertole nomine Vellibia (daughter of Sudrenus?)
Risingham	1249 ...] mil. coh. IIII Gal(lorum)	1254 1yr old daughter of Blescius Diovicus 1255 nephew of Aurelius Victor
Vindolanda		1714 Ingenui 1722 Brigomaglos
Hadrian's Wall (Carvoran- Birdoswald) Birdoswald	1919 Aureli Concordi, fil(ii) Aur. Iuliani trib(uni) - aged 1 yr.	1871 Serenus
Auchendavy		2182 Salmanes - aged 15 yrs (son of Salmanes?)
Wroxeter		<i>JRS</i> lviii 1968 p206 no. 8 Cunorix Macus Maqui

Opening and closing formulae: Common expressions used to open and close sepulchral inscriptions in Roman Britain have been tabulated for both military and civilian deceased (Tables F13a, F13b, F14a, F14b). The first century fashion for using no opening formula and closing with *H(ic) S(itus) E(st)* or opening with the full *Dis Manibus* and closing with *H S E* can be seen to occur on military tombstones from sites associated with the early phase of occupation. Use of the closing formula *H(eres) F(aciendum) C(uravit)* to indicate the appointment of an heir is also a largely military feature.

The abbreviation *D M.* for *Dis Manibus*, became the standard opening formula on most tombstones by the second century with, either no closing formula, or a simple *F(aciendum) C(uravit), posuit* or *fecit*. A greater proportion of civilian epitaphs have no closing formula and some, mostly late stones, simply bear a name with no opening or closing expression. A small percentage of both military (12%) and civilian (16%) epitaphs contain unusual expressions or rare pieces of information (Table F15). Some of these, such as *H(eres) P(onendum) C(uravit)*, *F(ilius P(onendum) C(uravit)* or *H(eres) C(uravit)* are just variations of common forms; a few indicate the wishes of the deceased and have already been mentioned (RIB 675, 233, 257, 864, 14, 931, 678). There is also evidence of funerary arrangements made by guilds or burial clubs (RIB 205, 156, 1436). The use of the verb *procuravit* (RIB 1620, 1713) instead of the simple form *curavit* is a fairly rare phenomenon<sup>35</sup> and could imply that the person who arranged for the monument to be set up was not actually present; RIB 1620, in fact, states that Delfinus, the heir, was *ex G(ermania S(uperore))*. RIB 1713 was set up by the wife of a *singularis consularis*, who is not bound to have been at Vindolanda with her husband when he died. Two tombstones give information on the cause of death.<sup>36</sup> One is from Chester and records the death of an *optio ad spem* in a shipwreck, *naufragio perit*; here the abbreviation *H*, for *Hic*, has been omitted from the formula *H S E* because the body was lost (RIB 544). The other, from Ambleside,

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<sup>35</sup> Only four examples of *procuravit* are recorded in CIL xiii among tombstones of Gaul and Germany where the simple form *curavit* is common.

<sup>36</sup> Always exceptional, cf tombstone of Iulia Maiana - *manu mariti crudelissimi interfecta* (CIL xiii 2182) and of Tertius Mascellio, aged 33, - *a latronibus interfectus* (CIL xiii 2282), both at Lyon

records the death of Flavius Romanus, *actarius*, who was killed in the camp by enemies, *in castris interfectus ab hostibus*.<sup>37</sup>

Formulae specifying the area designated for the tomb are common in Italy but rare in the north western provinces. Four inscriptions from Britain are concerned with the plot used for burial. The first, from Chester, indicates that the deceased owned the burial plot, *in suo est sepultus* (RIB 555), perhaps having bought it to provide a tomb for members of his family. Burial on the family estate is perhaps evidenced on the tombstone of a girl called Aurelia Concessa, from Lincolnshire. The inscription begins with the words *in his praedis*, followed by the name of the deceased in the genitive. R.P. Wright restores *ossa sita sunt* after *in his praedis* and then cites parallels from Rome and Capua<sup>38</sup> and suggests the memorial could have been commissioned by an Italian legionary from Lincoln, who could have been following a practice which he knew from his home in Italy.<sup>39</sup> The problem here is that the significant detail in the British inscription is the phrase *in his praedis* which does not appear to have an exact match elsewhere. Other possibilities could be suggested for the restoration, such as *ossa teguntur* (RIB 204), *ossa condita sunt*,<sup>40</sup> or *membra condita sunt*.<sup>41</sup> The suggestion of Roman or Campanian influence seems to have little justification. An epitaph of a woman at Maryport has an unattested formula which, although not fully understood, seems to indicate some arrangement about the plot: *pro condicioni loci*.<sup>42</sup> The fourth example is a stone from the funerary monument of Publius Aelius Bassus, a retired legionary centurion buried at Watercrock in Cumbria. His epitaph ends with a formula which imposes a fine on anyone who tries to re-use the tomb: *si quis in hoc sepulcrum alium mortuum intulerit inferat fisco Dominorum Nostrorum...* (RIB 754). This is the only example of this particular formula in Britain. Similar prohibitive formulae are well known in Italy but seem to be rare elsewhere.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *JRS* liii 1963, 160 no. 4.

<sup>38</sup> ILS 7468, Rome: *hic ossa sita sunt Fausti, Eronis Vicari*;  
ILS 8175, Capua: *Staberiae...Florae ossa heic sita sunt....*;  
ILS 8176, Rome: *ossa hic sita sunt Auctae Apustiae Rufae quae fuit....*

<sup>39</sup> *JRS* lv 1965, 221 no. 4.

<sup>40</sup> CIL xiii 1918.

<sup>41</sup> CIL xiii 1652.

<sup>42</sup> *JRS* lvii, 1967, 204, no. 14.

<sup>43</sup> H. Dessau ILS Vol.iii nos. 8171 ff.

**Table F13a - Opening and closing formulae on tombstones of military deceased (nos. refer to RIB I).**

↓CLOSE	→OPENING DIS MANIBUS	DM	DMS	NONE	LOST	OTHER
HSE/hic situs/ sepultus est	158 403? 495 606 1172	13 360 500		108 109 121 156 157 159 200 201 254 255 257 258 291 293 294 502 673	481 482 585 544 (SE)	
FC/faciendum curavit	1743 2213	11 356 359 361 491 503 1026 2115 <i>Brit. viii 1977 429 no.15</i>	754		160 362 363 749 1433	
HFC/heres faciendum curavit	403? 405 525	492 494 497 500 506 522 532 554 671? 1173 1480 1619 2003 2004		109 121 501	367 483 496 509 511 514 1175 1562 1921	1255
cura(m) agente titulum posuit	620	360 365 534 934	1667?		596	787
memoriam posuit		17 670				
posuit/posuerunt	619 858	15		200		
fecit/feecerunt		1742		680	557	
None		489 523 1618 2118	1350	256 261	124 266 1247 1288	
Lost	19 508 542 859 2030 2142 <i>JRS liii 1962 190 no.1</i>	259 490 499 504 505 513 517 519 521 526 527 528 536 539 540 595 612 638 679 714 748 768 804 857 907 1177 1289 1292 1481 1560 <i>Brit. xv 1984 333 no.1</i> <i>Brit. xix 1988 490 no. 4</i>	612 751 1559? 2046? <i>JRS liii 1962 194 no. 21</i>	260 475 476 477 478 479 480 484 486 487 493 498 518 524 52 530 535 538 541 546 1826	18 122 253 296 512 515 533 545 547 1178 1249	612
Other	252 510 2029	205 357 358 675 1620 1713	233 488 754?	156 257 258 292	203 544 555 864 935	<i>JRS liiii 1963 160 no. 4</i>

**Table F13b - Location of tombstones in table F13a with the number of examples from each site.**

↓CLOSE	→OPENING	DM	DMS	NONE	LOST	OTHER	Total
HSE/hic situs/ sepultus est	DIS MANIBUS-Total: 5 Bath (1) Brecon Gaer (1)? Chester (1) Lancaster (1) Corbridge (1)	3 London (1) Caerleon (1) Chester (1)		17 Cirencester (2) Gloucester (1) Bath (3) Colchester (2) Lincoln(4) Wroxeter (3) Chester (1) York (1)	4 Chester (4)		
FC/faciendum curavit	2 Great Chesters (1) Ardoch (1)	9 London (1) Caerleon (4) Chester (2) Piercebridge (1) Birrens (1)	1 Watercrook (1)		5 Bath (1) Caerleon (2) Greta Bridge (1) Hadrian's Wall (1)		
HFC/heres faciendum curavit	3 Brecon Gaer (2)? Chester (1)	14 Chester (8) York(1)? Corbridge (1) Chesters (1) Housesteads (1) Castlesteads (2)		3 Cirencester (1) Gloucester (1) Chester (1)	9 Caerleon (1) Chester (5) Corbridge (1) Carrowburgh (1) Birdoswald (1)	1 Risingham (1)	
cura(m) agente		3 Caerleon (2) Chester (1)			1 Ribchester (1)		
titulum posuit memoriam posuit	1 Templebrough (1)	1 Old Penrith (1)	1 Hadrian's Wall (1)?			1 Brougham (1)	
posuit/posuerunt	2 Templebrough (1) Maryport (1)	1 London (1) York (1)		1 Colchester (1)			
fecit/fecerunt		1 Gt. Chesters (1)		1 York (1)	1 Chester (1)		
None		4 Chester (2) Housesteads (1) Auchendavy (1)	1 Benwell (1)	2 Lincoln (2)	4 Gloucester (1) Lincoln (1) Risingham (1) High Rochester (1)		

Table F13b continued

↓CLOSE	→OPENING	DM	DMS	NONE	LOST	OTHER	Total
<b>Lost</b>	<b>DIS MANIBUS-Total:</b> 7 London (2) Chester (2) Maryport (1) Stanwix (1) Mumrills (1)	<b>Total</b> 32 Gloucester (1) Lincoln (1) Caerleon (1) Chester (14) Ribchester (1) Overborough (1) Ilkley (1) York (1) Malton (1) Greta Bridge (1) Kirkby Thore (1) Moresby (1) Maryport (1) Old Carlisle (1) Corbridge (1) High Rochester (2) Chesters (1) Carrawburgh (1)	<b>Total</b> 5 Overborough (1) Greta Bridge (1) Carrawburgh (1)? Burgh-by-Sands (1)? Birdoswald (1)	<b>Total</b> 21 Lincoln (1) Chester (19) Carvoran (1)	<b>Total</b> 11 London (1) Gloucester (1) Lincoln (1) Wroxeter (1) Chester (5) Corbridge (1) Risingham (1)	<b>Total</b> 1 Overborough (1)	<b>Total</b> 1
<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b> 3 Lincoln (1) Chester (1) Stanwix (1)	<b>Total</b> 6 Colchester (1) Caerleon (2) York (1) Housesteads (1) Vindolanda (1)	<b>Total</b> 3 Wansford (1) Chester (1) Watercreek (1)	<b>Total</b> 4 Bath (1) Lincoln (2) Wroxeter (1)	<b>Total</b> 5 Colchester (1) Chester (2) Maryport (1) Old Penrith (1)	<b>Total</b> 1 Ambleside (1)	<b>Total</b> 1

**Table F14a - Opening and closing formulae on tombstones of civilian deceased (nos. refer to RIB D).**

↓CLOSE	→OPENING DIS MANIBUS	DM	DMS	MEMORIAE / DM ET MEMORIAE	NONE	LOST	OTHER
HSE	639 932	21			9 110 165	<i>Brit. v</i> 1974 461 no.1	
FC	560	22 155 372 375 537 558 684 685 686 695 710 860		373 677? <i>JRS</i> lvii 1967 204 no. 8 <i>Brit. xiii</i> 1982 396 no.1	720 784	377	
HFC		562 688				163	
cura(m) agente titulum posuit		295 (x2) <i>Brit. v</i> 1974 462 no. 6			786	<i>Brit. v</i> 1974 461 no.1 689	
memoriam posuit posuit/posuerunt		136 250 251 559 683 691 785 936 959 1561 2182 <i>Brit.iii</i> 1972 352nos.2-4 164 184? 371 690 861? 1830	1251	<i>JRS</i> xlviii 1957 227 no.8 87	9 10 507	1831	594
fecit/feecerunt			1482	16		202 693 <i>Brit. xviii</i> 1987 367no.5	
NONE		133 134 162 374 376 866 867 937 958 1065 1171 1180 1181 1246 1248 1252 1254 1290 1293 1483 1714 1745 1871 1919 2183? <i>JRS</i> lv 1965 222 no. 9 <i>Brit. i</i> 1970 308 no. 14 <i>Brit. xxiii</i> 1992 312 no.8	632 750 1062		543 564? 687 862 863 908 <i>JRS</i> lviii 1968 206 no.8 <i>Brit. ii</i> 1971 292 no.14	1182	961 1747 <i>JRS</i> liii 1963 160 no.6
LOST	12 262	25 43 93 111 112 113 240 370 563 565 566 568 674 692 694 955 960 1435 1715 1716 1829 1920		23	95 137? 561 676 681 682	41 94 161 183 188 769 1621 2006	137
OTHER	14 621	250 263 369 569 684 688 931 933 955 1064 1065 1174 <i>JRS</i> lvii 1967 204 no.14	1250 1746?	<i>JRS</i> lviii 1968 208 no.15	20 678	265 693 696 1256 1258 1436 <i>Brit. xii</i> 1981 369 no.4	204 758 <i>JRS</i> lv 1965 221 no.4

**Table F14b - Location of tombstones in table F14a with the number of examples from each site.**

↓CLOSE	→OPENING DIS MANIBUS Total	DM	Total	DMS	Total	MEMORIAE / DM ET MEMORIAE	NONE	Total	LOST	Total	OTHER	Total
HSE	Ilkley (1) Old Penrith (1)	London (1)	1				London (1) Cirencester (1) Bath (1)	3	Cirencester (1)	1		
FC	Chester (1)	London (1) Bath (1) Caerleon (2) Chester (2) York (4) Aldborough (1) Maryport (1)	12			Caerleon (1) York (1) Catterick (1) London (1)	Eastness, Yorks. (1) Brougham (1)	2	Caerleon (1)	1		
HFC		Chester (1) York (1)	2						Bath (1)	1		
cura(m) agente		Wroxeter (2)	2						Cirencester (1)	1		
titulum posuit		Halon chesters (1)	1						York (1)	1		
memoriam posuit												
posuit/posuerunt		Beverston, Glos. (1) Lincoln (2) Chester (1) York (2) Brougham (1) Old Penrith (1) Carlisle (1) Carrawburgh (1) Auchendavy (1) Cirencester (3)	14	Risingham (1)	1	York (1) Sicchester (1)	Brougham (1) London (2) Chester (1)	3	Carvoran (1)	1	Chester (1)	1
fecit/fecerunt		Bath (1) Pitney, Som. (1) ? Caerleon (1) York (1) Maryport (1) Carvoran (1)	6	Chesters (1)	1	London (1)			Colchester (1) York (2)	3		



**Table F14b continued**

↓CLOSE	→OPENING	DM	DMS	MEMORIAE/ DM ET MEMORIAE	NONE	LOST	OTHER	Total
	DIS MANIBUS Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
NONE		Horsley, Glos. (1) 28 Lasborough, Glos. (1) Bath (1) Caerleon (2) Maryport (2) Old Penrith (1) Carlisle (1) South Shields (1) Corbridge (3) Risingham (4) High Rochester (2) Chesters (1) Vindolanda (1) Gt. Chesters (1) Hadrian's Wall (1) Birdoswald (1) Auchendavy (1) Carvoran (1) York (1) Cumbria (1)	Adel, Yorks. (1) 3 Greta Bridge (1) South Shields (2)		Chester (2) York (1) Maryport (2) Old Carlisle (1) Wroxeter (1) Northumberland (1)	Corbridge (1)	Carlisle (1) Gt. Chesters (1) Papcastle (1)	3
LOST	London (1) Lincoln (1)	London (1) 22 Canterbury (1) Chichester (1) Cirencester (3) Wood Eaton (1) Caerleon (1) Chester (4) York (3) Carlisle (2) Halton Chesters (1) Vindolanda (2) Carvoran (1) Birdoswald (1)		London (1) 1	Chichester (1) Sea Mills, Glos. (1) Chester (1) York (3)	Canterbury (1) Chichester (1) Bath (1) Pitney, Som. (1) Dorchester (1) Kirkby Thore (1) Housesteads (1) Castlesteads (1)	Sea Mills, Glos. (1)	8
OTHER	London (1) Templebrough (1)	Lincoln (2) 13 Caerleon (1) Chester (1) Corbridge (1) York (2) Maryport (1) Old Penrith (2) Carlisle (1) South Shields (2)	Risingham (1) 2 Gt. Chesters (1)	Brougham (1) 1	London (1) York (1)	Lincoln (1) York (2) Risingham (2) Halton Chesters (1) Tarrant Hinton, Hants - villa site (1)	Colchester (1) Brough-under- Stainmore (1) Branston, Lines. (1)	7

Among the other expressions which are quite rare on the tombstones of Roman Britain is the abbreviation *STTL* for *sit tibi terra levis*, which occurs twice at Risingham and once at York (RIB 1250, 1258, 693); all three examples are on tombstones commemorating women.<sup>44</sup> Another rather sensitive epitaph records the burial of a much loved young man at Colchester: *in hoc tumulo teguntur ossa desiderabilis iuvenis* (RIB 204). There are also verse epitaphs which have already been mentioned above. Two of the stones in the study group give the age of the deceased qualified by the phrase *plus minus*, generally taken to have Christian connotations; these were found at Carlisle (RIB 955) and Brougham (RIB 787). The example from Carlisle records the death of a Greek citizen, Flavius Antigonus Papias, who was probably a Christian immigrant from one of the eastern provinces. His tombstone has rather unusual late lettering with the abbreviation of Flavius to *Flas*, and a reference to the restoration of his soul to the Fates: *quem ad modum accomodatum fatis animam revocavit*. The stone from Brougham has been cut down and re-used in a ceiling at Brougham Castle. It has a very unusual opening formula: *D C M*, which can hardly be a mistake. Since it occurs in conjunction with the formula *plus minus*, it would be useful to find some Christian association for *D C M* but any parallels seem to be lacking. The inscription closes with *titulum posuit*, which is certainly associated with Christian burials elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Other British examples of *titulum posuit* (Tables F13a, F14a) offer no certainty of Christian connections but the Brougham inscription also has the formula *plus minus*. A third tombstone, which is probably Christian, is that of Aurelia Aia, the wife of a centurion at Carvoran (RIB 1828). She came from Salona, in Dalmatia, where there was a thriving Christian community, and is described by her husband as *coniugi sanctissimae.....sine ulla macula*; both these phrases tend to be associated with Christian burials, although perhaps not exclusively so.<sup>46</sup> Finally there is one tombstone from a villa site at Tarrant Hinton in Hampshire, which actually records the date of death, August 26th A.D.258.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Examples from Germany appear on tombstones of soldiers (CIL xiii 6877, 6954, 8735), a woman (CIL xiii 6435) and civilians (?), (CIL 7085, 8390).

<sup>45</sup> *Titulum posuit* occurs in conjunction with Alpha-Chi-Rho-Omega and doves in inscriptions from *Ager Picenum* in eastern Gaul (CIL xiii 1178, 1184), Trier (CIL xiii 3790, 3810, 3830), Worms (CIL xiii 6257), Mainz (CIL xiii 11918) and *vicus Belgium* (CIL xiii 7558).

<sup>46</sup> At Lyon *sine ulla macula* is generally found in conjunction with the opening formula *DM/Dis Manibus et Memoriae Aeternae* (CIL xiii 1884, 1991, 2061, 2191).

<sup>47</sup> *Britannia* xii, 1981, 369 no. 4.

**Table F15: Uncommon expressions and closing formulae found on tombstones from Roman Britain**

RIB MILITARY

(Opening: Dis Manibus)

- 252 Uncertain reading  
510 H(eres) C(uravit)  
2029 tit(ul)um faciendum curavit

(Opening: DM)

- 205 ex a[ere collato].....  
357 C(uravit)  
358 curatum per  
675 priusquam obiret fieri iussit  
1620 heres procuravit  
1713 coniux procuravit

(Opening: DMS)

- 233 M(onumentum) S(ibi) F(ecit)  
488 H(eres) P(onendum) C(uravit)  
754 si q[uis in hoc] sepulc(rum)  
alium mort[uum intul]erit infer(at)  
f(isco) D(ominorum) N(ostrorum)  
[H S .....] ins(tante) Ael(io) Surino

(No opening formula)

- 156 ex col(l)egio fabr(ice)nsium elatus  
257 T(estamento) P(oni) I(ussit)  
258 H(eres) D(e) S(uo) P(osuit)  
292 militavi aquilifer nunc hic sum  
- followed by verse

(Opening lost)

- 203 obitum.....  
544 naufragio perit (H) S E  
555 h[i]c [i]n suo est sepultus  
864 moritur[us.....] desider[avit]  
pat[ris] in tu[mulo].....  
935 F(ilius) P(onendum) C(uravit)

RIB CIVILIAN

(Opening: Dis Manibus)

- 14 V(ivus) S(ibi) F(ecit)  
621 coniux.....posit de suo

(Opening: DM)

- 250 ob merita.....posuit  
263 H(eres) P(onendum) C(uravit)  
369 secus tumulum patris posuit  
569 cu(rante).....he(rede)  
684 verse epitaph  
688 her(es) faciendum curavit vivus sibi et suis fecit  
931 tam sibi quam et filio suo posuit  
955 plus minus.....quem ad modum accomodatam  
fatis animam revocavit  
1064 qui piantissime pr[ose]qu(u)tus est  
1065 additional Palmyrene inscription  
1174 P(onendum) C(uravit)  
JRS lvii 1967 204 no. 14 ponendum pro condicione loci  
curavit

(Opening: DMS)

- 1250 S(it) T(ibi) T(erra) L(evis)  
1746 C(uravit)?

(No opening formula)

- 20 meritis eius  
678 haec sibi vivus fecit

(Opening: Memoriae)

- JRS lviii 1968 208 no. 15 titulum ponendum curavit

(Opening lost)

- 265 verse epitaph  
693 S(it) T(ibi) T(erra) L(evis)  
696 P(ro) P(arte) E(res)  
1256 ...cum per val[etudinem] sit [impeditus nat(urae)]  
ord(ine) filio [heres est] substi(t)us  
1258 S(it) T(ibi) T(erra) L(evis)  
1436 collegium conser(vorum)  
B(ene) M(erenti) P(osuit)  
Brit. xii 1981 369 no. 4 Tusco et Basso co(n)s(ulibus)  
(ante diem) vii Kal(endas) Septemb(res)

**Table F15 cont.**(Other opening)

787 D C M.....plus minus

*JRS* liii 1963 160 no. 4 D B M.....  
in cas(tris) inte(rfectus) ab hosti(bus)(Other opening)204 [in hoc t]umulo teg[untur ossa ven]erabilis  
iue[enis].....

758 Greek verse epitaph

*JRS* lv 1965 221 no. 4 in his praed[is].....Aurel(iae)  
Con[ce]ssae san[ctis]simae pu[ellae]

Among the alternative formulae found on the tombstones of Roman Britain there is nothing which suggests native Celtic influence whereas relief sometimes does appear to be the work of craftsmen who have not been trained in the classical tradition. Very simple, crudely cut tombstones bearing Celtic names are the only ones which suggest the adoption of the Roman taste for written memorials by native (?) Celts (RIB 861, 862, 863, 908, 961, 1181, 1722, *JRS* lviii 1968, 206 no.8); some of these are of late date.

Relief: Some sculptural relief survives on about 152 of the 377 stones chosen for study, but a great deal must have been lost. It is not the purpose of this thesis to enter into detailed discussion of funerary relief, but a few observations are perhaps worthwhile. There seems to be no obvious correlation between fine lettering and fine relief or poor lettering and poor relief. Breakage and weathering, in any case, mean that caution should be used in commenting here. In many cases tombstones were probably prepared in advance, so that clients could choose, if they so wished, from stones with decorative features already applied; a blank panel would be left for the inscription. This was often the practice with altars. The stonecutter who carved the lettering need not have been the man who carved the relief. Occasionally a very fine example is seen with good quality lettering and relief, both well preserved, for example, the tombstone of the centurion Marcus Favonius Facilis at Colchester (RIB 200), and the tombstones of Aelia Aeliana and Julia Velva at York (RIB 682, 688). In other cases there might be a disparity between the quality of the lettering and relief. One example of this is the tombstone of Victor at South Shields (RIB 1064). The exceptionally fine quality of the sculptured relief is not quite matched in the quality of the lettering which, although good, appears to have been of secondary importance, rather like the lettering on some of the finely decorated altars of *Coh. I Hispanorum* at Maryport (RIB 816, 827). The style of Victor's tombstone has something in common

**Fig. 25a: Tombstone of Regina.**



RIB 1065 (Plate XV) South Shields.

*D(is) M(anibus) Regina liberta et coniuge/ Barates Palmyrenus natione/ Catvallauna an(norum) XXX*

**Fig 25b: Tombstone of Victor.**



RIB 1064 (PlateXIV) South Shields.

*D(is) M(anibus) Victoris natione Maurum/ [a]nnorum XX libertus Numeriani/  
[e]q(u)itis ala(e) I Asturum qui/ p[an]tissime pr[os]e[qu]u(t)us est.*

with that of Regina, also at South Shields (RIB 1065). Regina's tombstone has an additional inscription in Palmyrene and the decoration of Victor's memorial shows Syrian influence.<sup>48</sup> It is arguable that a Palmyrene sculptor was working in South Shields and that he contributed to both tombstones (Figs. 25a and 25b). The Latin has several errors in both inscriptions, although the letters have not been cut in the same style (Table F18).

Several stones seem to show signs of Celtic influence, usually only apparent in the relief, as in the case of RIB 492 at Chester, in which there is no traditional classical decoration in the niche, no conch shell and the head of Caecilius Avitus looks decidedly Celtic. His oval face, the curve of the brow, drooping moustache and swept-back hair resembles, to some extent, the relief of a Celtic deity found at York (Fig. 26).<sup>49</sup> The bust of Quintus Cornelius depicted on RIB 528 is stylised and of Celtic appearance. He resembles the representation of Aurelius Lucius in RIB 522. These two are also at Chester and were used in the reconstruction of the north wall, as was RIB 492, but it is uncertain how close the three stones are in date. It is unlikely that a very good individual likeness was attempted; this would require a highly skilled artist. It seems more likely that stonecutters aimed at a general likeness or likeness to a "type". Philus, the Sequanian buried at Cirencester, is shown wearing a hooded cloak and looks civilian (RIB 110); the Cornovian depicted on her tombstone at Ilkley looks like a native British lady because of her long plaits (RIB 639 - Fig.27).<sup>50</sup> Both these tombstones are of early date and the mason might have been making an attempt to make a recognisable image of the deceased. The figures who recline on couches in funerary banquet scenes are generally recognisable as rather well-to-do ladies; family groups are usually well dressed and look prosperous; soldiers have the accoutrements of their rank and are perhaps portrayed in an idealistic way. Of course, the paint which would have originally added detail to the stones has now disappeared, so that it is difficult to know exactly how the tombstones would have looked when new.

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<sup>48</sup> M. Henig, *The art of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1995, p. 103.

<sup>49</sup> CSIR Vol. I Fasc. 3 no.27, plate 8.

<sup>50</sup> cf H. Schutz, *The Romans in Central Europe*, Yale University Press, 1985, p145-6 and Fig. 155 showing a Raetian couple on a tombstone relief (Historisches Museum der Platz, Speyer). Their dress and appearance are Celtic.

**Fig. 26: Caecilius Avitus and a Celtic deity from York**



RIB 492 Relief showing Caecilius Avitus from Chester. (Photograph M.E.Raybould)  
*D(is) M(anibus)/ Caecilius Avit/us Emeri(ta) Aug(usta)/ optio leg(ionis) XX/ V(aleriae) V(ictricis)*  
*st(i)p(endiorum) XV vix(it)/ an(nos) XXXIII/ h(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit).*



Detail from RIB 492 (above)



Relief showing a Celtic deity.  
 CSIR I Fasc. 3 no. 27 Pl.8.



**Fig. 27: Funerary reliefs showing Philus, a Sequanian and a lady of the Cornovii.**



RIB 110 (Plate IV) Philus the Sequanian  
who died near Cirencester.  
*Philus Ca/ssavi fili(us) Sequ(anus)/  
ann(orum) XXXXV h(ic) s(itus) e(st).*



RIB 639 (Plate X)  
A Cornovian lady who died at Ilkley.  
*Dis [M]anibus /Ved[.]ic[...].riconis filia/  
annorum XXX c(ivis) Cornovia/ hic s(ita) e(st)*

Occasionally a stylised Celtic figure is accompanied by rather casual lettering, as in RIB 1181 at Corbridge and RIB 1747 at Great Chesters. The figures here are highly stylised showing no intention on the part of the sculptor to represent natural facial features or flowing drapery. The position of the arms, shape of the shoulders and style of hair resemble the *Matres* in RIB 1318 at Newcastle. There are particular similarities between RIB 1181, 1318 and 1747 (Fig.28) and in all three cases the lettering is informal and strays out of the panel provided for it. These stones could be quite late in the third century and appear to have been made by a craftsman or craftsmen, trained in styles which were very different from the traditional military styles learnt in the schools training stonecutters in the Rhineland during the first century.<sup>51</sup> Martin Millett believes that some British stonemasons may also have been trained by Gaulish civilians.<sup>52</sup> The high round shoulders and the position of the arms seen in RIB 1181, 1318 and 1747 are non-classical features which also appear in reliefs from *Gallia Belgica* (Figs.29a,b).<sup>53</sup> One of the examples from Gaul is a dedication to Mercury which reads *Mercurio Esunertus Souni filius VSLM*; the dedicator has a Celtic name,<sup>54</sup> and *Sudrenus*, the commemorator of *Ertole nomine Vellibia* in RIB 1181 has a name that sounds Celtic and is only known from this example at Corbridge.<sup>55</sup> It is tempting to see native British talent in some of the reliefs from the northern frontier. Although setting up inscribed religious and funerary monuments was a Roman habit, in Celtic provinces it seems that alternative, and possibly native, styles of relief came to be used.<sup>56</sup> This would seem to be a natural development, since military fashions in epigraphy show features which were adopted from various provinces, as the legionary craftsmen moved around the empire. Native British craftsmen could have been at work in the legions, auxiliary forces or working as itinerant civilian stonecutters. An examination of decorative features on Romano- British altars has been made by Joyce Kewley, who has traced styles to

<sup>51</sup> Alastair Scott Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, Shire Archaeology, 1984, p28

<sup>52</sup> M. Millett, *The romanisation of Britain*, Cambridge, 1990.

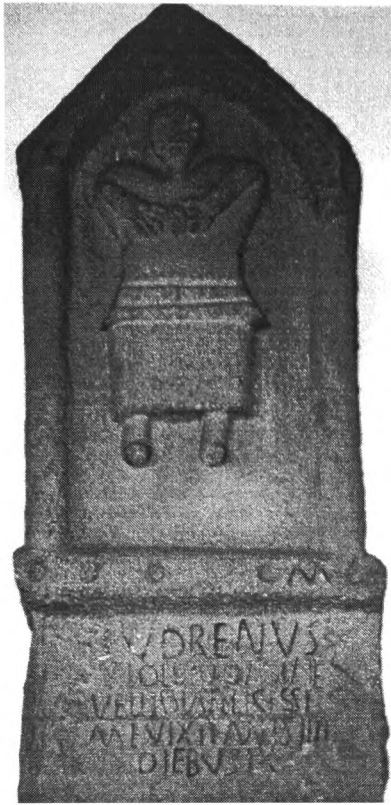
<sup>53</sup> E. Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs de la Gaule Romaine*, 1965-6, Vol. VI, 4866, 4869, 4872, 4874, 4876, 4879, 4880, 4881, 4888 - all now in the *Musée de Metz*.

<sup>54</sup> Espérandieu, *op. cit.* Vol. VI 4529.

<sup>55</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator*, Budapest, 1983.

<sup>56</sup> cf M. Henig, *The Art of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1995, p. 80.

**Fig. 28: Stylised Celtic figures from Roman Britain.**



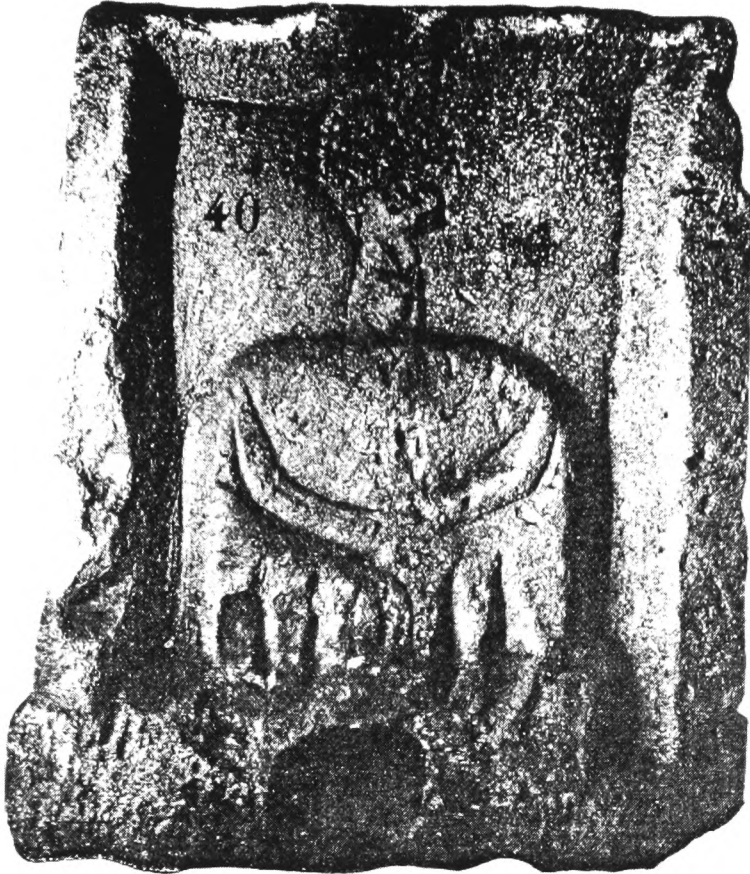
RIB 1181 Corbridge. (Photograph M.E. Raybould)  
*D(is) M(anibus) Sudrenus/ Ertole nomine/  
 Vellibia felicissim(e) vixit an(n)is IIII/ diebus LX.*

RIB 1747 Great Chesters. (CSIR).  
*Dis M(anibus) Pervica filiae/ [...]*



RIB 1318 Newcastle-upon-Tyne (no prov.) (After Embleton and Graham 1984)  
*Dea(bus) Matribus Tramarinis/ Patri(i)s Aurelius Iuvenalis/ s(acrum)*

**Fig. 29a: Stylised Celtic figures from *Gallia Belgica*.**



Espérandieu 4874 Soulosse. Possibly from a sepulchral monument.



Espérandieu 4863 Soulosse. Sepulchral monument.

**Fig 29b: Stylised representation of Mercury from Gallia Belgica.**



Espérandieu 4527. Near Phalsbourg, now in Musée de Metz.  
*Mercurio Esunertus Souni f(i)lius VSLM.*

**Table F16: Relief on funerary monuments from Roman Britain  
(nos. refer to RIB)**

<u>GENERAL FUNCTION</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>MILITARY DECEASED</u>	<u>CIVILIAN DECEASED</u>
<b>INDICATION</b>	Vine staff	17 200	
<b>OF</b>	Mounted trooper (armed)	108 109 121 159 201 291	
<b>PROFESSION</b>		499 538 (Greek) 541? 595 1172 1481 2030	
	Standard/imago	521 673	
	Armour/weapons	17 200 492 522 619	
	Tablet case	492	
	Purse?		543
-----			
<b>PERSONAL</b>	Full figure: standing	17 200 292 491 492C* 503 517 521 524 619 620 673 685 (family)	110 543 561 564 684? 686 (x2) 685 784 932 958 959 961 1181C 1747C
<b>REPRESENTATION</b>	seated		639C 1065
	reclining (banquet scene)	497 522C	558 563 565 566 568 676? 682 688 689 769 1064 1561 1829
	Bust	19 523 528C 538 748 750 751 804 1742 2003	20 137 250 692 866 1180C? 1254 1293 1483 1716C?
-----			
<b>FUNERARY</b>	Pine cone	293 612	688 785 959
<b>SYMBOLS</b>	Lion	121 201 293 538 2029	1064
	Sphinx	121 201	
	Medusa		295
	Snake	201	
	Conch shell	619	566 568 682
	Dolphin	258	295 375 568 682?
-----			

Table F16 continued.

	(Military)	(Civilian)
<b>OTHER</b>		
Rosettes	255? 256? 293 480 483? 502 529	110 369 769 936? 1246 1920 2183
<b>MOTIFS</b>		
Wheel?	254 258? 403? 508 530	1248 1293?
Star?		137 373
Crescent	487 529 544	111 133 369 936 960
Floral/leaves	109 156 157 200 294 363? 365 479 508 518 542 544 671 685 768 1826 2030 2181	9 681 1064 1290 2182
Circular motif	478 480 487 508 1618 2003	937 1174? 1181 1246 1290 1745 2182
Border pattern (cable etc.)	260 261 554 612 804 1618 1621 1828 2003	295 758 1251 1290 1436 1483 1747 2182
Peltas		16 678? 680? 687
Pediment Columns/pilasters	519 528	1064 1065 20 688 958 959 1064 1065
Aedicula	538 544	692
Altar (in relief)		20
Swags/festoons	517	295 563 689
Wreath		692 2182 2183
Child/attendant	523 528 538	558 668 689 769 1064
Figures in side panel	505 2029?	695 769? 1064
Animal/bird (pet?)	685 1618	137 558 563 676
Personal possession		563 683? 686? 692 769 1065
Scroll/document	517 523 619 620 685	
Tools/jug/patera/goblet	258 489 524 1714	1745

\*C indicates suggestion of Celtic influence.



workshops in the vicinity of Chester-le Street and Lanchester.<sup>57</sup> A comparison of sculptural detail on Roman inscribed stones and unscribed sculptures and relief from the province offers a potentially rewarding field of study.

A list of sculptural features on the Roman tombstones found in Britain is presented in Table F16. Military and civilian deceased have again been separated; there are, in fact, few differences in the two halves of the list and they all seem to be quite obvious. Mounted troopers and relief showing military accoutrements clearly belong to military tombstones. Alastair Scott Anderson discusses similarities and differences between military funerary relief from Britain and the Rhineland.<sup>58</sup> One difference which he highlights is that the banquet scenes appear more frequently on military tombstones in Germany than in Britain, although it is not clear whether this is in absolute numbers or as a proportion. Here the banquet scene is mainly found on tombstones from Chester and it is favoured on memorials to civilians, particularly women, presumably the wives of soldiers.

Similar decorative motifs can be found on sepulchral monuments from various provinces, reflecting the movement of the Roman legions. Pine cones are taken to symbolise new life coming from the dormant seed; lions represent all-devouring death and also guard the tomb; the sphinx also stands guard; conch shells and dolphins suggest the sea voyage to the lands of the blessed.<sup>59</sup> Some iconography is common to religious dedications and funerary monuments, for example, rosettes, wheel symbols, circular motifs and dolphins. It can be difficult to distinguish rosettes and wheel motifs if they are drawn with compasses.<sup>60</sup> Most of the more individual iconography serves as a reminder of what the deceased enjoyed in this life or provides a representation sustenance needed for the next. The unusual carving of a hare on the tombstone of a *medicus* with the *Coh. I Tungrorum* at Housesteads is probably not a pet, but perhaps has some medical significance, or could just indicate that he enjoyed

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<sup>57</sup> *Antiq. Journal* liv 1974, 53-65.

<sup>58</sup> A. Scott Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones* p 28

<sup>59</sup> J.M.C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans*, Clarendon 1964, 111-13, 181ff.

<sup>60</sup> This problem arises on the Alsace tombstones of the *stèles-maisons* type (E. Linckenheld, *Stèles-Maisons*, 1927).



hunting (RIB 1618). A hare is depicted on a Roman tombstone at Bordeaux,<sup>61</sup> and on a sarcophagus at Lyon.<sup>62</sup>

**Spelling:** Spelling irregularities have been recorded in the manner employed in previous chapters and can be seen in Table F18. As in the material examined in earlier chapters, the examples of changes in vowel sounds include many instances of **e** written for the diphthong **ae**. Because so many of the civilian epitaphs are tributes to women, a fairly large proportion of which give the lady's name in the dative, this presents an opportunity to look more closely at this feature. Table F17 shows the examples from the study material of retention of the **ae** spelling and reduction to **e**, which more closely represents the spoken form. In the 50 inscriptions which are included in this table, there are 41 examples of correct retention of the **ae** spelling as a first declension dative ending and 49 instances of reduction to **e**, of which 40 are dative. Some stones, shown in bold type in Table F17, include both correct retention of **ae** and reduction to **e**.

**Table F17: Retention of diphthong ae and reduction to e on tombstones of civilian deceased from Roman Britain (nos. refer to RIB I).**

<u>Retention of ae (1st decl. dative)</u>		<u>Reduction to e (mostly dative endings- some exceptions)</u>	
21	Cl. Martinae coniugi pientissimae		
<b>23</b>	<b>T]ulliae Numidi[ae</b>	<b>23</b>	pie]ntissime femin[e
87	Fl. Victorinae		
111	P. Vicanae		
113	Iuliae Castae		
163	Rusoniae Avent[i]nae		
164	Succ(essae) Petroniae		
262	Carssounae		
263	Claudiae Crysidi		
372	Iul. Nundinae		
<b>373</b>	<b>(Memoriae) Iuliae Secundinae</b>	<b>373</b>	matri pientissime (vixit.....)
		374	Iulie Senice
<b>507</b>	<b>Cocce[iae] Irene coniugi....sanctis[s]imae</b>	<b>507</b>	coniugi castis[s]ime et (sanctissimae)
		563	Fesonie Severiane
566	(i) Restitae      (ii) Martiae	594	socaere tenacissime

<sup>61</sup> Tarquinia Faustina is depicted on her tombstone with a hare to her left (CIL xiii 867).

<sup>62</sup> Sarcophagus of Annius Flavianus with relief of the four seasons; the *Genius* of Winter holds a hare (CIL xiii 1831). Hares may have chthonic symbolism since they forage at night (Miranda Green pers. comm.).

**Table F17 continued**

	(ae retained)		(reduced to e)
632	Candiedinae Fortuna[tae]		
676	Iul. Secun[d]ae		
682	Aeliae Aeliana	677	Emi(liae) for Aemiliae
		683	Ael. Severe honeste femine
		684	vite.....gnate.....nate
685	Flaviae Augustinae.....coniugi caris[s]imae	686	(i) Iulie Brice (ii) Sepronie Martine
		687	Iul. Fortunate.....Fida coniuncta (nom.?)
		688	Iulie Velve
689	Martini[a]e Maericae et Candidae Baritae		
690	Simpliciae	690	(Simpliciae) Florentine anime innocentissime que vixit.....
691	Ulpiae Felicissimae		
692	Deciminae		
693	.....coniugi piissimae		
695	Eglectae	694	Minne
		710	Felicule
		958	An(n)i(ae) Lucilie
		959	coiugi carissime
		1180	Ahtehe
		1181	Ertole (nomine Vellibia) - nominative?
		1250	Aur. Lupule matri piissime
1435	Aurelia[e] Victor[i]nae	1482	Fabie Honorate.....filie dulcissime
		1483	(i) Urse (ii) Iulie
		1558	.....]atencte [con]iugi pie.....et ...]iane fili(ae)
		1620	Pervince
1745	Aureliae Caula[e]	1745	sorori carissime
1746	Nigrinae		
1747	Pervicae filiae		
1828	Aur. Aiae.....coniugi sanctissimae	1829	sorori pien[tis]sime et di[lectissime]
		1831	f[il(iae) ca]rissime
2183	Verecundae		

Tombstones of military deceased do not offer suitable evidence for comparison since the deceased are all male and therefore first declension names in the dative are not a feature. The reductions which occur are in *Cecilius* (RIB 523), *perpetue* (RIB 612 - dative) and *ale* (RIB 907 - genitive); there is also a hypercorrect form *aeques* for *eques* (RIB 356). It is therefore not possible to say, from the evidence of tombstones, whether military spelling would be more correct in the use of the diphthong **ae** in the dative case. There are 8 tombstones in the study group which have the word *alae* (genitive) written in full and 7 of these retain the diphthong **ae** (RIB 108, 109, 159, 405, 606, 1172, 1480); only one reduces it to **e** (RIB 907). The language of the

Vindolanda tablets, which was discussed in the previous chapter, suggests that military clerks, stationed there at the turn of the second century, were trained in correct orthography<sup>63</sup> and habitually wrote *ae* and not *e* but, apart perhaps from the correct use of *alae*, there is little that can be seen as comparable in the evidence from tombstones. If military and civilian tombstones are examined for other spelling irregularities, they can be seen to be fairly similar. The use of the ablative, *annis* rather than the accusative *annos*, for recording lifespan became absolutely normal by the second and third centuries and should be regarded as linguistic evolution rather than a grammatical error (Table F18). Of about 44 instances where the case can be determined, for lifespan recorded with the *vixit* formula rather than use of the genitive case, there are 19 uses of the accusative (3 military, 16 civilian) and 25 uses of the ablative (12 military, 13 civilian). It is more common, however, to find an abbreviation or the use of the genitive.

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<sup>63</sup> J.N. Adams, *The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets*, *JRS* lxxxv 1995 pp 88, 130.

**Table F18: FUNERARY INSCRIPTIONS - SPELLING IRREGULARITIES**

Type -E: Spelling irregularities (References to RIB I by number only)

1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).

**Military deceased:**

108	cives	for	civis
108	it	for	et
109	Trhaecum (h)	for	Thracum
159	cives	for	civis
201	Sardica	for	Serdica?
266	Astorum	for	Asturum
356	aeques	for	eques
509	Macid(onicae)	for	Macedonicae
518	Antestius	for	Antistius
523	Cecilius	for	Caecilius
557	Vilix	for	Felix?
612	perpetue	for	perpetuae
620	monimentum	for	monumentum
678	cives	for	civis
749	filie	for	filiae (nominative plural)
907	ale	for	alae
907	equis	for	eques
1826	Vian(na)	for	Vienna

**Civilian deceased:**

23	pietissime	for	pietissimae
249	Maxumi	for	Maximi
251	Grecus	for	Graecus
369	Vallaunius	for	Vellaunius?
373	piissime	for	piissimae
374	Iulie Senice	for	Iulia Senica
375	monimentum	for	monumentum
507	Irene	for	Irenae
507	castissime	for	castissimae
558	Thesaeus (h)	for	Theseus
560	Atiliane?	for	Atilianae?
563	Fesonie Severiane		Fesoniae Severianae
594	socaere tenacissime?		socerae tenacissimae
621	cives	for	civis
677	Emilia	for	Aemilia
683	Aelie Severe	for	Aeliae Severae
683	honeste femine	for	honestae feminae
684	vite	for	vitae
684	gnate	for	gnatae
684	nate	for	natae
686	Iulie Brice	for	Iuliae Bricae
686	Sepronie Martine	for	Seproniae Martinae
687	Iul Fortunate	for	Iuliae Fortunatae (or Iulia Fortunata?)
688	Iulie Velve	for	Iuliae Velvae
690	Florentine	for	Florentinae
690	anime inocentissime		animae inocentissimae
690	que	for	quae
694	Minne	for	Minnae
710	Felicule	for	Feliculae
933	questorio	for	quaestorio

955	Grecus	for	Graecus	
958	Lucilie	for	Luciliae	
959	carissime	for	carissimae	
1064	piantissime	for	piantissime	
1065	Catvallauna	for	Catuvellauna	
1180	Ahtehe	for	Ahtehae?	
1181	Ertole	for	Ertolae? or Ertola?	
1250	Lupule	for	Lupulae	
1250	piissime	for	piissimae	
1482	Fabie Honorate	for	Fabiae Honoratae	
1482	filie dulcissime	for	filiae dulcissimae	
1483	Vrse	for	Vrsae	
1483	Iulie	for	Iuliae	
1558	pie	for	piae	
1620	Pervince	for	Pervincae	
1620	Senicionis	for	Senecionis	
1722	iacit	for	iacet	
1745	carissime	for	carissimae	
1829	piantissime	for	piantissimae	
1829	dilectissime	for	dilectissimae	
1831	carissime	for	carissimae	
	maemoriae (h)	for	memoriae	(JRS xlvii 1957 227 no. 8)
	Victorine	for	Victorinae	(JRS xlvii 1957 227 no. 8)
	Baib(ius)	for	Baebius	(JRS lv 1965 222 no. 9)

## 2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).

### **Military deceased:**

256	milts	for	militis
369	Exupertus	for	Exuperatus
478	vetrano	for	veterano
495	vetranus	for	veteranus
495	seplitus	for	sepelitus
540	milt(is)	for	militis

### **Civilian deceased:**

240	Decmus	for	Decimus
262	Carssouna	for	Carassouna
369	piissma	for	piissima
566	Restitae	for	Restitutae
594	Dubtatae?	for	Dubitatae
685	Augstinus	for	Augustinus
769	imagnifri	for	imaginiferi
1065	Catvallauna	for	Catuvellauna
1256	substitus	for	substitutus

## 3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

### **Military deceased:**

108	eqes	for	eques
253	Saliga	for	Salica?

4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections (h).

(Table F18 cont.)

**Military deceased:**

66	Pantera	for	Panthera
109	Trhaecum	for	Thracum
121	Tracum	for	Thracum
201	Tracum	for	Thracum
291	Tirintius	for	Tiryntius?
1175	Donisius	for	Dionysius
1620	Delfinus	for	Delphinus

**Civilian deceased:**

263	Crysi	for	Chrysi
695	Stepan(us)	for	Stephanus
1830	Senofilus	for	Xenophilus
	Eutichianus	for	Eutythianus

(*Britannia* iii 1972 352 no. 2)

5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

**Military deceased:**

156	anorum	for	annorum
156	colegio	for	collegio
256	anorum	for	annorum
293	anorum	for	annorum
483	Meti	for	Metti
488	anis	for	annis
524	Stelatina	for	Stellatina
670	anis	for	annis
787	Tittus (h)	for	Titus?
858	anis	for	annis
934	anis	for	annis

**Civilian deceased:**

20	Atia	for	Attia?
377	messes	for	me(n)ses
558	anis	for	annis
694	Minne	for	Minae?
786	carisim(ae)	for	carissimae
955	accomodatam	for	accommodatam
959	Apolinaris	for	Apollinaris
984	Pussitta (h)	for	Pusitta
1171	vexilarius	for	vexillarius
1171	anos	for	annos
1180	anis	for	annis
1181	anis	for	annis
1254	anum	for	annum
1558	anis	for	annis

**Deceased of uncertain status:**

123	anos	for	annos
909	anos	for	annos

6. Loss of final consonant.

(Table F18 cont.)

**Military deceased:**

292	uva	for	uvam
292	aqua	for	aquam
360	cura agente	for	curam agente
365	cura agent(e)	for	curam agente
534	cura a(gente)	for	curam agente
1713	procuravi	for	procuravit
	visi	for	vixit (JRS liii 1963 160 no. 4)

**Civilian deceased:**

183	vixi	for	vixit?
594	memoria	for	memoriam
1254	die	for	dies

7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

**Military deceased:**

11	incomparabili	for	incomparabili
156	fabriciesis	for	fabriciensis
159	Cauriesis	for	Cauriensis
361	coniux	for	coniunx
369	defuntus	for	defunctus
491	coniux	for	coniunx
505	coniux	for	coniunx
508	Anniesis	for	Anniensis
535	Pomentina	for	Pomptina
679	Cresces	for	Crescens
1713	coniux	for	coniunx
2029	coniux	for	coniunx

**Civilian deceased:**

25	coniux	for	coniunx
111	coniux	for	coniunx
202	coniux	for	coniunx
265	conpare	for	compare
371	coniux	for	coniunx
377	messes	for	menses
594	coniux	for	coniunx
621	Verecuda	for	Verecunda
621	coniux	for	coniunx
686	Sepronie	for	Sempronie
686	Sepronius	for	Sempronius
1064	equitis	for	equitis
1064	prosequutus	for	prosecutus
1248	mesibus	for	mensibus
1714	memses	for	menses
1747	Pervicae	for	Pervincae
	mese	for	menses 2 (Britannia iii 1972 352 no.)
	Igennus	for	Ingenuus (Britannia iii 1972 352 no.)

**Deceased of unknown status:**

123	Incenuina	for	Ingenua?
909	coniux	for	coniunx

8. Various renderings of x.

(Table F18 cont.)

**Military deceased:**

121	exs	for	ex
201	exs	for	ex
488	[vix]sit	for	vixit
804	vicsit	for	vixit
1254	vixsit	for	vixit
	visi	for	vixit ( <i>JRS liii</i> 1963 160 no. 4)

**Civilian deceased:**

163	Sestius	for	Sextius
249	Maxsumi	for	Maximi
374	vics/vigs	for	vix(it)
375	Alesander	for	Alexander
377	vixsit	for	vixit
750	vixsit	for	vixit
863	vixxit	for	vixit
908	vigsit	for	vixit
908	segsaginta	for	sexaginta
959	vixsit	for	vixit
984	vixsit	for	vixit
1249	vicsit	for	vixit
1621	vicsit	for	vixit

9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).

**Military deceased:**

109	Frisiaus	for	Frisiavo
670	coiunx	for	coniunx

**Civilian deceased:**

710	coiugi	for	coniugi
955	Flas	for	Flavius (graphic shortening?)
984	cis	for	civis (graphic shortening?)
	Duianus	for	Duvianus ( <i>JRS lv</i> 1965 222 no. 9)

**Deceased of unknown status:**

912	coiux	for	coniunx
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10. Miscellaneous changes, contractions, glides.

**Military deceased:**

109	e(res)	for	heres
121	cho	for	cohortis
256	ispani	for	Hispani
481	sepuls?	for	sepultus
612	eiius	for	eius
769	imagnfri	for	imaginiferi

**Civilian deceased:**

377	Iberna	for	Hiberna
677	e(res)	for	heres?
683	eus	for	eius
696	e(res)	for	heres?
937	Ylae	for	Hylae
	Onerata	for	Honorata ( <i>Britannia viii</i> 1977 429 no. 15)



11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.

(Table F18 cont.)

**Military deceased:** N/A

**Civilian deceased:** N/A

12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.

**Military deceased:**

670 possuit for posuit

**Civilian deceased:**

10 possuit for posuit

621 posit for posuit

689 posit for posuit

1420 posiit for posuit

13. Confusion over proper names.

**Military deceased:**

157 Arniensis for Aniensis?

479 Celea for Celeia

512 Oia for Oea

535 Pomentina tribu for Pomptina tribu

557 Vilix for Felix?

**Civilian deceased:**

562 Dinysia for Dionysia

1171 Palmorenus for Palmyrenus

14. Grammatical confusion / change of use.

**Military deceased:**

363 annis for annos

373 annis for annos

488 anis for annos

506 Ulpia separated from Traiana to give a pseudo-tribe (See RIB I addenda et corrigenda p766)

509 annis for annos

532 annis for annos

670 anis for annos

748 annis for annos

858 anis for annos

934 anis for annos

2142 nationis Brigans - confusion of cases

**Civilian deceased:**

558 anis for annos

558 annis for annos

558 Serapioni for Serapionis (dat for gen)

594 Campania dubitatae conflict of cases

632 pia for pie (adverb)

687 fida coniuncta - nom for dat / gen? (the scribe did not think to make this tag agree with the case of the deceased)

691 conflict of cases- *annis...menses...dies*

720 conflict of cases for deceased? - one nominative, two dative?

785 annis for annos

867 annis for annos

931 annis for annos

1064 confusion of cases

1065	confusion of cases			(Table F18 cont.)
1180	anis	for	annos	
1181	Vellibia nominative?		- confusion of case?	
1181	anis	for	annos	
1181	diebus	for	dies	
1248	annis	for	annos	
1248	mesibus	for	menses	
1249	anis	for	annos	
1251	annis	for	annos	
1558	anis	for	annos	
1714	conflict of cases in the lifespan		- annis / memses	
1828	Salonas accusative		for ablative?	
1920	die[bus]??	for	dies	
	Mamma	for	Mammae?	(JRS lv 1965 222 no. 9)

#### 15. Errors by craftsmen and scribes.

##### **Military deceased:**

252	<i>Leg VV VIC</i>	for	<i>Leg VI VV</i>
256	use of cursive b		in capital text?
356	interlinear insertion of I		in numeral XXVIII
481	error in numeral		- IXI for IIX?
482	<i>H S E S</i>	for	<i>H S E</i> ?
488	interlinear insertion of NI		in <i>Gabinus</i>
500	F repeated in error		- or abbreviation of <i>F(ilius)</i> in <i>H F F C</i> ?
527	<i>Cluvi-</i>		short for <i>Cluvius</i> or genitive case in error?
539	<i>stpen[diorum]</i>	for	<i>stipendiorum</i>
675	<i>Vi</i> omitted from <i>Leg VI Vic</i>		by haplography
787	<i>D&lt;C&gt;Mfor</i>		<i>D M</i> ?
1255	omission of L in <i>Aurelius</i> ,		and final S inserted later (poor draft? poor copyist?)
1433	<i>aliae</i>	for	<i>alae</i>
2029	<i>titum</i>	for	<i>titulum</i>

##### **Civilian deceased:**

9	<i>Atheni</i>	for	<i>Athenis</i>
250	<i>vixtt</i>	for	<i>vixit</i>
295	interlinear insertion of A		in <i>cur(am) Ag(ente)</i>
481	<i>LXI</i>		in error for <i>ILX</i>
594	<i>Dubitata&lt;e&gt;</i>	for	<i>Dubitata</i>
621	<i>Verecunda Rufilia</i>		for <i>Verecunda Rufi filia</i> , by haplography.
677	<i>EC</i>		cut for <i>FC</i> ?
684	<i>corpois</i>	for	<i>corporis</i>
690	<i>Leg VI V</i>		added below inscribed text
866	omission of <i>menses</i>		
1251	MI ligatured		for <i>mesibus</i> ?? or the numeral IV?
1254	S omitted from <i>die(s) XXI-</i>		plenty of room for S
2182	interlinear insertion of E		in <i>Salmanes</i> .

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE:**

**Ownership marks**

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

**Education**

**Fun and games**

**Personal communication**

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC LIFE**

The final part of this study deals with miscellaneous inscribed material, broadly associated with personal life, rather than official duties, religious observance or any profession; the evidence reflects some social and domestic activity. It is inevitable that what has survived is very fragmentary and cannot be expected to be a representative sample. This has been apparent in previous chapters and is perhaps even more of a problem in the present one. The material is often unrelated to anything else and difficult or impossible to date. Even when the context is certain, there are attendant problems: many of the finds are small and portable and some are both durable and valuable and so may have been kept as heirlooms. However, since this is the nature of the evidence, it has to be accepted as such and examined accordingly. Table P1 (Catalogue p. 140) provides a list of all the inscriptions used as source material for this chapter. Throughout the discussion, apart from the final section on Personal Communication, references to inscriptions in RIB II will be given as numbers only in brackets; any other sources will be specified in the footnotes.

In terms of numbers, the most common personal inscriptions to survive are ownership marks. Because of the durability factor, most of these are on pottery or metal goods. Some survive on less durable materials such as bone and leather; textiles and wood, may also have been marked by their owners, but it will never be possible to glean much evidence of this. Even on durable materials, only permanent forms of marking survive; anything written in paint, ink, chalk or charcoal will almost certainly have perished. Since they are most numerous, ownership marks will be dealt with first in this chapter, followed by a consideration of written evidence associated with other aspects of personal, social and domestic life. The headings used are listed below:

- 1. Ownership marks - a) on pottery**
  - b) on metal and gems**
  - c) on miscellaneous materials.**
- 2. Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities.**
- 3. Education.**

#### 4. Fun and games.

#### 5. Personal communication.

### OWNERSHIP MARKS.

#### a) On pottery.

In a recent paper, Jeremy Evans examines graffiti on pottery as evidence of basic literacy in Roman Britain.<sup>1</sup> He deals with graffiti cut after firing on finds of fine and coarse pottery from Roman Britain, reported for the period 1970-1983, in *Britannia*, volumes i-xiv. He considers regional variations and the percentage of finds from different types of excavated sites: forts, *vici*, *civitas* capitals, other towns, villas, rural and other sites; he also looks at different types of graffiti, but most are ownership marks. His tables and figures provide valuable information about where evidence, of at least a very basic form of literate activity, has been found. From the material studied, in the areas which had long-term military occupation, Wales, Scotland and the north of England, virtually all the graffiti came from forts and *vici*, as would be expected. In the southern half of England the most productive sites are the *civitas* capitals and small towns, with some examples from villas and rural sites, but very few graffiti from early forts which were occupied for only brief periods.<sup>2</sup> Figures can, of course, only reflect available evidence from sites selected for excavation, but it seems reasonable that graffiti should survive in greater numbers in the types of settlement which were occupied for the longest periods, military installations in Wales and the North, civilian settlements in the South. Jeremy Evans' findings concerning date are also of interest; he uses vessel type, potters' stamps and the context of the find as dating evidence. Most of the graffiti from forts and *vici* tend to be early, reflecting intensive occupation in the first and second centuries. They become less common in the third and fourth centuries; at this later date finds from *vici* outnumber those from forts,<sup>3</sup> perhaps because of changes in the way that military installations in the North

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Evans, Graffiti and the evidence of literacy and pottery use in Roman Britain, *Archaeol. Journal* 144, 1987, 191-204.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Evans, op. cit (note 1) p 195.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Evans, op. cit. Fig 5, p 197.

were manned in the later period.<sup>4</sup> Graffiti from villas are more common in the third and fourth centuries, reflecting the peak period of villa occupation. Jeremy Evans' survey indicates that graffiti on pottery show no decline in basic literacy in the third and fourth centuries, although the number of monumental inscriptions declines sharply at this time.

### Owners.

The people who marked their possessions with a personal name are elusive characters, known only by style of nomenclature and from the location of the finds. No other clues usually survive, although there are some overtly military graffiti on samian (RIB II 2501.1-14) and on coarseware (2503.116-20). It might be possible to suggest a date from the style of the artefact or on the basis of a potter's stamp. In Fascicules 7 and 8 of RIB II, tables are provided for the classification of personal names, on samian vessels and coarseware respectively.<sup>5</sup> All the names considered were cut after firing and are taken to be those of the owners rather than manufacturers. The most common means of indicating ownership is by use of the *cognomen* only; it is rare to find any indication of Roman citizenship in the name. This is perhaps because this particular use of literacy was very informal, and only served to indicate ownership within a restricted group of individuals. It would therefore be natural for the owner to use the name by which he was normally known to friends and associates. Unless several people had the same name, there would be no need to write anything more formal, and so, the full *tria nomina* or both *nomen* and *cognomen* would be unnecessary, even for citizens who bore them. This also applies to ownership marks, cut after firing, on amphorae and mortaria.<sup>6</sup> Changes in onomastic practice in the second and third centuries A.D. are also significant here, particularly the need to use a *cognomen* after the grant of universal franchise in A.D. 212.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> D.J. Breeze and B. Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall*, London, 1987, p 210 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Fascicule 7, Table II, p 9; Fascicule 8, Table II, p 22-3.

<sup>6</sup> Classification nos. 2494, 2497 in RIB II.

<sup>7</sup> Benet Salway, *What's in a name? A survey of Roman onomastic practice 700 B.C.-A.D.700*, *JRS* lxxxiv 1994 p 130-35.

**Table P2: Evidence of Celtic names as ownership graffiti on pottery fragments from Roman Britain.**

<u>SAMIAN</u>			<u>COARSEWARE</u>		
<u>RIB</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>RIB</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b>2501:</b>			<b>2503:</b>		
81	Atto Maccis	Corbridge	176	Aesuc...	Kingscote, Glos.
96	Bel...	Baldock, Herts.	177	Alatucca	Newport, Is. of Wight
97	Belaluci (?)	Mancetter	180	..]Amb[.	Slonk Hill, E. Sussex
98	Bellenia	Baldock, Herts.	181	..]mb[.	Slonk Hill, E. Sussex
101	Bikki	York	182	..]mb[.	Slonk Hill, E. Sussex
102	Bellica	Billericay, Essex	183	Amb	London
107	Bitu...(?)	Catterick	206	Beliciani	Housesteads
108	Bitudacus	Leicester	230	Cocca	Cambridge
110	Blat...lo (?)	Canterbury	127	Caraticu[s]	Richborough
172	Esico		234	Conne (/)	Leicester
	Litullus		236	Cunicati (?)	Caerleon
	Commico	Henlow Park,	237	Cun...	Lincol
	Lousico	Beds.	238	Cun...	Bower Chalke, Wilts.
210	Gleva (?)	Winterton villa, Lincs.	239	Cuni	Winchester
236	Indi	Corbridge	244	Disete (?)	Chelmsford
293	Linditi (?)	South Shields	277	Cunol[...vii	St. Albans
314	Maccus	St. Albans	312	Maporigis	Leicester
361	Mato	London	313	Map...	Gestingthorpe, Essex
363	Matugenus	Vindolanda	314	Map	Gestingthorpe, Essex
375	Med...	Kenchester	335	Matugena	Neatham, Hants.
376	Med...	Ambleside	336	Matugenus	Vindolanda
386	Miccio	St. Albans	337	Maviloduo (?)	St. Albans
470	Ria(norix?)	Caerleon	365	..]omeco[.	Puckeridge, Herts.
500	Sen...	St. Albans	410	Sen...	St Albans
520	Sintorix	Richborough	411	Senna	Carlisle
634	Vodunius(??)	Chesters	421	Tamm(onius?)	Wanborough, Wilts.
635	Vrca (?)	South Shields	439	Vassedo	Colchester
			441	[V?]ugna (?)	Leicester
			444	Vrilucolo	Ilchester, Somerset.

The typology of the names recorded is analysed in the tables in RIB II.<sup>8</sup> Most of the names recorded are Roman, adapted forms of Roman names, or romanised native names, known from various provinces. An assembly of non-Roman and Celtic names or Celtic name elements can be seen in Tables P2 and P3.<sup>9</sup> They have been selected on the basis of evidence and other cited examples supplied in RIB II and with

<sup>8</sup> Fasc. 7, Tables II, III & IV, p 9-11; Fasc. 8, Tables II & III, p 22-25.

<sup>9</sup> Table P2 does not take into account Roman names which incorporate a Celtic name element e.g: Lucius/Lucanus 2501.298-308, Senecio 2501.499; Vindex 2503.418.

reference to Mocsy.<sup>10</sup> All the names in the lists are attested elsewhere or contain elements which make deductions about etymology possible. There are several unattested and uncertain names among the graffiti but these have not been included in Tables P2 and P3. The Celtic names include some that are attested in other inscriptions from Roman Britain and in *Gallia Belgica*, for example *Matugenus*, which is also the name of a potter from *Verulamium* (Ch. 4) and which appears in the **Table P3: Evidence of other non-Roman names as ownership graffiti on pottery fragments from Roman Britain.**

<u>SAMIAN</u>			
<u>RIB</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ETYMOLOGY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b>2501:</b>			
37	Agath...	Greek	London
38	[Agath]opus (?)	Greek	Canterbury
156	Deciba...	Dacian (cf RIB 1920)	Hadrian's Wall
158	Dida	Thracian (cf RIB 888)	Rocester, Staffs.
164	[D?]oridis	Greek	Caersws, Powys
617	Eptacen[ti]	Thracian	Corbridge
173	Eup...	Greek	Cirencester
201	Gani[co]nis (?)	German ?	Carlisle
202	Ganenco	German?	Birrens
224	Hunicusa	German?	Carlisle
256	Iulia Sita	Thracian (cf RIB 121)	York
377	Melenio	Greek	Baldock, Herts.
379	Mele	Greek	Wilderspool, Cheshire
383	Mesi	Thracian	Corbridge
384	Mesti	Thracian	Corbridge
416	Oraeus	Greek (?)	St. Albans
553	Tungre	German(?) Norican (?)	Ribchester
636	Xen...	Greek	Fishbourne
637	Xy (Chy?)	Greek (?)	Chester
<u>COARSEWARE</u>			
<u>RIB</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ETYMOLOGY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b>2503:</b>			
203	Bata	Pannonian(?)	Brougham
254	[E]jutu[ches]	Greek	Cirencester
268	Ger(ontios?)	Greek	Catterick
355	Neuto	Tungrian (?)	Housesteads
358	Nicefori	Greek	Usk
375	...]ithous	Greek	Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

<sup>10</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator, Dissertatione Pannonicae III i*, Budapest 1983.



feminine form as an ownership mark at Neatham, Hants (2503.335), *Biccus* (*Bikki* in Table P2), which occurs in a curse tablet from Uley,<sup>11</sup> and *Belicianus*, which also appears on a brick (2491.80) and on a tombstone (RIB I 375) at Caerleon. Among the unusual, and perhaps British, names are *Gleva*, cognate with *Glevum*, (Gloucester), *Linditi*, perhaps cognate with *Lindum*, (Lincoln), *Ria*, which could be short for *Rianorix*, a name occurring on a late tombstone from Maryport (RIB I 862), and *Tamm*, which, if correctly expanded to *Tammonius*, is known only from two inscriptions at Silchester (RIB I 67, 87). Many of the Celtic names in Table P2 are associated with civilian sites, notably finds from Slonk Hill, a peasant settlement in East Sussex (2503.180-2). Some of the finds are of late date, such as a decorated pot from Chelmsford inscribed *Disete* (2503.244) and a flanged bowl from St. Albans reading *Cunolf...Jvii* (2503.277).

There are a few curious ownership graffiti on coarseware. A buff jug from Dorchester bears a well-written inscription in capitals with serifs and ligatures, reading *NVTRICIS* (2503.362). *Nutrix* is unusual as a personal name; it means wet-nurse, and can be applied to a mother goddess, but here the use of the genitive case suggests that it was the ownership mark of a woman. A grey-ware jar, now on display in the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff, bears the inscription *C Piscis Fagi*, (property) of Gaius the fish-eater (?) and has a drawing of an animal, possibly an otter. It was recovered by a Penarth trawler, 150 miles off the west coast of Ireland. It is uncertain whether this is some sort of shipboard joke, or whether it could be the feeding bowl of the ship's pet (2503.379).<sup>12</sup> The name *Vetula* is rather a rare *cognomen* found on two grey bowls from a Roman villa at Pakenham, Suffolk (2503.446-7) As a diminutive form of *vetus*, meaning "little old woman", it can be used as an insult, but here it appears to be a personal name. Another possibility is that it is a variant of *Vitula*, meaning "calf"; both *Vacca* and the diminutive, *Vaccula*, appear as personal names, the former in Britain, at Silchester (2501.556) and the latter in Spain.<sup>13</sup> A greyware bowl found in the River Thames at Amerden, Buckinghamshire, has a graffito in

<sup>11</sup> *Britannia* xix 1988, 485 no. 2.

<sup>12</sup> This is not necessarily of British provenance.

<sup>13</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator, Dissertatione Pannonicae* III i, Budapest, 1983.

Greek letters which reads [...]*mantios mulophysikos*], that is [...]mantius, the mule-doctor (2503.537). Apart from the linguistic interest of finding a Latin-Greek compound for *mulomedicus*, this find also recalls the reference to a vet in one of the Vindolanda tablets.<sup>14</sup>

The other non-Roman names, recorded in Table P3, reflect the same national origins as inscriptions on some religious dedications (Ch. 3) and tombstones (Ch. 5). The bearers of German, Dacian, Thracian, Pannonian or Greek names need not have arrived in Britain directly from these provinces. Direct recruitment, or family tradition in continuing to use native names, could account for survival of foreign names in Roman Britain. A possible example of continued use of a Tungrian name is Neuto, which appears on a late second or early third century black-burnished bowl at Housesteads. The First Tungrian Cohort was stationed there after the abandonment of the Antonine Wall (2503.355). Traders, doctors and slaves from different parts of the Roman World were probably present in Britain throughout the occupation.<sup>15</sup>

The types of samian vessels with ownership marks are mainly cups, plates and dishes;<sup>16</sup> the most common coarseware vessels with names inscribed are beakers, jugs and jars.<sup>17</sup> The preponderance of samian or coarseware depends partly on date and on availability at particular locations. Military sites tend to have more samian, but by the third century, the supply of imported samian had decreased, in favour of locally produced coarsewares. This accounts for fewer graffiti on samian at civilian sites, particularly villas, which flourished in the third and fourth centuries. Even at an earlier date, locally produced wares might have been more attractive to the purchaser than expensive, imported samian, if they were plentiful and of suitable quality.<sup>18</sup> One interesting fact is that literate ownership marks continued to be used into the third and fourth centuries and are found at civilian as well as military locations. Basic literacy was achieved by members of the civilian population in Roman Britain. This is

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<sup>14</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandeses II*, 310, l.11.

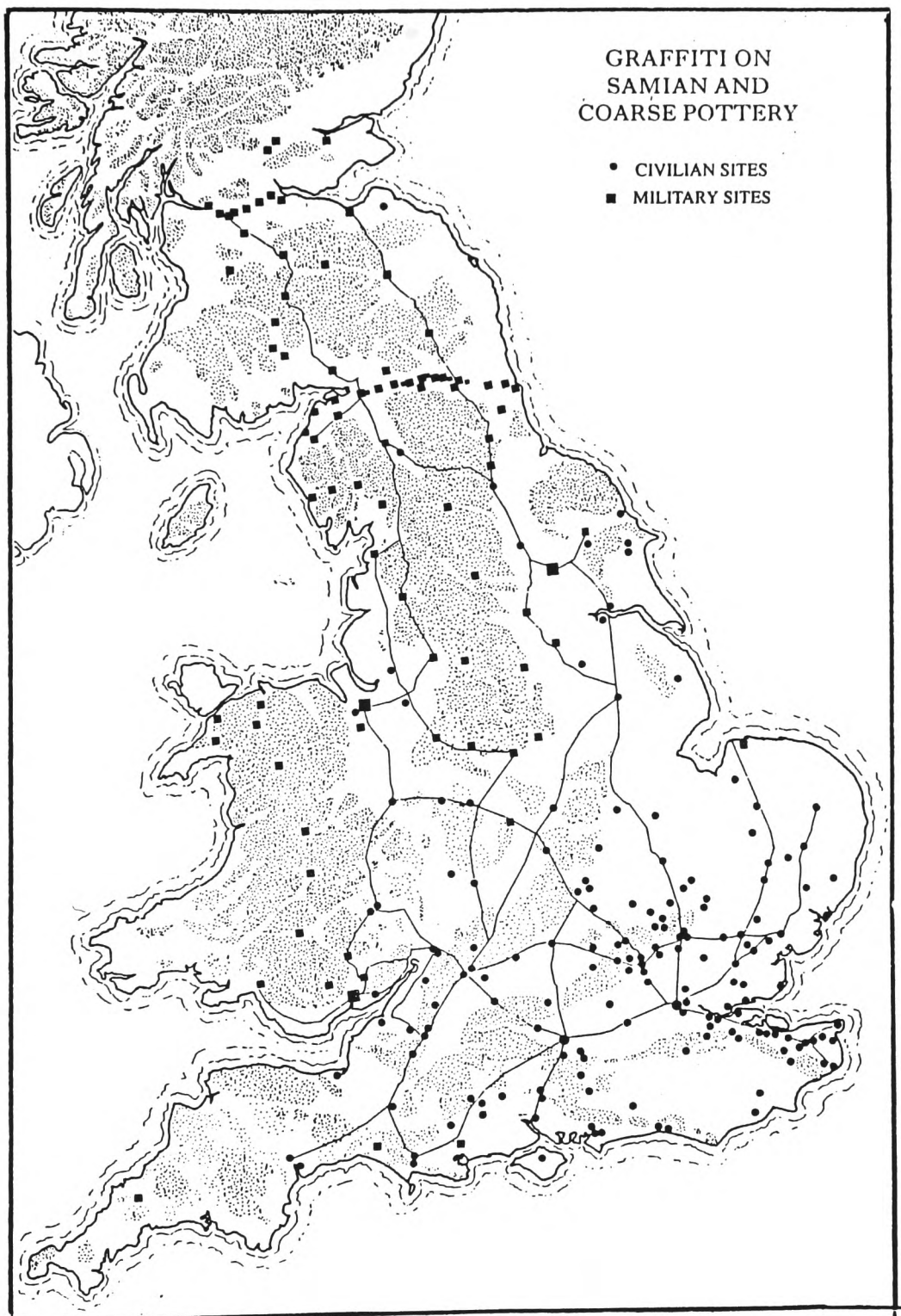
<sup>15</sup> A. Birley, *The people of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1979.

<sup>16</sup> RIB II, Fasc. 7, Table IX, p 14

<sup>17</sup> RIB II, Fasc. 8, p 19.

<sup>18</sup> RIB II, Fasc. 8, Table VII, p 29.

**Fig.30: Distribution of graffiti cut after firing on samian, amphorae, mortaria and coarse pottery.**



After S.S. Frere and R.S.O.Tomlin, RIB II, Fasc.7. p 6.

illustrated by the distribution map produced by S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin and reproduced in Fig. 30.<sup>19</sup>

#### Reasons for ownership marks on pottery.

It seems worth considering why the habit of inscribing one's name on pottery was adopted and why it persisted at different periods and at different types of sites, where living conditions might have varied. Inscribing one's name on personal possessions is known to have been a habit adopted by the army for very practical reasons; the many finds of marked utensils, armour, weapons and other equipment at military sites confirm this. Soldiers had to be responsible for their own kit and, in communal living conditions, it was a necessary precaution to write one's name as an ownership mark, just as name tapes are used to mark school uniform today. It is very easy to appreciate the need for ownership marks in such circumstances. One element in the training of new recruits to the army could have been instruction in basic literacy. Several applications of this skill have already been outlined in previous chapters (Ch. 3, 4).

Away from forts and military installations, it is perhaps less easy to envisage circumstances which made ownership marks necessary. There could have been several motivating factors. The most obvious which suggests itself is fear of loss through theft, or through confusion about ownership in communal living conditions. There is no way of knowing whether any of the ownership graffiti did not belong to "communal living". Accepting the need to write one's name on quite ordinary items of tableware, is perhaps made more difficult for the modern mind, because of current social conditions. Today, family units in Britain tend to be quite small, and equipped with more than enough crockery and utensils for their needs. The relative material wealth of much of the present day population of Britain has led to a lack of concern about preserving mundane items; broken cups, plates or glasses are usually easily replaced. Very different circumstances must have prevailed over sixteen centuries ago, and until relatively recently. Although samian ware was mass-produced in Gaul for export, the logistics of distribution and marketing cannot have compared to modern day ease of transport and network retailing. Even locally manufactured

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<sup>19</sup> RIB II, Fasc. 7, p 6; cf Jeremy Evans, *Archaeol Journ.* 144, 1987, Fig.4 p 195, Fig.5, p 197.

British pottery would present problems because of bulk and weight: it had to be moved manually and transported by slow and difficult means to market. Access to these markets might not always have been easy. Thus, even though production and distribution systems would attempt to keep pace with increasing demand, the need to look after and preserve utilitarian items was probably a lesson to be learnt when one was young and became the habit of a lifetime. The fact that some pottery vessels have been found repaired with rivets supports this view.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the inventory of domestic equipment found in a kitchen at Vindolanda is also significant here.<sup>21</sup> This was not a “throw away” society. Carelessness about personal possessions is a modern trend, which has come with mass-production of cheap wares and disposable materials coupled with ease of distribution and access.

Family units in Roman Britain might have extended to several generations or several branches of one family and, for those who could afford them, would include slaves and freedmen. If the habit of taking care of material possessions was the norm, then, even in domestic circumstances, it would not be surprising if names were written on utilitarian items, many of which might have been non-durable and will have left no evidence. The inscribed fragments of cups, bowls, plates and metalware which survive are the only testimony to this habit. Fear of theft is not the only possible reason for marking possessions in civilian or military contexts. It might have been of interest to know whose equipment had been damaged or broken; the onus of replacing it might have fallen on the owner or the culprit. Treasured possessions might have been named in the hope that no-one else in the household would use them.<sup>22</sup> Using identification marks is a fairly sure sign that loss would be inconvenient at least, and possibly distressing.

Most ownership marks were written on the base of open pottery vessels, such as cups, plates and dishes, but on the side of closed forms, such as jugs, jars and beakers. This

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<sup>20</sup> eg a Dr 18 plate repaired with bronze rivets, found in a cremation burial at Baldock, Herts. (RIB II 2501.377).

<sup>21</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 194.

<sup>22</sup> Miranda Green has suggested that a name written on a possession might have been regarded as a talisman against theft, loss or misuse (personal communication).

is mainly because of the practical difficulty of writing on a pottery vessel. The location of the graffito depends on how the writer held the object.<sup>23</sup> How a reader would read the name seems to have been of secondary importance. The vessel could be picked up and turned to reveal the name. If a jug, jar or beaker stored liquid, it would be useful to find the name on the side and not on the base of course. Whether the inscription could be read on a shelf or rack depends on the method of storage. If cups were stored upside down the writing might be visible but this would depend on the height of the shelf and of the reader. The important point is that writing one's name on tableware seems to have been quite common and, in the social environment where the practice was adopted, there must have existed the expectation that names could be read, if necessary. This very basic form of literacy must have been commonplace in Romano-British society, at military sites and at many civilian locations, by the second century A.D. and throughout the period of occupation. The habit of writing ownership marks would not have been adopted if it did not serve a useful purpose.

Protecting one's belongings with ownership marks seems to have been useful then, in both military and domestic circumstances. This supposes that they were used within the dwelling, but there might also have been occasions when equipment was taken away from the place of residence. Soldiers were frequently employed on duties away from their fort and would have to collect equipment from the *custos armorum* and carry it with them.<sup>24</sup> Names on property would have been essential here. In a civilian situation in Roman Britain, particularly in towns, there must have been the opportunity to buy snacks and drinks from shops and taverns. Examples of *popinae* and *tabernae* which sold food and drink can be seen at Pompeii.<sup>25</sup> Mass-produced, disposable packaging was not available, and so personal vessels might have been used on the premises or to carry away food and drink for consumption elsewhere. In a rural situation, communal feasts and celebrations might have been arranged from time to time, and vessels needed for eating and drinking would have to be brought and retrieved at the end. Names would help here.

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<sup>23</sup> RIB II Fasc. 8, p 19-20.

<sup>24</sup> R. Macmullen, Inscriptions on Roman armor, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 64, 1960, p 23-40.

<sup>25</sup> R. Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: space and society*, Routledge 1994, 78-9, 101.

## Style

An examination of the lettering in ownership graffiti on pottery reveals little about the literate or scribal capability of the owner. Most of the marks are scored in roughly formed capitals; the results are more a testimony to the difficulty of writing on the hard surface of an object not designed to be written on, than of the skill of the writer. Much more important than the style of lettering is the fact that so many people could scratch their name at all to indicate ownership.

There are a few indications that some of the writers of ownership marks had acquired scribal skills, or attempted to use formal lettering like that produced by a trained stonemason. Very carefully inscribed capitals are used on the base of a second century samian dish (Dr. 31), which was found in a Roman cemetery at Ospringe in Kent. Seven names are written around the wall, separated by use of interpunct. The list ends with the statement that this was a *vas<s> communis*. In spite of the misspelling of one name, *Vli* for *Iuli*, the repetition of *s* in *vas*, and the incorrect ending on *communis*,<sup>26</sup> this is an elegant inscription, which does not show the informality of more common ownership marks; the vessel was probably used in religious ritual (Ch. 3). It is large enough to allow this lengthy inscription without any crowding of letters (2501.307). An inscribed sherd of an Italian red-ware bowl also has elegant capitals. It was found at Leicester and is probably a love token: *Verecunda Iudia, Lucius gladiator*. The fragment is imported, since the pottery is of a type not found outside Italy, and it might well have been inscribed before it reached this country (2501.586). An inkpot from London is carefully inscribed in serifed capitals reading *Iucundus* (2503.287) and the buff jug from Dorchester, mentioned above, is quite stylishly marked *Nutricis*, in letters which have both serifs and ligatures (2503.362 - Fig.31). The fact that the majority of ownership marks do not display any elegance should be attributed to their informal nature, and cannot be taken as a lack of ability on the part of the owners. Very often names are written in a very small space on the base of a vessel. It must have been difficult enough to hold the object steady and score the hard material, without making any attempt to be stylish.

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<sup>26</sup> Error of gender, *vas communis* for *vas commune*.

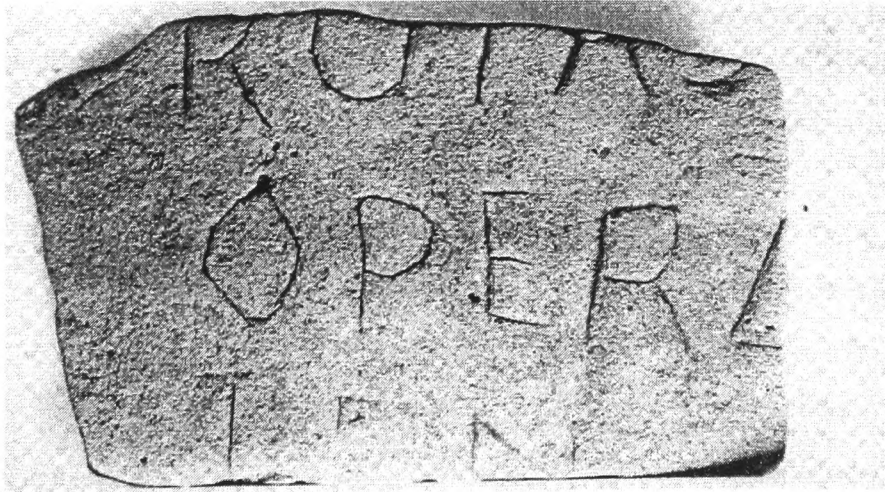
**Fig.31** (i) An ownership graffito.



RIB 2503.362

A jug from Dorchester.

(ii) A palindrome.



*(Photo: Manchester University Department of Archaeology)*

*Britannia* x 1979 353 no. 34.

An amphora sherd from Manchester.



Cursive script is a rarity among ownership marks on pottery. The ability to use cursive script probably indicates a certain degree of education or professional training on the part of the writer. Only about five examples occur on samian vessels: two from Catterick (2501.63, 113), one from Silchester (2501.346), one from London (2501.590) and one from Caerleon (2501.813). There are also five examples on pieces of coarseware: one from London (2503.101), one from Cirencester (2503.219), one from St. Albans (2503.224), one from a Roman villa at Gadebridge Park, near Hemel Hempstead,<sup>27</sup> and one with no provenance (2503.525). The majority of these come from very romanised civilian centres, or military locations, with only one from a villa. There are instances of inscriptions, on both samian and coarseware, which appear to combine capital and cursive script. Samian examples are more numerous than coarseware, but they only amount to 14 and 3 respectively.<sup>28</sup> Not all the readings are certain, since there are letter forms which are similar in both cursive and capital script, and there is always the danger of modern mis-reading. Of the examples cited in RIB II, most come from military sites, only a few from towns.<sup>29</sup> The numbers are so small that it is probably best not to look for any significance in the locations. It is easier to scratch straight lines than curved ones on a hard surface and so it was probably more practical to make capital letters than cursive script. Clarity was important and capitals are easier to read.

Use of ligatures, interpunct and different forms of the letters A and E are discussed and tabulated in RIB II.<sup>30</sup> There is no significant difference in the use of such features on samian and coarseware. R.S.O. Tomlin and S.S. Frere note that the use of interpunct occurs mainly on early or undated finds, whereas leaf stops do not appear before the second century.<sup>31</sup> Examples come mainly from large towns and military sites, but this is to be expected because the majority of inscribed wares come from

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<sup>27</sup> D.S. Neal, *Excavation of the Roman villa in Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead 1963-8*, Soc. Antiq. London, Thames and Hudson, 1974, 94, 254-5.

<sup>28</sup> RIB II Fasc. 7, Table V, p 12; Fasc. 8, Table IV, p 26.

<sup>29</sup> **Samian:** 2501.2 (Chester), 95 (Great Chesters), 124 (Gloucester), 140 (Silchester), 148 (Caerleon), 164 (Caersws), 427 (Mumrills), 448 (Vindolanda), 448, 634 (Chesters), 502 (Camelon), 589 (Corbridge), 654 (Catterick).

**Coarseware:** 2503.190 (Caister-St.-Edmund), 414 (Housesteads), 443 (Castleford, W. Yorks)

<sup>30</sup> Fasc. 7, Tables V, VI, VII p 12-13; Fasc. 8, Tables IV, V, VI, p 26-8.

<sup>31</sup> RIB II Fasc. 7, p 4.

these locations. As with other types of inscriptions, Greek letters are found only rarely. A few recruits and perhaps merchants and doctors from Greek-speaking provinces would have been present in Britain through the Roman period.

### Spelling irregularities

A list of spelling irregularities for all sections of this chapter can be seen in table P8 (p. 334). Because ownership marks are of necessity brief, the list is not extensive. There are occasional slips, such as the omission of a letter, as in *Crescns* for *Crescens* (2501.147); a few examples of change in vowel sound: *Postimia* for *Postumia* (2503.382); and of reduction in consonant clusters: *Masuetus* for *Mansuetus* (2503.311). One interesting inscription seems to be a transliteration, into Greek characters, of the word *Felici*, either as a name or as part of *feliciter* (2503.260). There is little evidence of *e* for *ae* as a feminine, genitive ending because, for reasons not fully understood, most of the feminine names appear in the nominative, whereas the majority of the masculine names occur in the genitive.<sup>32</sup> The use of the genitive for masculine names is more frequent on samian ware than on coarseware finds. Only seventeen feminine names are thought to be genitive, 11 on coarseware and 6 on samian; not all the readings are certain. Of these, perhaps 9 have a genitive ending in *ae* (3 samian, 6 coarseware) and there could be 7 examples of *e* for *ae* (3 samian and 4 coarseware), but some readings are doubtful. There is one third declension feminine name which is in the genitive: *Nutricis* (2503.362 - Fig.31). The discrepancy between the proportion of masculine and feminine names in the genitive cannot really have any grammatical explanation. The suggestion in RIB II that women might have been less well educated, and therefore less attuned to correct orthography is a possibility, but not totally convincing; there really needs to be a comparison with evidence from other provinces. It might just be a matter of habit; perhaps masculine names were habitually heard in the genitive case more often than feminine names, as the possessors of children, slaves, freedmen, wives. Women might have been more accustomed to hearing their names in the nominative, coupled with a masculine genitive, the name of their father or husband, as in an ownership graffito on a pewter plate from St. Albans: *Viventia Victorici* (2417.35) and on a bone knife handle from

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<sup>32</sup> RIB II, Fasc. 7, Table I, p 8; Fasc. 8, Table I, p 21.

Colchester inscribed *Flamma Senovari* (2441.8). Perhaps a masculine genitive just came to mind more naturally than a feminine genitive; it is not that the women could not have inscribed their name in the genitive but that perhaps they just did not think to do it.

## **b) On metal and gems.**

The range of metal goods bearing ownership marks from Roman Britain is quite extensive. It includes luxury tableware in silver, exemplified in the Traprain Law<sup>33</sup> and Mildenhall hoards<sup>34</sup> and less expensive items made of pewter and bronze. There are also spoons and vessels which were probably used in religious ritual or given as votive offerings, for example the unique collection of spoons in the Thetford treasure.<sup>35</sup> Some items of silver from Roman Britain were probably made here. Graffiti show that silver was always thought of in terms of weight; bullion value was important and some silver was probably recast. In the third and fourth centuries, pewter vessels came to be a popular, cheaper alternative to silver tableware in Britain; they were manufactured here for both the home and the export market.<sup>36</sup> Bronze *trullae* cauldrons and cups could have been produced here but some could have been imported. Not enough information has been accumulated about fabrication and manufacturers' stamps to be sure about the origins of many bronzewares (Ch 4).

Items of jewellery from Roman Britain occasionally bear the names of their owners but examples are few. Perhaps this is because more expensive pieces were individually designed and therefore easily recognised; also jewellery would not be subjected to communal use.<sup>37</sup> This also perhaps applies to larger pieces of decorated samian, few of which have ownership graffiti. A small number of rings made of gold, silver and jet and a few intaglios bear the owner's name. Those which have the name

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<sup>33</sup> A.O. Curle, *The treasure of Traprain*, Glasgow, Maclehose Jackson, 1923.

<sup>34</sup> K.S. Painter, *The Mildenhall treasure*, BM 1977.

<sup>35</sup> C. Johns and T. Potter, *The Thetford treasure*, BM 1983, 107-30; 2420 classification in RIB II. Also see in Chapter 3 above under Miscellaneous Religious Dedications.

<sup>36</sup> N. Beagrie, Romano-British pewter industry, *Britannia* xx, 1989, 169ff.

R. F. Tylecote, *Metallurgy in Archaeology*, Arnold, 1962, p 70.

<sup>37</sup> C. Johns, *The jewellery of Roman Britain : Celtic and Classical traditions*, UCL Press, 1996.

engraved retrograde on the bezel might have been used as seals, for example a hexagonal gold ring from London, reading *A·P·D*, or a silver ring from Colchester engraved, *LVCIANI*, both retrograde. If the inscription appears on the bezel, it is obviously intended for display, whereas if it is written on the hoop, or on the back of a gemstone, it would seem just to indicate ownership.<sup>38</sup> An important recent find at Fishbourne is the gold signet ring, inscribed *TI CLAVDI CATVARI*, which might have belonged to a member of the family of Cogidubnus.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes jewellery bears a slogan which includes the name of the owner, but such inscriptions are considered later in this chapter.

Military equipment was habitually marked by the owners. There is evidence from Roman Britain of successive owners: an early bronze helmet from London has four names in punched dots on the neck-guard (2405.2) and another from St. Albans has two names (2405.3). The frequent finds of ownership graffiti on pottery from military sites has already been discussed. The importance of basic literacy for military recruits needs to be emphasised. Vegetius stresses that military insignia, in this case the standards of individual cohorts, were inscribed with letters and numbers indicating the century and cohort:

“seeing and reading this, soldiers could not stray from their comrades whatever the confusion of battle” (Vegetius, *Epit.* II 13)<sup>40</sup>

The note on this in Milner’s translation suggests that Vegetius was overlooking the fact that the average soldier could not read. Milner believes that Vegetius might be thinking of ownership marks on shields and confusing them with inscriptions on standards. He supports this with reference to papyri documents which show that soldiers used amanuenses. In this Milner fails to recognise that reading and writing are different skills and that there are degrees of proficiency in each. The natural progression in the acquisition of language is to listen, speak then to recognise letters which will facilitate simple reading and perhaps writing skills. Anything more advanced takes time and commitment, but it is incorrect to assume that people who

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<sup>38</sup> eg: a gold ring from London (2422.13); an oval nicolo intaglio from Colchester (2423.9)

<sup>39</sup> *Britannia* xxvii 1996 455 no. 48.

<sup>40</sup> Vegetius, *Epitome of military science*, N.P. Milner trans. Liverpool, 1993, - see note 8, p 44.

cannot read and write well, cannot read or write at all. In view of the numerous instances in which cohorts and centuries were identified in simple inscriptions (Ch 4), it seems likely that soldiers were expected to be able to read at least this sort of basic information, even if they could do no more.

### Owners

The style of nomenclature for ownership marks on metal goods is presented in Table P4 below. Although the names are taken from miscellaneous artefacts, and there are only about 116 in total, it is interesting to note that the typology resembles that of names used as ownership marks on pottery. There are few examples of the *tria nomina*; those that survive are virtually all on prestige goods but there are relatively few mundane items in this collection. The most common means of identification is again, by use of a single name and, as with pottery, masculine names tend to be in the genitive whereas feminine names tend to be in the nominative. Where ownership is explicitly military, if the name of the individual is given as well as the name of the *centuria*, *turma* or *legio*, it is almost always in the genitive.<sup>41</sup> There are only two exceptions to this, a helmet from London when it was the property of *L. Postumius* (2425.2 ii) and a bronze disc from Stanwix belonging to *Hilario* (2427.17). A small number of Greek names are written in Greek characters.

### Reasons for ownership marks on metal goods.

This has already been discussed at some length for ownership marks on pottery. Metal goods must have been marked for similar reasons. Perhaps in the case of rings, the name was also used for display or decoration. The Thetford spoons present a unique collection. They differ from other items in this selection because they are professionally marked with the names of deities in niello. The names appear in the genitive, suggesting that the spoons were the property of *Faunus Ausecus*, *Faunus Blotugus*, *Faunus Medugenus*, *Faunus Narius* etc. It is not known whether the various representations of *Faunus* shared a sanctuary; if they did, the spoons could distinguish the various functions of the deity. There is some evidence to suggest that

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<sup>41</sup> The overtly military examples are not included in table P3.

**Table P4: Ownership marks on metal goods - style of nomenclature.****Three names**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2423.23	Rubrius Carinus Orientalis	nom.	m	cornelian intaglio	Suffolk
2427.15	L. (I)un. Abeni (?)	gen.	m	bronze disc	Chester

**Three names abbreviated**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2422.3	A·P·D (retro)	heptagonal gold ring	London
2422.13	Q·D·D	gold ring intaglio	London
2422.78	C·P·S	jet ring	South Shields
2423.21	P·I·Q	cornelian intaglio	Kingsholm Glos.
2423.25	T·E·B (retro)	cornelian intaglio	Caerleon

**Two names**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2417.4 (?)	G(aius) Novillius (?)	nom.	m	pewter plate	Blackwardine, Hereford & Worcs
2417.10 i	Fl(aviae ?) Aetionis	gen.	f	pewter dish	Suffolk
2420.28	Bel. Ianuaris (?)	gen.	m	silver spoon	Eccles Villa, Kent
2422.79	G(aius) Atinius (?)	nom.	m	jet ring	Vindolanda
2423.24	Seri Fausti	gen.	m	intaglio	Folkstone
2427.4-12	Dometi Attici	gen.	m	9 bronze discs	Newstead
2433.3	Ausoni Aviti	gen.	m	bronze handle	East Winterslow, Wilts.

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<u>No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
63-4	Aur. Vrsicinus	nom.	m	2 silver spoons	Hoxne
65-72	Aur. Vrsicini	gen.	m	8 silver spoons	Hoxne

**Two names abbreviated**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2415.57	Al. Pri	bronze trulla	Near Scunthorpe
2422.24	G. Fl.	silver ring	London

**Single name - masculine**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2417.12	Isarninus (?)	nom.	pewter dish	Icklingham, Suffolk
2417.18	Isxarninus	nom.	pewter vessel	Icklingham, Suffolk
2417.19	Ixarinus	nom.	pewter vessel	Icklingham, Suffolk
2417.22	Licinius	nom.	pewter cup	Icklingham, Suffolk
2417.23-4	Martinus	nom.	pewter plates	Southwark

(Table P4 cont. - Single name - masc.)

420.9	Cumindius (cursive)		silver spoon	Traprain Law
2424.1-2	Vernico	nom (?)	silver bracelets	Castlethorpe, Bucks.
2427.21 i	Senecio	nom.	pommel stiffener	Newstead
2427.21 ii	Cresce(n)s	nom.	pommel stiffener	Newstead
2420.58	thuhpino (?)	?	silver spoon	Traprain Law
2414.5-6	Eutheriou	gen.	silver plate	Mildenhall
2414.12	Elmi (cursive)	gen.	silver cup	Traprain Law
2414.13	Amabilis	gen.	silver cup	Traprain Law
2415.27	Liciniani	gen.	bronze trulla	Upper Weardale
2415.67	Maximi	gen.	bronze cup	Newstead
2417.2	Amati	gen.	pewter patera	Wickford, Essex
2417.3	Curati	gen.	pewter vessel	Icklingham, Suffolk
2417.10 ii	Fidelis	gen.	pewter dish	Suffolk
2417.11	Florenti	gen.	pewter dish	Cambridgeshire
2417.30	Taciti	gen.	tin cup	High Rochester
2417.33	Victrici	gen.	pewter jug	Appleshaw, Hants.
2420.38-9	Restituti	gen.	silver spoons	Thetford
2420.57 ii	[...]iniani	gen.	silver spoon	Monmouthshire (?)
2422.27	Luciani (retro)	gen.	silver ring	Colchester
2425.6	Caravi	gen.	bronze helmet	Ribchester
2427.22-4	Senecionis	gen.	pommel stiffeners	Newstead

**Single name - feminine**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2414.23 ii	Victorina	nom.	silver cup	Traprain Law
2415.39	Lucca (?)	nom.	bronze trulla	Caerleon
2417.26	Narina	nom.	pewter plate	Appleford, Oxfordshire
2417.27-8	Pacata	nom.	pewter plates	Appleford, Oxfordshire
2415.35	Viventia Victorici	nom	pewter plate	St Albans
2420.29	Ilaxata (??)	nom.	spoon	Littleton, Somerset
2420.44	Verecunda	nom.	silver spoon	Barbury Castle, Wilts.
2423.22	Rosa	nom.	glass intaglio	Dragonby, Lincs.
2423.26	Thermia	nom.	gem	Colchester
2417.21	Iustinae	gen.	pewter plate	Manton, Wilts.
2417.25	Millilunae (??)	gen.	pewter plate	Appleford, Oxfordshire
2417.31	Venustae vas	gen.	pewter bowl	Silchester

*Britannia* xxv 1993 308 nos.84-5: Silvicole sum, silver spoons, Hoxne

(Table P4 cont.)

**Single name - abbreviated**

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2414.14	Ar.	silver bowl	Traprain Law
2414.15	Bri.	silver bowl	Traprain Law
2414.16	Con.	silver goblet	Traprain Law
2414.17	Dig. (cursive)	silver cup	Traprain Law
2414.18	Adve.	hemispherical bowl	Traprain Law
2414.23 i	Mar.	silver cup	Traprain Law
2414.24	Rom.	silver bowl	Traprain Law
2414.26	Seve.	silver cup	Traprain Law
2417.20	Ixarin.	pewter dish	Icklingham, Suffolk
2418.2	Mau.	shale vessel	Tarrant Hinton Villa
2420.3	An.	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.6-8	Blo.	silver spoons	Thetford
2420.28 i	Ianu.	silver spoon	Eccles Villa, Kent
2420.32	Med.	silver spoon	Thetford
2422.6	Eutolm.	gold ring	Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire
2422.26	Iuv. (?)	silver ring	Cirencester
2422.34	Succes.	silver ring	Corbridge
2423.9	Eusebi.	nicolo intaglio	Colchester
2423.20	P.	nicolo intaglio	Oxfordshire
2428.11	Ma (?)	quarry wedge	Corbridge

the cult of Faunus did not require a temple, shrine or priests, but suppliants would bring offerings to a natural holy-place where the god would communicate with them, sometimes through dreams.<sup>42</sup> The names on the spoons seem to indicate that they were associated with religious ritual (Ch. 3), but their precise purpose and the exact significance of the inscriptions remains unclear.

Style

There are three distinct methods for making ownership marks on metal. The two simplest methods, graffiti and punched dots, could be done by the owner using any suitable sharp or pointed implement; the third, engraving, with or without niello,

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<sup>42</sup> C. Johns and T. Potter, *The Thetford treasure*, BM 1983, p. 50; cf Virgil. *Aeneid* VII 81-91, Horace *Odes* III 18.



would require professional skill. The method used for the inscription is usually quite specific to the material and type of artefact. Silver and pewter vessels tend to be marked by their owners in capital letters, scratched on the underside of the base or occasionally under the rim or on the side. The only exceptions to this, among the surviving examples from Roman Britain, are an inscription in punched dots on a fragment of a silver bowl (2414.19) and two cursive inscriptions on silver cups (2414.12, 17), all from the Traprain hoard. One other cup in the hoard has the name *Amabilis*, written in capitals, except for the final S, which is in fourth century New Roman Cursive. Punched dots are used for marking bronze, particularly *trullae*, armour and military decorations. It is much rarer to find graffiti on bronze, perhaps because of the hardness of the metal. A bronze cauldron and a cup from Newstead are marked with graffiti (2415.65, 67), but the punched dot method is widespread, and is also used on iron spearheads from London and Newstead (2427.2, 3).

The names on the silver spoons in the Thetford treasure are evidently more than mere ownership marks. The significance of linking the name of Faunus with several Celtic counterparts is not fully understood.<sup>43</sup> The inscriptions are clearly engraved, usually along the axis of the bowl, and could easily be read by any right handed person using the spoon. The names form a display and the lettering looks as if it is engraved by a professional. A few of the inscriptions appear on the handle, rather than in the bowl, but again, they could be read when the spoon was being used. A quite different sort of inscription is found on a silver spoon from Traprain Law; it is a graffito in fourth century New Roman Cursive, on the underside of the bowl and appears to be the name of the owner, *Cumminidius (?)* (2420.9). A similar ownership graffito is written in capitals beneath the bowl of a silver spoon from Barbury Castle in Wiltshire (2420.44).

Few items of jewellery bearing their owner's name survive from Roman Britain. There are some examples of engraved rings in gold, silver and jet and some engraved gems. There is a rather unusual glass intaglio, from Dragonby in Lincolnshire, which has the name, *Rosa*, moulded retrograde on the back so that it was intended to be read

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<sup>43</sup> C. Johns and T. Potter, op. cit. 1983, Chapter 7.

orthograde through the glass (2423.22). Expensive, ornate articles, if marked at all, are usually marked by professionals rather than casually by their owners. It depends on whether the inscription was purely functional or whether it was designed to be seen when the item was being worn, in which case it would need to be decorative. Some inscribed decoration is integral such as the *IVLIANA* bracelet in the Hoxne hoard.

Spelling irregularities are few and are listed in Table P8. There are some errors in the spelling of *Dei* on the Thetford spoons<sup>44</sup> and there is some evidence of variation in vowel sounds.<sup>45</sup> The name Isarninus (?) has various spellings on pewter dishes from the second hoard at Icklingham, Suffolk.<sup>46</sup> If they all belonged to the same man, it is interesting to speculate why so many different spellings occur. The concept of correct spelling is probably quite inappropriate here; each attempt must represent an effort to render sounds into symbols. They need not have all been inscribed at the same time or by the same person, and each attempt produced a different answer. There is a misspelling of *Crescentis* on a bronze bowl from Prestwick Carr, Northumberland, with a misguided attempt at correction (2415.63), and an accidental repetition of the letter A, overwritten with the X, in *Maximi*, on a small, white bronze cup from Newstead (2415.57). There are very few female names in this selection of material and only five appear in the genitive; three (?) have the ending *ae* (2417.21, 25(?), 31), but the two spoons from Hoxne have an *e*. They are both inscribed *Silvicole sum*.<sup>47</sup>

### **c) On miscellaneous materials.**

There remains a small number of ownership marks preserved on items of bone, leather, wood and stone. Almost 400 inscribed bone roundels have been recovered from Roman Britain. Most of the inscriptions are thought to relate to the games played with them, but a few might be ownership marks. There are not enough examples to be certain, only about 21 all together, 10 of which are on a set of roundels

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<sup>44</sup> *Deii* for *Dei* (2420.17, 20, 21).

<sup>45</sup> *Medigeni* / *Medugeni* (2420.17, 18).

<sup>46</sup> *Isarniavs* (?) (2417.12; *Isxarninus* (2417.18); *Ixarinus* (2417.19); *Ixarin* (2417.20).

<sup>47</sup> *Britannia* xxv, 1993 308, nos.84-5.

from Bermondsey, London (2440.123-32). Five of these are neatly inscribed, *SEXTIII* on the obverse and *IVNIII* on the reverse (2440.123-7); one also has the figure of a man wearing a crested helmet (2440.124). Another has *SEIXTIII* and a drawing of a quadruped on the obverse and *RVFINVS* on the reverse (2440.128). All the above appear to be inscribed in the same hand. The remaining four are inscribed on one side only, in a different hand, and read: *SEXTI* (2440.129-32). Most of the Bermondsey roundels have additional decoration in the form of elongated strokes, which are often a continuation of some of the letter strokes, and these extra lines are crossed by short lines at rightangles to them. The significance if this is not clear. It is not even certain that the inscribed names are ownership marks.

The names of owners survive on only about six other bone items from Roman Britain: 3 knife handles, from King's Sedgemoor, Somerset (2441.1), Corbridge (2441.5) and Colchester (2441.8); a bone scraper from London (2441.4); a spatula from Ilkley (2441.15); a bone peg or toggle from East Tilbury, Essex 2441.9). All the inscriptions are in capital letters incised with a sharp instrument, but there is a cursive letter B in the name *PVbLI* on the knife handle from Corbridge. Four of the names appear to be genitive but *Flamma*, on the knife handle from Colchester, the only feminine name, is nominative and she seems to be the wife or daughter of a man with a Celtic name, *Senovari*. *Iuliao*, on the bone peg from Essex is rather crudely cut and perhaps stands for *Iuliavo* but it is an uncertain reading and interpretation.

Personal names survive on some fragments of leather. They are usually stamped or incised, although branding is also a possibility. Because of the positioning of some of the names, on offcuts from the edges of hides, they are taken to be tanners' marks or the names of owners who left hides to be treated.<sup>48</sup> Other inscriptions could be the names of owners of leather artefacts; soldiers are known to have inscribed their names on leatherware, for example a fragment of stitched calfskin found at York, marked with the name of a centurion of the Sixth Legion: *Solli Iuliani*; it is perhaps a fragment of a tent belonging to his century (2445.16). Shoes occasionally bear the incised names of their owners: *PIVLSVR*, perhaps for *P(ublius) Iul(ius) Sur....*, is cut

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<sup>48</sup> M. Rhodes, *Inscriptions on leather waste from Roman London*, *Britannia* xviii, 1987, 173-81.

twice on the upper sole, near the heel of a shoe, and *L·E·M* incised towards the heel of another, both from London (2445.34, 29). Leather goods were sometimes cut down for re-use, and this might partially account for ownership marks being scored near the seams and edges. The best parts of the leather could then be preserved unblemished. Perhaps this is the case with a fragment of calf hide from the late third or fourth century filling of a Roman well in London; it is scored near the margin with the name *BVRDONIVS* (2445.21). This could be further evidence of a society that was accustomed to conserve, material possessions. Producers of artefacts might mark their stock, which could account for the incised mark *CIXB*<sup>49</sup> on an offcut of shoe-making leather at Vindolanda (2445.24) and another similar fragment from London marked, *MSM* (2445.33).

The best evidence of personal names scored on wooden artefacts comes from preserved barrel staves. Marks are sometimes found on the inside of the staves and their nature suggests that these are coopers' marks (see Ch. 4), but three names, incised on the outside of barrels, seem to be the owners' marks: *Ianuaris* on an oak barrel from Bar Hill (2442.9), *Novixi*<sup>50</sup> on a silver fir stave from Carlisle (2442.16) and *Sualinos*, a name with a Gaulish termination, scored across two barrel staves from Silchester (2442.22). It seems certain that many other wooden items would have been inscribed by their owners, but the evidence does not survive.

The military habit of marking possessions with a personal name or the name of a century is further attested by inscriptions on stone handmills. It is not certain how many handmills would be required by one century, but an inscription from Great Chesters reads, *c(enturia) A[n]to(ni) mola vii*, suggesting that they were sometimes numbered (2449.3). Two of the surviving handmills come from the *vici* at Binchester (2449.1) and Brough-on-Noe (2449.10); they bear personal names in the genitive but, no centurial sign since they were probably for civilian use. The essential business of grinding corn and baking bread for the century clearly called for the precaution of writing names on handmills and loaves of bread. Circular bread ovens are found

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<sup>49</sup> *C(oh) IX B(atavorum)*.

<sup>50</sup> Possibly a variant of *Novicius* which occurs in Italy and Britain (A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator*, Budapest, 1983).

inside the walls of fortresses, for example at Caerleon.<sup>51</sup> It is uncertain how many men could be supplied by the product of each oven, but there would have to be an organised system of batch baking. Names survive on handmills and on dies for stamping bread (Ch. 4). It seems reasonable to suppose that the ovens themselves might have been marked for use by particular centuries. It is uncertain how grain was issued to military sub-units or how it was stored in the short term, but sacks might have been labelled in some way, possibly using lead tags.

Personal names as ownership marks on other stone artefacts include two finely polished rectangular palettes from York (2450.1) and Wroxeter (2450.2). The names, *Candidus* and *G(...) Licinianus* respectively, are inscribed in capitals on the back. Both are nominative and masculine, which rules out use by women as make-up palettes; male body-painting perhaps remains a remote possibility. Other uninscribed examples have been found but these are the only two inscribed palettes; they could have been used in the preparation of medicines or possibly of pigments.

### Style

Because there are so few inscriptions in this final, miscellaneous group, consideration of the style and spelling irregularities can add little to what has already been said for inscriptions on pottery and metal. The few spelling irregularities are listed in Table P8 at the end of the chapter.

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<sup>51</sup> G.C. Boon, *Isca, the Roman legionary fortress at Caerleon*, Nat. Mus. Wales 1972, p 84.  
Jeremy Knight, *Caerleon Roman fortress*, Cadw 1987, 24-5.

## SALUTATIONS, SLOGANS, CHARMS AND OBSCENITIES.

About 160 inscriptions are considered under the above heading. They are listed in Table P1 (Catalogue p. 140). Some salutations and slogans appear on imported glassware and on beakers from the Rhineland. These are not included in the present selection, although it is useful to compare such inscriptions with similar messages occurring on artefacts which might have been produced in Roman Britain.

Investigation of Romano-British glass production is progressing gradually,<sup>52</sup> but, for the purposes of this study, the inscribed wares are taken to be imported and are not included in table P1.<sup>53</sup> It is fairly certain that some inscribed jewellery was imported, but in the absence of certain knowledge about origins, finds of inscribed jewellery have been included in the selection for this chapter. The appeal of slogans to those who gave gifts of jewellery and those who received and wore them in Roman Britain, is regarded as sufficiently significant to include them in the study. The matter of origin, in the case of such personal items, is regarded as of secondary importance.<sup>54</sup>

### **Types of message and suggested reasons for use.**

#### Wishes for long life. (Table P5, 1a and 1b - p.297)

The most commonly used slogans on finds from Roman Britain are wishes for long life, good fortune and success in love, generally expressed in standard formulae or variations of these expressions. They are summarised in Table P5, in which a likely expansion has been recorded, rather than the actual inscription. At the moment, wishes for long life outnumber other expressions, partly because so many occur on silver spoons from Thetford, Hoxne and Mildenhall.<sup>55</sup> Many of these long-life

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<sup>52</sup> E. Barrington Haynes, *Glass through the ages*, Penguin 1964, 39-40.

J. Price (University of Durham), *Reflections on Romano-British glass production*, paper delivered at the Second International Roman Archaeology Conference, held at the University of Nottingham, April 1997, publication forthcoming.

H.M. Cool and J. Price, *Roman vessel glass from excavations in Colchester 1971-5*, (1995).

<sup>53</sup> D.B. Harden, *Glass of the Caesars*, Olivetti 1987 - for inscribed wares see pp 168, 197, 199, 207-10.

<sup>54</sup> see M. Henig, *The art of Roman Britain*, Batsford 1995 p 80. Henig believes that engravers from the Continent were at work in Britain from the first century. C. Johns also has useful comments on jewellery manufacturers at work in Roman Britain (*The jewellery of Roman Britain*, UCL 1996).

<sup>55</sup> These wishes for long life are paralleled in inscriptions on glassware classified 2419 in RIB II and on Rhenish beakers classified 2498.

slogans are associated with late Roman hoards in Britain, especially of silver. They come mainly from civilian sites, some of which might have early Christian associations. A wish for long life, *vivas / vivatis* (Table P5, 1a), need not have any particular religious significance, unless other factors suggest this.<sup>56</sup> The fuller versions, *vivas in deo* or *pie vivas*, which appear at Hoxne<sup>57</sup> and Caistor-St-Edmund (2420.49), are usually thought to be Christian legends and are sometimes associated with other Christian evidence, such as the Chi-Rho or perhaps a fish or palm leaf.

The major fourth century hoards of silver and pewter are discussed by Charles Thomas,<sup>58</sup> who also provides a useful distribution map.<sup>59</sup> Individual finds are considered in various publications by Kenneth Painter.<sup>60</sup> Charles Thomas and Kenneth Painter share the same reservation about being too specific concerning the use of inscribed silver spoons.<sup>61</sup> It cannot be assumed that all spoons inscribed with a Chi-Rho or the *vivas* formula were christening spoons or presented at adult baptism; neither is it reasonable to assume that such spoons were necessarily used at the Eucharist. The fact that inscribed spoons form such a large proportion of the late Roman hoards shows that they were important items in silver collections, but gives no indication of their general purpose. They were perhaps general gifts for a variety of occasions, not all associated with Christianity. Some perhaps formed part of a good set of tableware belonging to a wealthy family. Not all the inscribed spoons bear Christian legends, but some Christian families might have chosen tableware marked with symbols of their religion. Items so marked need not have been church silver.

Variations of the *vivas* formula appear on openwork gold rings from Corbridge (2422.1) and Stonham Aspal, Suffolk (2422.10). A second, similar gold ring from

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<sup>56</sup> This view is also expressed by K.S. Painter, *Journ. of the British Archaeol. Ass.* 3 ser.28, 1965, p 10.

<sup>57</sup> *Britannia* xxv, 307, no.61.

<sup>58</sup> C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to A.D.500*, Batsford 1981, 108-128.

<sup>59</sup> C. Thomas, 1981, Fig. 10, p 109.

<sup>60</sup> K.S. Painter: (i) A Roman silver treasure from Canterbury, *Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, 3, 28, 1965, 1-15.  
(ii) A Roman Christian silver treasure from Biddulph, Staffs., *Antiq. J.* iv 1975, 62-9.  
(iii) The Water Newton early Christian silver, B M 1977  
(iv) The Mildenhall treasure, B M 1977.

<sup>61</sup> K.S. Painter (ii) above, p 69; C. Thomas, 1981, p 110.

**Table P5: Salutations, slogans and other inscribed messages from Roman Britain**1a. WISHES FOR LONG LIFE

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2414.25	vivatis	silver bowl	Traprain
2414.32	Desideri vivas	silver beaker	Bywell, Northumberland
2416.4	vivas	lead casket	Caistor, Lincs.
2420.1	Aeternus vivas	silver spoon	Colchester
2420.2	Agreste vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.4	Augustine vivas	silver spoon	Dorchester
2420.5	Auspice vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.10	Censorine vivas	silver spoon	Chedworth villa
2420.25	diu vivas	silver spoon	St. Neots, Cambridgeshire
2420.30	Ingenuae vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.33	Papittedo vivas	silver spoon	Mildenhall
2420.34	Pascentia vivas	silver spoon	Mildenhall
2420.35	Perseveranti vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.37	Primigenia vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.40	Silviola vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.41	Silviola vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2420.43	Veneria vivas	silver spoon	Great Horwood, Bucks.
2420.45	Vibia vivas	silver spoon	Kent
2420.46	Vibia vivas	silver spoon	Kent
2420.47	Vir bone vivas	silver spoon	Thetford
2422.1	<i>Aemilia zeses</i>	gold ring	Corbridge
2422.5	Eusebio vita	gold ring	Bedford
2422.10	<i>Olympie zeses</i>	gold ring	Stonham Aspal, Suffolk
2422.25	Iul. Bellator vivas	silver ring	Silchester
2422.42	vivas	silver ring	Silchester
2422.67	vita	bronze ring	Canterbury
2422.75	da mi vita	iron ring	London
2422.77	vita volo	iron ring	London
2441.18	.....vivas	bone plaque	Richborough
2447.28 c	vivat	wallplaster	Leicester

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307 no.73	Datianae vivas	silver spoon	Hoxne
74	Eutheri vivas	silver vase	Hoxne
75	Faustine vivas	silver spoon	Hoxne
76	Peregrinus vivat	silver spoon	Hoxne
77	Peregrinus vivat	silver spoon	Hoxne
308 no.80	Quissunt vivat (erased)	silver spoon	Hoxne
81	Quissunt vivat(erased)	silver spoon	Hoxne
82	Quissunt vivat (erased)	silver spoon	Hoxne
86	Sivicola vivas	silver spoon	Hoxne
87	Sivicola vivas	silver spoon	Hoxne
88	vir bone vivas	silver spoon	Hoxne

1b. FULLER VERSIONS OF VIVAS FORMULA

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2417.34	pie vivas cum tuis	pewter dish	North Oxfordshire
2420.36	pium vivas	silver spoon	No provenance
2420,49	vivas in deo	silver spoon	Caistor-St Edmund
2420.65	bene vivas(?)	silver spoon	Sunderland



(Table P5 cont)

2422.14	Seniciane vivas in deo	gold ring	Silchester
2422.15	vivas in deo	gold ring	Brancaster, Norfolk
2422.70	Iustine vivas in deo	bronze ring	Richborough
2441.11	soror, ave vivas in deo	bone plaque	York

*Brit. xxv* 1994 307, no.61; vivas in deo silver spoon Hoxne

### 2a. GOOD LUCK TO THE USER

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2416.8	utere felix	lead casket	East Stoke, Notts.
2417.32	utere felix	pewter dish	Welney, Norfolk
2420.50	utere (felix)	tinned bronze spoon	Colchester
2420.52	uti felix	silver spoon	Thetford
2421.56	utere felix	bronze brooch	Canterbury
2421.57	utere felix	bronze brooch	No provenance
2421.58	utere felix	bronze brooch	No provenance
2422.41	utere felix	silver ring	Brafield, Northants.
2423.28	utere felix	bronze intaglio	London
2423.29	utere felix	sard intaglio	Kilbride
2429.13	utere felix	bronze belt fittings	South Shields
2429.14	utere felix	bronze belt fittings	South Shields
2429.15	utere felix	bronze belt fittings	Chester
2429.16	utere felix	bronze belt fittings	Chesters
2429.17	utere felix	bronze belt fittings	Chesters
2433.3	uti felix	bronze handle	East Winterslow, Wilts.
2441.12	utere felix	fragment of bone	Chesterton, Cambridgeshire
2444.4	utere felix (?)	wooden stake	London

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307 no.62	utere felix, domina Iuliane	gold bracelet	Hoxne
RIB I 712	utere felix	building stone	Malton

### 2b SUCCESS, GOOD FORTUNE, JOY AND WELL-BEING

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2414.54	feliciter (?)	enamelled bronze bowl	Beadlam, North Yorks.
2422.66	valiatis	bronze ring	London
2423.10	<i>eutuch(e)i o phoron</i>	sardonyx cameo	Keynsham villa, Somerset
2423.14	felix (?)	gem - green paste	Wroxeter
2423.30	<i>chara</i> + motifs	dark green intaglio	Caerleon
2441.7	domine Victor, vincas felix	bone plaque	York
2491.155	....lege feliciter (?)	brick fragment	Corbridge
2503.102	Dexter feliciter conclamant et Egnatius	black burnished cooking pot	Chester
2503.116	feliciter (?)	storage jar	Caerleon

### 3. LOVE TOKENS

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2421.1	ama me (?)	bronze brooch	Norfolk
2421.50	si amas ego plus	bronze brooch	Richborough
2422.2	ama me	gold ring	Carlisle
2422.12	<i>Polemiou philtron</i>	openwork gold ring	Corbridge
2422.18	ama me (?)	silver ring	Porchester, Hants.

(Table P5 cont.)

2422.19	amor dulcis	silver ring	Castell Collen, Powys
2422.35	<i>sunelthe</i>	silver ring	Brandon, Suffolk
2422.47	ama amo (?)	bronze ring	Wroxeter
2422.48	ama (?)	bronze ring	St. Albans
2422.49	amica	brass ring	London
2422.58	fides concordia	bronze ring	No provenance
2422.61	veni Termo mane	bronze ring	Wanborough, Wilts.
2422.62	misce mi	bronze ring	London
2422.80	quis sepa(rabit) meum et tuum durante vita	jet ring	Chesters
2423.4	anima mea	red cornelian	Vindolanda
2423.7	ave mea vita	red cornelian	Ribchester
2423.11	<i>eutuchos homonoia</i>	onyx cameo	North Wraxall, Wilts.
2423.18	mihi vivas	red cornelian	Gogmagog Hills, Cambs.
2423.29	<i>homonoia</i>	onyx cameo	Bradwell, Essex
2447.16	Domitilla Victori suo (puniamini) (?)	wallplaster	Caerwent
2501.47	ama amo (?)	samian fragment	Camelon, Stirlingshire
2501.586	Vercunda ludia, Lucius gladiator	Italian redware sherd	Leicester

#### 4. WARNINGS

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Slogan</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2447.24	cave canem (?)	wallplaster	Exeter
2447.39	vapules (?)	wallplaster	Silchester
2447.40	cave canem (?)	wallplaster	Tarrant Hinton villa, Dorset
2494.I117	cave meus est	amphora sherd	Corbridge
2501.21	cave malum (?)	samian fragment	Brecon
2503.100	cave malum (?)	greyware fragment	London
2503.101	cave Martialem (?)	black jar fragment	London

#### 5. MISCELLANEOUS MESSAGES

<u>RIB II</u>	<u>Message</u>	<u>Artefact</u>	<u>Location</u>
2415.53	Mais Aballava Uxelodunum Cambogla[nna] Banna Aesica	bronze enamelled bowl	Rudge, Wilts.
2422.43	<i>phula</i>	gold plated ring	Corbridge
2423.6	<i>arete</i> (?)	cornelian intaglio	Braintree, Essex
2433.6	<i>kalos elouse</i>	bronze strigil	Caerleon
2447.22	Paternus scripsit (cursive x2)	wallplaster	Dorchester
2447.26	[...]s dabam	wallplaster	Fishbourne
2447.28 c	debetque....	wallplaster	Leicester
2447.28 d	fidis fidis (fides ?)	wallplaster	Leicester
2447.42	ave v....	wallplaster	Bancroft villa, Bucks.
2448.2 b	bene colite	mosaic	Woodchester villa, Glos.
2448.6	Invidia verse	mosaic	Lullingstone villa
2448.7 a	leo frammefer (?)	mosaic	Rudstone villa, Yorks.
2448.7 b	taurus omicida	mosaic	Rudstone villa, Yorks.
2448.8	Neptune verse	mosaic	Frampton villa, Dorset.
2491.122	[...]sirica viduam puellam (?) (cursive)	tile	Caerleon
2491.147	Austalis dibus xiii vagatur sibi cotidim	brick	London

(Table P5 cont.)

2491.153	liber esto	water pipe	Greetwell villa, Lincs
2491.156	ludere	tegula fragment	Colchester
2491.158	puellam	brick	Silchester
2491.159	satis	brick	Silchester
2503.97	ars longa vita brevis (?)	coarseware fragment	Benwell
2503.98	vita brevia (?)	redware fragment	Chedworth
2503.99	pro bono reipublicae (?)	greyware fragment	Neatham, Hants.
2503.103	hic amici bibunt (?)	greyware fragment	Ickleton villa, Cambs.
2503.104	..multa solvenda vides (?)	coarseware sherds	St. Albans
2503.106	si quis cupit severitudinem (?)	greyware fragments	Endfield, Middlesex.
2503.107	SPQR	greyware fragment	Harlow, Essex
2503.108	<i>hugiaine pie</i> (drink and be healthy ?)	greyware fragment	South Shields
2503.109	Lucianus (?) bibite R..	colour coated beaker	St. Albans
2503.111	Divixtus Metti lagona	jug handle	Ospringe cemetery, Kent

Corbridge bears a different legend, *Polemiou philtron* (2422.12). These are expensive, beautifully crafted pieces of gold jewellery, with Greek inscriptions incorporated in the design. The precise nature of the gold work is discussed in an article by John Cowen.<sup>62</sup> The rings were believed to be of fourth century date and to have Christian associations. The design is very similar to other examples from Cologne, Rome and Egypt (?). However, a sixth ring, which turned up in a datable context, in a first to second century barrow at Turlemont in Belgium, threw previous theories into doubt. The date and Christian nature of the formula were questioned.<sup>63</sup> More recently the evidence has been examined by John Wall, who cites eight examples of rings in this style, five of which are inscribed in Greek characters. He questions the dating of the Turlemont find and favours a fourth century date for the rings and possible Christian associations.<sup>64</sup> It is apparent that these rings have a common source, which is likely to be in the eastern Mediterranean, possibly, though by no means certainly, Alexandria. Their Christian associations are not without doubt. Wishes for long life are in keeping with Christian thinking, but the second gold ring from Corbridge bears quite a different sentiment: *Polemiou philtron*, the love potion of Polemius, (2422.12 - Fig.32). The question must remain open.

<sup>62</sup> J.D.Cowen, An inscribed open-work, gold ring from Corstopitum, *Arch. Ael.* 4, xiii, 1936, 310-19.

<sup>63</sup> J.D. Cowen, The Corbridge ring - a footnote, *Arch. Ael.* 4, xxvi, 1948, 139-42.

<sup>64</sup> J. Wall, Christian evidences in the Roman period - the Northern Counties Part I, *Arch. Ael.* 4, 1965, 201-25.

A bronze ring from Canterbury (2422.67) and two iron rings from London (2422.75, 77) also have variations of the *vivas* formula. The Christian usage, *vivas in deo* occurs on two gold rings one from Silchester (2422.14) and the other from Brancaster, in Norfolk (2422.15). The Silchester example is the well known *Senicianus* ring, which combines an inscribed bust of Venus on the bezel with a Christian inscription on the ten facets. This perhaps suggests conversion of a pagan to Christian beliefs, or at least secondary use of the ring by a Christian. The same formula is found on a bronze ring from the Saxon shore fort at Richborough (2422.70) and on a bone plaque from a woman's burial in a sarcophagus at York (2441.11). These finds are mainly prestige goods, presumably the property of prominent Christian families who would be of some influence in the community. Poorer members of the church perhaps owned little that could survive.

Good luck, success, joy and well-being. (Table P5, 2a and 2b)

The second most numerous collection of slogans from Roman Britain, conveys wishes for good luck, well-being and joy. The usual formula for this is *utere felix / uti felix*; various uses of *feliciter* and a few less common expressions seem to be an extension of this idea. *Utere / uti felix* is found on a wide range of objects. It appears on silver spoons from Malton (2420.50) and Thetford (2420.52), a tinned bronze spoon from Colchester (2420.51), and mis-spelt on a pewter dish from Welney, Norfolk (2417.32). It also occurs on jewellery: a bronze enamelled brooch from Canterbury (2421.56) and two more of the same type but lacking provenance (2421.57-8); a silver ring from Brafield, Northamptonshire (2422.41), a bronze ring from London (2423.28) and an intaglio from Kilbride (2423.29). It is used to decorate belt fittings found at South Shields, Chester and Chesters (2429.13-17) and a gold bracelet in the Hoxne treasure.<sup>65</sup> Although *utere felix* is far from being an exclusively Christian sentiment, it is occasionally linked with evidence of Christianity: a lead casket from East Stoke, Nottinghamshire, has both *utere felix* and a Chi-Rho, which confirms its use in a Christian milieu. Several of these lead tanks have been found bearing a Chi-Rho, leading to suggestions that they may have been used as fonts or for ritual

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<sup>65</sup> *Britannia* xxv, 1994, 307, no.62

ablutions.<sup>66</sup> Whether they were Christian or not they appear to have been intended for communal lustration or purification activities.

Various expressions involving the word *feliciter* appear on a range of archaeological finds. A black burnished cooking pot has perhaps the most spontaneous of these inscriptions; the casual graffito around the top reads *Dexter feliciter con<e>clamant et Egna[tius]*, which suggests genuine joy and exuberance (2503.102). A general message of well-being is directed at the wearers of an octagonal bronze ring found in London, reading *valiatis* (2422.66), and of a gold ring, set with a sardonyx cameo, from a Roman villa at Keynsham, Somerset. The cameo is inscribed in Greek, “May you, the wearer, prosper” (2423.10). Symbols denoting good luck and wishes for prosperity are suitable decorative features for jewellery, but unless accompanied by an inscription, they have not been included in this study. The fact that such messages were often conveyed without the use of words should not be overlooked however.<sup>67</sup>

#### Love tokens. (Table P5, no.3)

Love and betrothal evidently inspired a range of inscriptions, almost all on items of jewellery, particularly rings. The giving of a ring on betrothal was a Roman custom; the bezel sometimes shows clasped hands and a suitable sentiment, such as “harmony” (2423.11, 19 - Fig 32). Some expressions are more direct, *ama me* (2421.1?, 2422.2, 18?) or *misce mi* (2422.62). The most personal of such inscriptions, recovered from Roman Britain, occurs on a jet ring from Chesters. This has already been discussed in Chapter 3 (Fig. 10), but the excellent craftsmanship in a local material, the expression of eternal devotion, and the sophistication of the Latin make it worth a second mention: *quis sepa(rabit) meum et tuum durante vita*. The unusual representation of the Chi-Rho suggests a Christian couple (2422.80).

#### Warnings. (Table P5, no.4)

A few warning messages have been found among the casual graffiti on wallplaster and fragments of pottery. The readings are by no means certain. *Cave canem* or *cave*

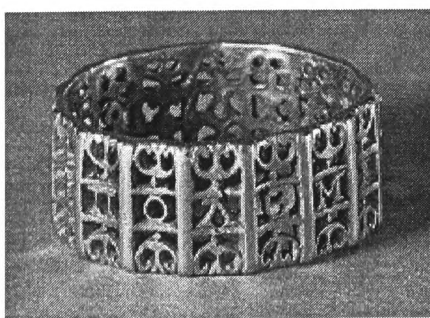
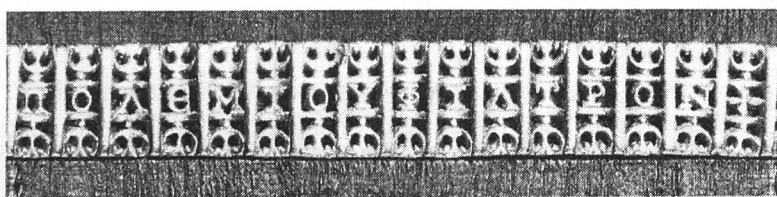
<sup>66</sup> C. Guy, Roman circular lead tanks, *Britannia* xii, 1981, 271-6.

<sup>67</sup> M. Henig, A corpus of engraved gemstones from British sites, BAR Brit. Ser. 8, 1978; C. Johns, The jewellery of Roman Britain, UCL Press, 1996.

**Fig. 32: Two rings probably used as love tokens.**



RIB 2423.11 Onyx cameo betrothal ring from North Wraxall, Wiltshire.



RIB 2422.12 Openwork gold ring from Corbridge (After C. Johns 1996)

*malum* probably account for most of them but there might be *cave meus est* on an amphora fragment from Corbridge (2494.177).

Miscellaneous messages. (Table P5, no.5)

Finally there are some miscellaneous messages listed at the end of Table P5. Some of them are professionally produced show-pieces, such as the mosaics commissioned by the wealthy owners of villas at Woodchester, Gloucestershire (2448.2a-b), Lullingstone, Kent (2448.6), Rudston, Yorkshire (2448.7a-b) and Frampton, Dorset (2448.8). The choice of subject matter for mosaics in Roman Britain is outside the scope of this study, as is debate about continued use of pagan imagery by early Christians.<sup>68</sup> The verses, however are of particular interest and have been included below, under the heading "Education" (2448.6, 8). The labels, *frammefer* (?) and *taurus omicida*, on two of the hunting scenes from the Venus mosaic, found at Rudston, Yorkshire, seem to be redundant. It is almost as if they are explanatory notes, copied inexpertly from a design in a pattern book (2448.7a-b).

Another show-piece is the enamelled bronze cup found at a Roman villa site at Rudge in Wiltshire (Fig.33). It depicts Hadrian's Wall and six of the forts are named (2415.53). The remains of an almost identical vessel has been found in North West Spain, perhaps bought as a souvenir by someone who had served in the province of Britain and then moved to a new post or returned home. This vessel, the Rudge cup and other items are likely to be the product of a British workshop specialising in enamelling.<sup>69</sup> A similar design and similar enamelling can be seen on a fragment of a bronze vessel from Beadlam, North Yorkshire. It was probably inscribed [*Fel*]icit(e)r (2415.54). Rings and gems have some additional wishes for health and well-being,<sup>70</sup> but most of the miscellaneous messages are casual graffiti and appear on inexpensive items such as wallplaster and pieces of pottery, brick and tile.

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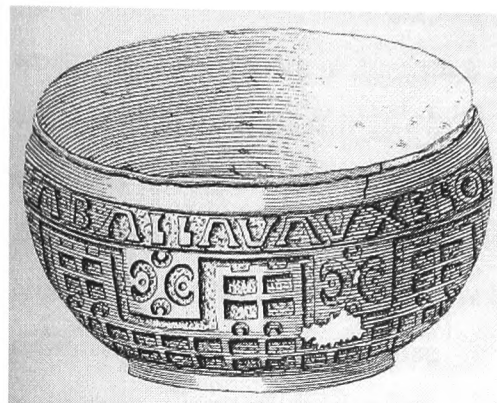
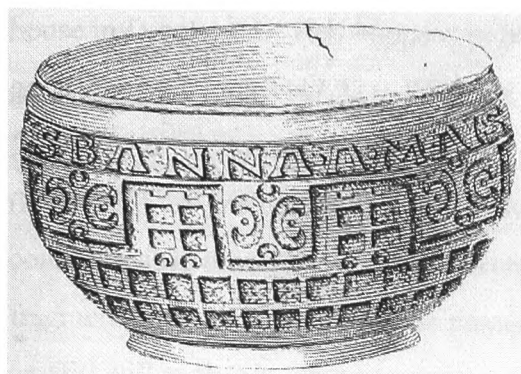
<sup>68</sup> K.S. Painter, Villas and Christianity in Roman Britain, *B M Quarterly*, 35, 1971, 164-5.

Martin Henig, Religion in Roman Britain, (in M. Todd ed., Research on Roman Britain 1960-89, Britannia Monograph Ser. no.11, 1989).

<sup>69</sup> J.D. Cowen and I.A. Richmond, The Rudge Cup, *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4, xii, 1935, 308-338.

<sup>70</sup> e.g. 2422.43 Corbridge; 2422.66 London; 2423.6 Braintree, Essex (all in Table P5).

**Fig. 33: The Rudge Cup.**



RIB 2415.53 Bronze enamelled cup found at Rudge in Wiltshire.



Drinking slogans were evidently popular (2503.103?, 108?, 109), since they also appear in white barbotine inscriptions, on imported beakers found in Roman Britain.<sup>71</sup> Some graffiti seem to do no more than record the writer's presence, for example *Paternus scripsit*, written twice in cursive script on wallplaster from a Roman town house in Dorchester. This happens to be the work of an experienced writer with a good cursive hand (2447.22). Whoever wrote *SATIS*, with his fingertips on a brick from Silchester, seems to have been very thankful that the day's work was done (2491.159). A graffito from Benwell, which perhaps once read, *ars longa vita brevis*, could possibly have been a writing exercise, scratched on a sherd of pottery, but only fragments remain (2503.97). The precise significance of some of the surviving graffiti will probably always remain a mystery: *Austalis dibus xiii vagatur sibi cotidim*, on a brick from Roman London (2491.147); the uncertain reading *Sirica viduam puellam*, on a tile from Caerleon (2491.122); *multa solvenda vides (?)*, on coarseware sherds from St. Albans (2503.104) and *si quis cupit severitudinem (?)*, on fragments of greyware from Endfield in Middlesex (2503.106).

Charms from Roman Britain range from imported magical texts, written on gold leaf<sup>72</sup> to the drawing of phallic symbols, with an accompanying inscription, on items of stone.<sup>73</sup> Phallic symbols also appear on bone roundels, used as good luck charms in the Roman world.<sup>74</sup> The curious series of bronze rings, found at sites in southern Britain must have come from one producer. The various permutations of the letters *IXSAONC*, inscribed on seven of the eight facets of the rings, have not been deciphered, and perhaps never will be. They could be a good luck charm of some sort, or have some magical significance.<sup>75</sup> Obscenities from the Roman period vary little from modern obscenities; they were casually scratched on wallplaster, tiles or any suitable surface, as they are today.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> RIB II 2498.1-39 - not included in the selection for this chapter.

<sup>72</sup> RIB I 436, 706; RIB II 2430.2.

<sup>73</sup> RIB I 631, 872, 983.

<sup>74</sup> S. Greep, *Britannia* xxv, 1994, 79-97.

<sup>75</sup> RIB II 2422.53-6; *Britannia* xxii, 1991, 306, no.49.

<sup>76</sup> e.g. 2447.1a, villa site, Essex; 2447.28a, b, d, Leicester; 2450.3, London; 2491.79, villa site, Farningham, Kent; 2491.215, Silchester.

### Style and technique.

The material inscribed and the function of the object are factors which determine the technique used to make the inscription, and thus the style of writing. There are some differences in the various inscriptional styles for writing slogans and those for making ownership marks. The chief difference is that the majority of surviving slogans are professionally produced, applied either to the finished artefact or during the manufacturing process. Their significance in this chapter is therefore in terms of craftsman literacy as well as the popular appeal of the slogans. Relatively few of the salutations and slogans from Roman Britain occur as casual graffiti.<sup>77</sup> The main reason for this is perhaps loss of most of what was written on perishable material. The salutations and slogans which survive are on durable, and often precious goods; they were intended for display and the position of the inscription and its presentation were therefore important.

Some very sophisticated decorative techniques were used. The openwork gold rings, from Corbridge, Stonham Aspal and Bedford, discussed above in this chapter, were worked with the metal band lying flat; it was subsequently curved and joined to form a ring. There are three registers, the upper and lower bearing openwork motifs, mainly peltas, and the middle section carrying an openwork inscription in Greek letters (2422.1, 5, 10). They are thought to have been made in the eastern part of the Roman Empire but the precise source is unknown.<sup>78</sup> Delicate openwork has also been used to reveal the words, *soror ave, vivas in deo* ((restored), on the bone plaque found in a sarcophagus at York. There are two ligatures and the letters are quite crowded towards the end, but the work is still fairly competently accomplished, by cutting away the unwanted material to leave only the letters (2441.11). A bronze belt plate from Chesters has an openwork inscription, originally reading *utere felix*, in which the background material has been cut away to leave very crisp letters and additional decoration (2429.17). Another example, also from Chesters, has the same motto in cast letters which are not so neatly defined (2429.16). Two rings from London, have moulded letters around the hoop, in a rather unusual style; the hoop itself is very

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<sup>77</sup> Casual graffiti are, however, the most common forms of ownership marks.

<sup>78</sup> J.D. Cowen, *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4, xiii, 1936, 310-19.

narrow and the letters extend above and below it. Both rings are evidently love tokens and read *amica* (2422.49) and *misce mi* (2422.62). The jet ring from Chesters, mentioned above, is inscribed with raised letters in recessed panels. It is expertly made in a local material from North East Britain.

A large pewter bowl from Welney, Norfolk, incorporates an inscription into the design around the rim. The dish is beautifully decorated with a geometric design and scroll work, but the recorded inscription shows a mis-spelling: *VERE FELEI*. It is now in private possession and it is possible that the letters were incorrectly deciphered rather than an engraver's error (2417.32). Most of the silver vessels, spoons, jewellery in various metals and the gemstones in this selection have been professionally engraved. Niello is used to enhance the lettering on some of the Thetford spoons and it is also found on bronze rings from London (2422.75, 77) and on a bronze handle from East Winterslow, Wiltshire (2433.3). The technique involves filling the engraved letters with a black compound of silver sulphide paste. Most of the inscriptions on silver spoons are written within the bowl, and intended to be read when the spoon was held by a right-handed person; the writing begins near the tip and progresses towards the handle. An interesting example in the Hoxne treasure has the inscription starting at the handle end of the bowl and proceeding towards the tip; it would be the right way round if held by a left-handed person. This leads to speculation about whether it was the property of someone who was left handed, or whether it was engraved by a left-handed craftsman. It depends on how the spoon was held when the inscription was made.<sup>79</sup> Evidence of ownership marks on pottery suggests that the position of the inscription would be decided by the writer.

Letters, filled with coloured enamel, can be seen on bronze belt fittings from South Shields and Chester. They clearly come from one workshop and may have been cast in the same mould. The words *utere felix* have been engraved as two lines of text and the letters filled alternately with red and green enamel. One of the examples from South Shields is the most complete and has a crescent motif at the end of each word (2429.13-15). The workmanship of these objects resembles that of the Rudge cup,

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<sup>79</sup> *Britannia* xxv 1994, 307, no. 73.

which was enamelled in red, green and blue (2415.53), and could be evidence of British craftsmanship in enamelling.<sup>80</sup> A bronze spoon, recently discovered at Vindolanda, has lettering inlaid with red enamel.<sup>81</sup> Three bronze brooches, one from Canterbury, the second from an unknown location in County Durham and the third lacking any provenance, all have moulded inscriptions reading *utere felix*, with the background filled in blue, green and red enamel respectively. They must come from one workshop and one mould, as the letter forms and ligatures testify (2421.56-58).

The majority of slogans on metal artefacts from Roman Britain are described as “engraved”, which implies that a pointed graving tool was used, but lettering could also be applied using small straight and curved punches. This was the technique used on a silver spoon from Caister-St-Edmund, Norfolk (2420.49). The method is discussed by Kenneth Painter, who compares a spoon from Biddulph in Staffordshire, which is so marked, to spoons from Carthage and the coffin mounts of St. Paulinus at Trier.<sup>82</sup> Punched dots are used to inscribe the sentiment, *si amas ego plus*, on the panel of a bronze brooch from Richborough (2421.50). This method is used for making ownership marks on items of bronze, but the result looks less professional than other forms of inscriptions on jewellery.

In the case of lead vessels, decoration and inscriptions are usually applied during the manufacturing process, either by pressing a die into the sand in a mould, or by fusing prefabricated strips of cable moulding or plait-work onto the surface of the vessel. A lead casket from East Stoke, Nottinghamshire, has *utere felix* moulded onto one panel (2416.8) and another from Caistor, Lincolnshire, has *vivas* as part of a lengthier inscription; this casket also bears the words *Cunobarrus fecit* (2416.4). Although there is sometimes doubt about the origin of some of the silver and bronze vessels from Roman Britain, lead tanks and caskets are thought to have been made here because lead is heavy and available locally.

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<sup>80</sup> E. Birley, The Rudge Cup, *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4 xii, 1935, 308-333.

<sup>81</sup> *Britannia* xix, 1988, 502, no. 69.

<sup>82</sup> K.S. Painter, A Roman Christian silver treasure from Biddulph, Staffordshire, *Antiq. Journal* lv, 1975, p 67.

Inscriptions in *tesserae* on mosaic pavements, various methods of moulding or engraving glasswork, and white barbotine inscriptions on pottery all came with the fashionable use of such luxury goods in Roman Britain. Imported mosaic pattern books, glassware and fine pottery might have inspired a few British craftsmen to experiment with some of the techniques. Thus several British mosaics display North African influence.<sup>83</sup> A fragment of a red colour-coated bowl found at Canterbury and two fragments of colour coated ware from St. Albans and Brougham, Cumbria, could provide evidence of the manufacture of wares, with white barbotine inscriptions, in Oxfordshire (2498.37) and the lower Nene Valley (2498.3, 22), but chemical analysis is required to prove this. It is possible that they are imported from Continental potteries, like the redware beakers with white barbotine inscriptions, which come from kilns around Trier.<sup>84</sup>

Surviving salutations and slogans are largely a feature of luxury goods. The sentiments expressed are likely to have been inspired by similar inscriptions on imported goods. It is not always possible to know whether portable items, such as jewellery or luxury tableware, were made in this country or not. Some no doubt were,<sup>85</sup> and craftsmen would cater for the tastes of wealthy members of Romano-British society, who used the Latin language in their daily lives, and who might well want particular inscriptions on the goods which they bought. Lead vessels, the jet ring from Chesters (2422.80), and mosaic floors are known to have been made here; the inscriptions on them continue a tradition already associated with other aspects of social and religious life.

Casual graffiti on wallplaster, bricks, tiles, and pottery sherds are very different from the professional inscriptions on luxury goods, but the purpose can be the same: a form of display. Their very casual nature makes graffiti more interesting than professional inscriptions, from a literacy point of view. They can be written spontaneously, using

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<sup>83</sup> J. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain*, London, 1962, p 205; RIB II, 2448.7 note; K.M. Dunbabin, *The mosaics of Roman North Africa*, 1978, p 79; D. Smith in Henig ed., *A handbook of Roman art*, Phaidon 1983, 134.

<sup>84</sup> RIB II 2498.3, 22 - see note.

<sup>85</sup> M. Henig, *A corpus of engraved gemstones from British sites*, BAR Brit. Ser. 8 1978.

any sharp instrument, or just a finger tip. No real skill is required except the ability to write. The important point is that they were written at all. It is, in fact, arguable that some of the graffiti represent writing exercises, but most are perhaps an informal way of addressing passers by. No prestige goods are involved here; casual graffiti appear on any suitable surface and it is unlikely that they were written only by the wealthy and highly educated. They seem to be akin to inscriptions from brick and tile-works, or perhaps some of the less well executed curse tablets, or religious dedications written without any professional assistance.

Unfortunately the number of surviving examples from the province is not large; only about 40 or 50 are recorded and very few are complete, so that it is difficult to make any worthwhile observations about language. For what it is worth, spelling seems to reflect pronunciation rather than education; *mintla* for *mentula*,<sup>86</sup> *ped(icator?)* for *paedicator(?)* (2491.79) and *pedi[cat]* for *paedicat* (2491.157) but, since these are obscenities, they can be expected to show colloquial usage not educated language. Casual graffiti are not always literate, of course. There are many examples recorded in RIB which are undeciphered, and museum displays testify to the artistic rather than the literate abilities of some Romano-Britons. A hunting scene is incised on a piece of stone in the Clayton Collection Museum, now at Chesters,<sup>87</sup> and a small duck can still be seen, although with difficulty, on wallplaster in the Jewry Wall Museum at Leicester.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> RIB I 631.

<sup>87</sup> Catalogue of sculptures, altars etc. from *Cilurnum*, 307 no. 50, in *An account of the Roman antiquities preserved in the museum at Chesters, Northumberland*, Wallis Budge 1907.

<sup>88</sup> The small graffito of a duck was seen when I visited the Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester in 1996.

## EDUCATION.

Because Latin was the language of civil and military administration and of much trade from the earliest days of the Roman occupation, and because there were schools on the Rhine and in Gaul, teaching the Latin language,<sup>89</sup> there can be a reasonable expectation that schools existed in Roman towns in Britain, and that their main purpose would be instruction in Latin. Tacitus, in fact, records the education of the British aristocracy,<sup>90</sup> just as Plutarch records the education of nobles in Spain under Sertorius.<sup>91</sup> Unfortunately archaeological evidence can do little to confirm this. There is always the problem of survival of evidence but, in this case, there can be little expectation. Schools probably operated with very little equipment that could leave any trace.<sup>92</sup> So much of the teaching and learning process would be oral, or would require only temporary records and visual explanations. Records in chalk or charcoal, or on wax or in sand would not last. The surface of a tile or slate could be cleaned and re-used, and wax or sand could be made smooth and used again. A classroom need not look any different from any other room, and almost certainly would not, in an archaeological context.

The meagre primary evidence for education in Roman Britain amounts to a few alphabets, writing exercises, snatches of verse and possibly palindromes. The best evidence for education in Latin in Roman Britain is the range of activities which have left some literate record, and the length of time over which they are attested; but this is secondary evidence and cannot shed any light on where the writer learnt his skill. Archaeological evidence does not generally reveal much about the standard of education of those who have left written records, but Adams has some interesting points to make about the educated language of the prefect, Flavius Cerealis at Vindolanda. His spelling is correct and shows a preference for some old fashioned

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<sup>89</sup> Tacitus *Annals* iii 43; Suetonius, *Caligula*, 45, 3; see also a conventional literary reference in Juvenal *Satires* xv 111-2.

<sup>90</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola* 21.

<sup>91</sup> Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 14.

<sup>92</sup> See Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Rome, its people, life and customs*, Longman 1963 p. 168 and plates 42-3 showing relief of scenes from a boy's education, taken from the sarcophagus of Cornelius Statius in the Musée de Louvre, Paris and the Neumagen relief.

forms, such as *occassio* for *occasio*, and *salvom* for *salvum* (*Tab. Vind. II 225*). He uses the ablative absolute and idiomatic phrases such as *quomodo voles* and *bene mane* which show very sound and confident knowledge of the language reflecting a formal education (*Tab. Vind. II 225, 242*).<sup>93</sup>

### **Alphabets, writing exercises and palindromes.**

Practice in writing letters of the alphabet must often have taken some non-permanent form. First attempts at writing usually involve copying letter forms and learning to write one's name.<sup>94</sup> This is the case today and there seems no reason to suppose any great difference in Roman times, or indeed at other times, and in other cultures.

Alphabets, which survive from Roman Britain, survive because they were permanently marked on stone, lead, wallplaster, brick, tile or pottery. It must have been very common practice to use a non-permanent method of writing and perhaps less durable materials. Most of the surviving alphabets are in capitals and are achieved with varying degrees of proficiency. An example on the neck of a red jug, of late third century or fourth century date, has been found at Little Chester, Derbyshire. The letters A - L proceed normally but there is confusion about the order of the second half of the alphabet (2503.162). Another pottery sherd, from a villa site in Norfolk, has a complete alphabet, but the letters C and D were originally omitted and then added afterwards as a correction; the letters P to X are written retrograde above the first part of the inscription (2503.168). A sherd of an Oxfordshire redware bowl, from Chedworth Villa, was clearly inscribed avoiding existing scratch marks; it bears the first nine letters of the alphabet (2503.166). A lead tablet from Bath has the letters A to E, followed by an X, but this perhaps has some special significance in communicating with the goddess, Sulis.<sup>95</sup> There are also "illiterate" and undeciphered texts which could perhaps be the best that some devotees could manage.<sup>96</sup> Alphabets need not always indicate writing exercises. Letter sequences were used in some board

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<sup>93</sup> J.N. Adams, *The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets*, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, p 129.

<sup>94</sup> A possible example is the the name *Bellicianus*, written four times on a brick found at Caerwent (2491.80).

<sup>95</sup> *Tab. Sulis* 1.

<sup>96</sup> *Tab. Sulis* 101-6.



games<sup>97</sup> and combinations of letters are sometimes thought to have magical significance, rather like the caractères and vowel combinations used in ancient *defixiones*.<sup>98</sup> Alphabets and repeated letters from Roman Britain, however, appear to be examples of writing practice.

Only one surviving alphabet is in cursive script; it was found on a fragment of *tegula* at Caves Inn, Warwickshire. The letters A, B, and E are in New Roman Cursive, but the M and N are not. This could be a fourth century graffito (2491.135). Two pottery sherds from a Roman villa at Gayton Thorpe, Norfolk, have graffiti in Greek letters, one of which might be a bungled attempt to write the name *Odysseus* (2501.71, 2503.364). A slab of chalk from Richborough has a crudely inscribed drawing of a sun dial, which might have been used to explain how one worked or how one could be made (2454.7). The *ROTAS OPERA* palindrome, found both on wallplaster at Cirencester (2447.20) and on an amphora fragment from Manchester (Fig. 31) need not be more than a clever diversion to impress one's friends. Although the possible Christian significance of this palindrome has been much discussed, it is perhaps unlikely in the case of the two British examples. In an informative note in *Britannia* x, 1979, on the Manchester sherd, R.S.O. Tomlin shows the word square occurs in contexts which are too early to suggest Christian use, for example at Pompeii before A.D.79 and on the Danube in an early second century context. The palindrome might have been adopted by Christians, but its use is not exclusively Christian. A sherd of amphora from a second century context in Northern Britain and the inscription on wallplaster from Cirencester are isolated examples and cannot be taken as evidence of early Christianity at these locations.<sup>99</sup>

### Verse.

It seems fairly safe to assume that lines of verse surviving from Roman Britain, whether they are well-known or obscure, must indicate a certain level of education. Examples survive among the graffiti from Pompeii, particularly quotations from the

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<sup>97</sup> R.G. Austin, *Roman Boardgames I, Greece and Rome*, 1934, p 33.

<sup>98</sup> J.G. Gager, *Curse tablets and binding spells from the Ancient World*, OUP 1992, p 10.

<sup>99</sup> R.S.O. Tomlin, *Britannia* x, 1979, 353 note 70.

Aeneid,<sup>100</sup> sometimes even misquoted.<sup>101</sup> They do not suggest great erudition, but they are evidence of at least some minimal knowledge of the poets. This need not extend beyond the one or two lines quoted, since such verses were frequently used as writing exercises. An example has been found on the back of a draft letter from Vindolanda. It is an attempt to write a line of Virgil's Aeneid, in neat rustic capitals, with serifs.<sup>102</sup> It begins very well, apart from the P and S which resemble cursive forms, but ends with the omission of *per* and a mis-spelling of *urbem*, which also contains a cursive B. There appears to be a comment at the end, by a different hand, writing in cursive script; it could be an abbreviation of *segniter*, perhaps meaning "sloppy work".<sup>103</sup> Some of the epigraphic material, examined in previous chapters, provides evidence that the wives and children of officers accompanied them to their posts in Britain (Ch. 3 and Ch.5). There is also epistolary evidence from Vindolanda<sup>104</sup> and there have been finds of children's footwear at the fort. It is to be expected that the children would continue to be educated, wherever the father was posted; the writing exercise from Vindolanda could be evidence of precisely this activity.

Verse graffiti from Roman Britain are quite rare. Metrical lines copied onto tiles during the drying process are written with more confidence than alphabets on the same material (Ch. 4). Presumably those who could copy or reproduce verse were more advanced writers. Whether they were receiving instruction at the tile-works, or just seized the opportunity to write on an inviting surface is debatable. Learning to write could be a very informal affair, a skill passed on by a friend or colleague. It depends on motivation and whether formal schooling was available. The hexameter, *Armea me docuit recte (?) (ti)bi dicere cunctis*, probably meaning, Armea has taught me to say "no thank you" to all others, is repeated on a fragment of *tegula* and a fragment of brick, found at the site of the *praetorium* at Binchester (Fig. 34). Only the former example is complete. It appears that the first syllable of *tibi* has been

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<sup>100</sup> CIL IV 3198, 4832.

<sup>101</sup> CIL IV 1282 - *arma virus*.

<sup>102</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid* IX 473: *Interea pavidam volitans pinnata per urbem*.

<sup>103</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 118.

<sup>104</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandenses II* 291.

**Fig. 34: Two verse graffiti.**



RIB 2491.146 Written in capitals on a tile from Binchester.  
*Armea me docuit recte(?) / (ti)bi dicere cunctis.*



RIB 2491.48 Four names with a Virgilian tag written in cursive script on a tile from Silchester.  
*Pertacus perfidus / Campester Lucilianus / Campanus conticuere omnes.*

missed out by haplography after the final letters of *recte*, suggesting a copying error. Both texts are written in the same hand, in quite stylish capitals (2491.146 i, 146 ii). The opportunity for promotion or a shift to clerical duties might have motivated some recruits to improve their writing skills. This particular line of verse is unknown, but there are parallel expressions in Propertius<sup>105</sup> and in a graffito from Pompeii.<sup>106</sup> The notion of being taught by a girl to change one's ways might have proved more interesting subject matter than a well-known line of Virgil, for whoever was concerned with improving his literacy skills at Binchester..

*Conticuere omnes*, the opening words of Virgil's Aeneid II, ends a cursive graffito on a tile at Silchester (2491.148 - Fig.34). It is the commonest Virgilian tag from the Empire. Here it is preceded by four masculine names, and could have been used as a writing exercise. The hand is a practised Old Roman Cursive<sup>107</sup> Such handwriting is found on stilus tablets, often of a legal nature, and on the leaf tablets from Vindolanda. The demand for clerical skills in military and civilian spheres must have been very great during the period of the occupation. The same Virgilian fragments might occur on a pottery sherd from St Albans, but the text is too incomplete to be sure; again the writing is cursive (2502.51). A correctly written line of verse on a tile could have been prepared as an exemplar, since it was durable.

Verses illustrated and displayed on wallplaster and mosaics serve quite a different purpose from casual graffiti. A white dipinto on a black background on wallplaster at Otford Roman villa in Kent, reads *bina manu* (2447.9). This could have been taken from Virgil *Aeneid* I 313, in which case there might have been an accompanying scene showing Aeneas exploring the district of Carthage. Alternatively it could have been taken from *Aeneid* XII 165, and there might have been a painting of Turnus riding his chariot to meet Aeneas, although Barrett casts some doubt on these

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<sup>105</sup> Propertius I x 19: *Cynthia me docuit semper quaecumque petenda, quaeque cavenda forent.*

<sup>106</sup> CIL IV 1520: *Candida me docuit nigras odisse puellas.*

<sup>107</sup> See RIB II, 2491.148 note. For a discussion of Old Roman Cursive and New Roman Cursive forms, see Bowman and Thomas, *Tabulae Vindolandeses II*, BM Press 1994, introduction P 47 and B. Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, CUP 1990, 56, 61-3.

suggestions.<sup>108</sup> In his assessment of the Europa mosaic at Lullingstone villa (Fig. 35), he argues convincingly that the work was designed especially for the *triclinium* at Lullingstone, dated about A.D. 330, and that the verse inscription was specially composed for it. Although the scene shows familiarity with Virgil, Barrett shows that the verse is written in a style that reflects a thorough knowledge of Ovid.<sup>109</sup> The most popular works of classical authors might well have reached Britain; readings and discussions might have entertained guests after dinner. The occupants of Lullingstone in the fourth century were evidently wealthy, sophisticated and cultured.

The combination of pagan mythological scenes, a Chi-Rho monogram and a Latin verse inscription is of great interest in the mosaic recorded at Frampton villa in Dorset (2448.8). Unfortunately this no longer survives, but it seems to have been evidence of a transitional phase, when Christianity was adopted but there was a reluctance to abandon old pagan ideas and iconography. There was probably a period of selection and evolution in which old beliefs survived along with Christian thought.<sup>110</sup> The Roman habit had always been to accept foreign cults and to find ways of integrating them with Roman religious practice. A clean break might have been desirable for those embarking on a purely Christian way of life but, in practice, social patterns change slowly and there are many complicating factors. Pagan practice and symbolism can sometimes be traced in Christianity. The votive leaves, bearing the Chi-Rho, in the Water Newton hoard are pagan in style.<sup>111</sup>

Scenes from Virgil are the subject matter of uninscribed mosaics. Dido and Aeneas are featured on the splendid mosaic from the bath-house at Low Ham, Somerset; it is now on display in the County Museum at Taunton. Aeneas, grasping the golden bough, was depicted at Frampton, but it is lost.<sup>112</sup> A mosaic from Aldborough, Yorkshire, originally showed the nine Muses, and has the word *Helicon* inscribed in

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<sup>108</sup> A.A. Barrett, Knowledge of the literary classics in Roman Britain, *Britannia* ix, 1978, 307-13; J. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain*, London 1962, p229.

<sup>109</sup> For his discussion of Ovidian features in the vocabulary, metre, sentence structure and use of a mythological *exemplum* in this inscription, see *Britannia* ix, 1978 311-12.

<sup>110</sup> K.S. Painter, Villas and Christianity in Roman Britain, *BM Quarterley*, 35, 1971, 157-75.

<sup>111</sup> K.S. Painter, the Water Newton early Christian silver, BM 1977.

<sup>112</sup> A.A. Barrett, A Virgilian scene from Frampton Villa, Dorset, *Antiq. Journal* lvii, 1977, 312-3.

Greek capitals, formed by blue glass *tesserae*. It is believed to be of late third or fourth century date (2448.5). There is evidence of interest in Classical literature and the arts in Roman Britain, as well as the popular myths and hunting scenes, which were perhaps offered more frequently in mosaic pattern books.

**Fig. 35: The Europa mosaic from Lullingstone.**



RIB 2448.6.

*Invida si ta[uri] vidisset Iuno natatus  
Iustius Aeolias isset adusque domos.*

## FUN AND GAMES.

Inscriptions associated with pastimes and entertainment in Roman Britain are few and the content is extremely limited, but they should not be overlooked. Their importance lies in their informality, as with casual graffiti and ownership marks. There is nothing very impressive about inscriptional evidence of games in Roman Britain, but at least it is a voluntary form of literacy, and motivation is an important factor for anyone using the skill of writing.

The only fairly frequent finds are roundels, most of which are gaming counters. The majority are uninscribed, but about 400 inscribed roundels are recorded for Roman Britain. Most are made of bone, but a few larger pieces in pottery<sup>113</sup> and stone<sup>114</sup> could have been used on larger gaming boards. Bone counters are often turned on a lathe and are sometimes decorated with concentric circles. Few gaming boards have been found but some stone examples exist; one is currently displayed in the site museum at Chesters<sup>115</sup> and another at Chedworth Villa. The grid is normally made of 8 x 8 squares. Wooden boards will have perished, of course, but even without a prepared board, a simple grid could be marked in temporary fashion on any suitable flat surface. A set of gaming pieces was more important, and once made, they could be kept in a bag and were easily portable. Most games also required dice; a description of popular games such as *ludus latrunculorum* and *ludus duodecim scriptorum*, is provided by R.G. Austin.<sup>116</sup> The sites which have yielded finds of inscribed bone roundels are comparable in type to those producing five or more graffiti on coarse pottery.<sup>117</sup> The majority of both types of inscription come from towns, with *civitas* capitals well represented; military sites have yielded quite large numbers, but the totals are slightly less than those for towns. The numbers are much less for rural sites and villas.

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<sup>113</sup> Classified 2439 in RIB II.

<sup>114</sup> Classified 2438 in RIB II.

<sup>115</sup> Catalogue of sculptures from *Cilurnum*, 301 no. 15, in *An account of the Roman antiquities preserved in the museum at Chesters, Northumberland*, Gilbert and Rivington, 1907.

<sup>116</sup> R.G. Austin, *Roman Board Games, I and II*, *Greece and Rome*, IV, 1934, 24-34 and 76-82.

<sup>117</sup> RIB II, Fasc.3, Table IV, p 109 for bone roundels - cf Fasc. 8, Table VII, p 29 for graffiti on coarse pottery.

The inscriptions on bone roundels are analysed and tabulated in Fascicule 3 of RIB II. Numerals are more common than letters over all,<sup>118</sup> but many examples of numerals come from the fort at Ravenglass in Cumbria, which has produced 119 roundels, 79 bearing numbers. Letters occur singly, in pairs and occasionally as abbreviations of proper names, or perhaps of other expressions. The significance of the inscriptions cannot generally be determined. There is a possibility that a set of roundels from Ewell in Surrey could have been used as gambling tokens (2440.20, 107-10, 188). Three of the inscriptions include a denarius sign and the Roman numeral V; four perhaps also have an abbreviation of the word *remittam*, I will pay, and two could also have an abbreviation of *libenter*, willingly. There are other possible interpretations, however, and the note in RIB II urges caution (2440.20 note).

A fragment of *tegula* from Colchester has a graffito reading *LVDERE*, which is one of the six-letter words included on a gaming board for *ludus duodecim scriptorum* (2491.156).<sup>119</sup> An inscribed *tegula* would make a suitable gaming board, but without more evidence it cannot be said that this is the function here. A red colour-coated vase from Colchester is decorated with the figures of gladiators, two *venatores*, hunting a bear (?), a *secutor* and a *retiarius* (Fig. 36). The inscription is in the form of a graffito, cut after firing. It names the individuals portrayed, who are apparently attached to the Thirtieth Legion: *Secundus, Mario, Memnon, sac (for secutor?) viiii Valentinu(s) Legionis XXX* (2503.119).<sup>120</sup> The vase could have been produced in Colchester, but it could equally well have been brought here by someone arriving from the Continent. Perhaps it is a souvenir of a gladiatorial contest. The only other inscription referring to gladiators in Roman Britain occurs on a love token written on a piece of imported pottery, but the actual inscription, indicating a love match between a gladiator and an actress, could have been relevant to this province: *Verecunda ludia, Lucius gladiator* (2501.586). A clay syrinx has been discovered at Shakenoak Roman villa, Wilcote, Oxfordshire. It has been inscribed with two Celtic names, *Bellicia* and *Catavacus*. There are several Celtic names beginning with *Bel*,

<sup>118</sup> 231 examples of numerals to 150 examples of letters.

<sup>119</sup> R.G. Austin, *Greece and Rome IV*, 1934, p 31.

<sup>120</sup> RIB II Fasc. 8, Plate III.



**Fig. 36: The Colchester vase.**



RIB 2503.119 *Secundus Mario sac viiii Valentinu(s) Legionis XXX.*

and *Bellicianus* is well attested in Pannonia, Noricum and Britain.<sup>121</sup> *Catavacus* is, so far, unattested but contains Celtic name elements. It is uncertain whether *Bellicia* is complete here and, if the word ending is missing, it is impossible to work out any relationship between the two names.

Other evidence of recreational activity is either uninscribed,<sup>122</sup> or appears on imported wares. Glass vessels with scenes of chariot racing and gladiatorial contests (2419.1-35) were desirable as items of tableware, but neither the scenes nor the inscriptions provide evidence of such sports in Britain. No *circus* is yet known in Britain but there are several amphitheatres. A lost mosaic, from Colerne in Wiltshire, is said to have shown scenes of chariot racing and to have been inscribed *Servius / Severus (?)* (2448.10). Such items were decorative and fashionable and could only be afforded by the wealthy, like silver tableware and wallpaintings. The fact that some owners chose inscribed pieces would be of particular interest to the present study, if the names were thought to be those of local participants in the sport, but there is no evidence for this.

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<sup>121</sup> A. Mocsy, *Nomenclator*, Budapest 1983.

<sup>122</sup> Joan Liversidge, *Britain in the Roman Empire*, 1968, Chapter 13.

## PERSONAL COMMUNICATION.

The almost miraculous recovery of the Vindolanda writing tablets has added to the inscribed material from Roman Britain, in a way that would have been thought impossible thirty years ago. Military accounts, lists and official communication have been discussed in Chapter 4. Over thirty of the deciphered letters are concerned, at least in part, with social and domestic matters. This might not have been the prime purpose of the letters because some of the texts are fragmentary, but they all have some domestic or personal content (Tables P1, P6 P7). In this part of the chapter, the numbers in brackets will refer to texts in *Tabulae Vindolandenses II*.<sup>123</sup>

### **Domestic matters.**

Some of the texts listed in Table P6 were found in a room, which is believed to have been a kitchen, in the Period 3 *praetorium* at Vindolanda, dated to A.D. 97-103. This location and the content of some of them have led to the suggestion by Bowman and Thomas, that these deal with the domestic arrangements of the *praetorium*, when Flavius Cerealis was prefect of the Ninth Cohort of Batavians at Vindolanda. Several of the texts might have been written in the same hand (191, 194-7), possibly that of a domestic slave. It seems that, even in domestic quarters at the fort, there prevailed the military habit of keeping a written record of commodities received and used, and inventories of equipment. Such meticulous record keeping would be a safeguard against pilfering and would also lead to efficient replacement of stock. One of the suppliers, Gavo, also appears in a military account which lists items of clothing (207). His name could be Celtic and the present account (192) lists two textile items which were certainly borrowed Celtic words, *bedocem* (line 2) and *tosseas* (line 6).<sup>124</sup> The two accounts from Gavo are written in a competent cursive script, possibly by the

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<sup>123</sup> A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda writing tablets: Tabulae Vindolandenses II*, BM Press, 1994.

<sup>124</sup> J.N. Adams, *The Language of the Vindolanda writing tablets: an interim report*, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, p 128; In tables P6 and P7 references are made to this paper by Adams. They appear as page numbers e.g. Adams p 97.

same hand.<sup>125</sup> Since they were lodged at the fort, it is difficult to say whether they were written there, or arrived with goods, as a delivery note or invoice.

One of the texts in Table P6 records small amounts of food, 8 eggs and  $\frac{1}{2}$  *sextarius* of spices, apparently on loan to a centurion called Felicio.<sup>126</sup> Two dates, May 21st and June 20th, and the price of the items are supplied. At the left hand side of the list a second hand has added *rec(epi?)*, received, implying that Felicio had replenished what he borrowed (193). Such precise record keeping of even small transactions suggests that great care was taken in balancing the books, and that someone would be held accountable for any discrepancy. The only other text in Table P6 which probably has writing in two hands, is 196. This is a list of clothing and textile items, which has another list of non-textile goods on the back. The two texts need not have been written at the same time; there are other examples of secondary use of leaf tablets at Vindolanda.<sup>127</sup>

Some newly published tablets from Vindolanda include a list of miscellaneous items, which comprises clothing, equestrian equipment, domestic utensils and textiles.<sup>128</sup> For everything listed, unit prices and totals are given. Bowman and Thomas suggest that this is a private memorandum, or list of assets, kept by those who were in charge of domestic arrangements at the *praetorium*. The format looks as if it records a stocktaking exercise, and the fact that unit prices are given, suggests a list of goods held for retail. It seems possible that some equipment might have been ordered in batches, and then sold on individually to military or non-combatant personnel. There is no evidence of wholesale and retail price, and therefore no suggestion of profit here. It might just have been a simple way of obtaining some necessities, which were then purchased singly, as required by individuals, or it might possibly be evidence of the sale of army surplus, or even of second-hand goods. This could explain why the unit price is included in this list, and why no supplier is mentioned.

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<sup>125</sup> Bowman and Thomas note a difference in the form of the letter U in a *Gauuone* at the beginning of the two texts (192, 207).

<sup>126</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandesenses II*, 193 line 1: *Felicioni...mutuo*.

<sup>127</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandesenses II*, 118/331, 180/344, 280?

<sup>128</sup> *Britannia* xxvii 1996, 300 no. 1.

**Table P6: Tabulae Vindolandenses II - Domestic matters.**

(M<sup>1</sup> = First or main hand; M<sup>2</sup> = Second hand, adding additional information; P3p = Period 3 *praetorium* at Vindolanda (A.D.97-103); P3p-k = Period 3 *praetorium* in room VIII, believed to be a kitchen; oP3p = outside the *praetorium*, on the *intervallum* road. References to Adams are by page number in his paper, The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995).

<u>TVII</u>	<u>M<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>M<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Observations</u>
191	domestic slave? at <i>praetorium</i> ? cf 194, 195-7?	adds total amount l.15?	P3p-k	list of food items, including salt and spices for preserving.	small quantities - for <i>praetorium</i> ?
192	Gavo (Celtic? supplier) cf 207	n/a	P3p-k	lists small quantities of edible & textile items, received from Gavo	Celtic loan words <i>bedocem / tosseas</i> , Celtic(?) name <i>Gavo</i> , Adams p 128.
193 Pl.XIV	domestic slave? at <i>praetorium</i> ?	marks items received	P3p	list of small amounts of food on loan to Felicio, with dates	<i>halicae</i> for <i>alicae</i> ? ( <i>ae</i> retained).
194	domestic slave? cf 191, 195-7?	n/a	P3p-k	list of household objects, mostly plates & dishes	small quantities - <i>praetorium</i> ?
195	domestic slave? cf 191, 194, 196-7?	writes <i>cultrum</i> on back	P3p	list of clothing and a knife (on back)	195 could be part of 194, but uncertain.
196 Pl X	domestic slave?	writes list of non-textile goods on back	P3p-k	list of clothing and textile goods on front cf 195	2 separate lists? leaf used twice? <i>a Tranquillo</i> erased (l.14) and <i>a Broccho</i> written (l.15). New vocabulary - Adams pp. 123,125.
197	domestic slave? cf 191-2, 194, 195,-6?	n/a	P3p	items of footwear	fragment of tablet.
203	domestic slave?	n/a	P3p	shopping list / menu? small quantities of foodstuffs, dated 15th August, cf 204	found with 284, a letter to Flavius Cerealis, <i>offellam</i> for <i>ofellam</i> - Adams p. 107.
208	domestic slave?	n/a	P3p-k	list of foodstuffs, but not an account - possibly a recipe?	good cursive hand using interpunct; <i>...m batavico</i> - an ingredient brought from Germany?
302 Pl.XXIV	domestic slave? cf 498	n/a	P3p	letter about foodstuffs; traces of address suggest recipient was slave of Verecundus	food in quite large quantities; <i>mala</i> <i>formonsa centum, ova</i> <i>centum aut ducenta,</i> <i>fabae frensae</i> - keeps <i>ae</i> (l.1); list has several lines of a letter written between the columns.

(Table P6 cont.)

**Britannia xxvii 1996:**

300 no.1 domestic slave?? PL.VII	n/a	oP3p	list of miscellaneous textiles, equestrian equipment, domestic utensils with unit prices and totals	stock-taking list? no suppliers mentioned; new vocabulary: <i>infibulatoria</i> , <i>scordicscum</i> , <i>saga</i> <i>corticia</i> .
307 no.2 domestic slave? Pl VIII -IX	n/a	oP3p	domestic account from <i>praetorium</i> , listing commodities received & consumed, with suppliers & dates	fragments of notebook; detailed record for April 102 - July 104 AD.

The second new text records foodstuffs, mainly poultry and beer, supplied on specific dates between April A.D.102 and July A.D.104. Part of the list deals with goods received, and some suppliers are mentioned. It is noteworthy that one is described as *veterano* (line 21); there must have been ample opportunity for veterans to maintain profitable links with the army. Other entries deal with goods consumed with a record of the occasions: 18th May .... at dinner, a chicken consumed (lines 48-9); 25th December, when Brocchus was dining (lines 63-4); 1st March, for the Lords, for the *Matronalia*....(lines 70-1); 1st May for the governor's visit, consumed at lunch....(lines 95-7).<sup>129</sup>

It is clear from the texts listed in Table P6 that those who served the domestic administration of the Period 3 *praetorium* at Vindolanda were fully trained in scribal skills. Whether they were slaves, civilians or soldiers they were required to meet high military standards of efficiency, with the requisite level of literacy and numeracy. The Vindolanda tablets show that, even in an auxiliary fort, on the far northern frontier of the Empire, meticulous written records had to be kept, at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century A.D. These are skills which Vegetius suggests are desirable in at least some legionary recruits; daily record keeping was a normal feature of life in the legions:

*"totius enim legionis ratio, sive obsequiorum, sive militarium munerum, sive pecuniae, cotidie adscribitur actis....."* (Vegetius II 19)

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<sup>129</sup> *Britannia xxvii 1996, 307 no. 2.*

N.P. Milner translates *obsequiorum* as special services, but *ratio.....militarium munerum* is taken to refer to normal supplies of food, water, fodder and firewood.<sup>130</sup> The accounts from Vindolanda record daily supply and consumption of such necessities.

### **Personal and social matters.**

The tablets listed in Table P7 all have some personal or social content, although this may not have been the main purpose of all of them. There are many good wishes for mutual acquaintances, particularly for the wife and family of Flavius Cerealis, since many of the texts seem to represent the personal correspondence of his household when he was prefect at Vindolanda. References to social and recreational activities include hunting (233), New Year celebrations (261), a birthday party (291), a social visit (292), the celebration of the *Saturnalia* (301) and a festival (313?). On a more serious note, there is mention of remedies for ill-health (295); this might also be the reason why 50 oysters were sent to the decurion, Lucius (299). There is a reference to a debt of 10 *denarii* (312), some books (333) and the need for special equipment, such as shears from a vet (310) and a spindle (?) for a corn mill.<sup>131</sup> In nine of the letters the closing greeting in the hand of the sender is preserved. The main text of these letters, where it survives, is written by a scribe. The closing greetings are sometimes expressed in very affectionate terms, particularly in the letters from Claudia Severa, the wife of Brocchus, to Sulpicia Lepidina, the wife of Flavius Cerealis: *anima mea; anima desideratissima; soror karissima* (291-3).

One of the draft letters is written on a leaf which was previously used for a list of foodstuffs (233). A reluctance to waste resources of this kind is understandable. It seems that, even in social correspondence, use of a scribe was absolutely normal, and the scribes were clearly highly trained. Several letters, from the household of Aelius Brocchus, are written in the same hand (2443-4, 248, 291), which is an elegant cursive, with long ascending and descending strokes.<sup>132</sup> By comparison, Claudia

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<sup>130</sup> N.P. Milner, *Vegetius - Epitome of military science*, translation, Liverpool UP 1993.

<sup>131</sup> *Britannia* xxvii 1996, p 326.

<sup>132</sup> *Tabulae Vindolandeses II* Plate XX, 291.

**Table P7: Tabulae Vindolandenses II - Personal and social matters.**

(M<sup>1</sup> = First or main hand; M<sup>2</sup> = Second hand, adding additional information; The location of these tablets is not listed in the table, since they all come from the Period 3 *praetorium* at Vindolanda (A.D.97-103); References to Adams are by page number in his paper, The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995).

<b>TVII</b>	<b>M<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>M<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Observations</b>
227 Pl.XV	Cerealis	n/a	draft letter - making an excuse for not doing something?	fragmentary - difficult to say whether Cerealis has drafted this for his wife, or whether this is from Cerealis himself and <i>Cerialis mei</i> is a reference to his son; substitution of <i>valetudinem</i> for <i>natalem</i> and <i>tibi</i> for <i>vobis</i> are further difficulties.
233 Pl.XVI	scribe of Cerealis cf 235, 240	n/a	draft of a letter from Cerealis to Brocchus requesting hunting nets	Written on the back of a leaf previously used to list foodstuffs; <i>exercias</i> for <i>exsarcias</i> , Adams p 122.
247	scribe's hand for address	author writes closing greeting	close of letter to Cerialis with greeting for his wife, Lepidina	most of letter lost; warm close: <i>Lepidinam tuam a me saluta.....frater karissime.</i>
256 Pl.XVI	scribe of Genialis for letter and address	Genialis adds closing greeting	letter to Cerealis from Flavius Genialis, who is "contemplating in the woods"??	<i>per silviolas repto ?</i> Adams p 121-2.
261 Pl.XIX	scribe of Hostilius Flavianus	n/a	New Year's greeting from Hostilius Flavianus to Cerealis	fragment; closing greeting lost; <i>novom</i> added as interlinear insertion
265 Pl. XIX	scribe?	n/a	letter to Cerealis, mentioning New Year's Day sacrifice	close lost; writer puts apex mark over <b>a</b> , regardless of quantity; sender unknown.
274	?	?	close of letter to Cerealis with greeting for Lepidina	most of letter lost; could be from Brocchus cf 247; hand not identified.
291 PL.XX	scribe of Brocchus' household cf 244, 248	Claudia Severa adds very affectionate close	letter to Sulpicia Lepidina from Claudia Severa, wife of Aelius Brocchus, inviting her to her birthday party	Claudia Severa's writing is more cramped and uneven than the elegant handwriting of her scribe; earliest known example of Latin written by a woman; close: <i>sperabo te soror, vale soror anima mea ita valeam karissima et have;</i> Adams pp 124, 127.
292 Pl.XX	scribe of household of Brocchus	Claudia Severa adds very affectionate close on the back	letter to Sulpicia Lepidina from Claudia Severa concerning a visit; Severa will lodge at Briga on the way; greeting for Cerealis	written across whole width of a double leaf instead of in columns close: <i>...soror karissima et anima ma desideratissima;</i> <i>ego</i> - Adams 123.



(Table P7 cont.)

293	scribe writes address	Claudia Severa adds affectionate closing greeting	fragment of letter from Claudia severa to Sulpicia Lepidina	most of text lost; close: <i>soror karissima</i> .
294 Pl.XIX	Paterna? her scribe??	n/a	letter to Sulpicia Lepidina from an unidentified woman (not Severa) - Paterna (?), about 2 remedies, one for a fever	address lost.
299	?	n/a	letter to Lucius, a <i>decurio</i> ; greetings and news that the sender has received 50 oysters from <i>Cordonovia</i> ?	opening and part of address lost; <i>epistolae meae</i> retains <i>ae</i> ; <i>missit</i> - archaic retention of <i>ss</i> .
301 Pl.XXIII XXV	Severus, slave - of whom?	n/a	letter from Severus, slave of...?, to Candidus, slave of Genialis, about money for <i>Saturnalia</i>	letter between fellow slaves; large cursive script; close in same hand as main text; address incomplete; <i>souxum saturnalicium</i> ; <i>sexs</i> ; Adams p 193-4.
310 Pl XXVIII XXIX	scribe of Chrauttius? Chrauttius himself?	Chrauttius adds closing greeting?	letter from Chrauttius (a German?) to Veldedeius (a Celt?), <i>suo fratri contubernali antiquo</i> who is the governor's groom; discusses mutual friends and asks for shears from a vet	informal, colloquial, odd expressions and sentence structure - foreigner's Latin? - <i>tot tempus</i> ? close: <i>opto sis felicissimus</i> ; Adams pp 116-7, 129-30.
311 Pl. XXIV XXV	scribe of Sollemnis	Sollemnis adds closing greeting	letter from Sollemnis to Paris. of <i>Coh iii Batavorum</i> sends greetings and best wishes to Paris and their mutual acquaintances	competent, squarish cursive; uses apex mark four times, over final <i>o</i> of first person singular verbs; <i>facio</i> ; <i>ne</i> ; Adams pp 123, 127.
312 Pl. XXVII XXIX	scribe of Tullio	Tullio adds closing greeting	letter from Tullio to Cessaucius Nigrinus (?), a <i>duplicarius</i> ; he owes Cessaucius 10 <i>denarii</i> ; asks for something to be sent; commends Virocius (?) to Cessaucius	deliver to <i>Coria Textoverdorum</i> ? Corbridge? close: <i>opto bene valeas</i> . (standard closing greeting)
313 Pl. XIV	cf 213 from Curtius Super?	n/a	mentions sending a priest to the prefect Verecundus - for a festival?	fragment; no opening or address; cursive with many ligatures.
321 Pl. XXVII	?	n/a	start of letter to Fadus - hoping things turn out badly for him - joke?	fragment; competent but inelegant cursive; close and address lost; <i>opto male tibi eveniat</i> ?
322 Pl XXVIII	?	n/a	theft of a belt - from the slaves' bath-house?	fragment; beginning and end lost.
324	?	n/a	some social content?	very fragmentary.
333	?	n/a	reference to books - from Arcanus?	small fragment.

(Table P7 cont.)

353	scribe?	final <i>vale</i>	close of a letter sending greetings to the recipient's wife (?), Pacata and all their household	only the close survives: <i>Pacatam saluta verbis meis et tuos omnes, cum quibus opto domine bene valeas. vale.</i>
<b>Britannia xxvii 1996:</b>				
p 326	Maior	n/a	letter from Maior to Coccelius(?) Maritimus about a spindle (?) for a corn mill; some social exchange: <i>salutat te pater meus</i> ; apparently written in bed; note in margin	address upside down in relation to front; all in one hand; <i>cum haec tibi scriberem lectum calfaciebam!</i> marginal note: <i>rogo si puerum missurus es mittes chirografum cum eo quo securior sim.</i>

Severa's close, in letter 291, is cramped and uneven, but it is the earliest known example of Latin handwriting by a woman. Her letters show that an equestrian officer's wife, at the end of the first century A.D., was both literate and enjoyed corresponding with her friends. Literacy must have been a valuable social skill, a pleasure that had no match until the invention of the telephone.

The language of the letters in Table P7 is generally correct. References have been made to comments by J.N. Adams, who deals very fully with orthography and unusual usage in the correspondence. Typical of the scribal correctness at Vindolanda is the retention of the diphthong *ae*, which has been noted in a few texts in the table, for example *epistolae meae* (299), and the taste for the old-fashioned double *s*, after some long vowels, as in the perfect tense of *mittere*: *missit* (299). The influence of foreigners in the language of the letters is particularly interesting. *Souxstum saturnalicium* (301), the expenses for the *Saturnalia*, has been explained by Adams as rendering of *sumptum saturnalicium*, which has been subject to a Celtic treatment of the consonant cluster **mpt** (Fig. 37).<sup>133</sup> The slave who wrote the letter might well have been of Celtic origin. Chrauttius' letter could well provide an example of Latin written by a German (?) who had learnt Latin relatively recently, perhaps on joining the army (310). His correspondent, Veldedeius/Veldeius, could be of Celtic extraction. The letter is very informal, with several peculiarities of sentence structure and expression, including the use of *tot tempus* for *tamdiu* (line 5). The language, the names of the two correspondents and of their acquaintance, Thuttena, suggest that fairly recently romanised foreigners are corresponding in the Latin language. It is

<sup>133</sup> J.N. Adams, The language of the Vindolanda writing tablets, *JRS* lxxxv, 1995, 93-4.

perhaps a language that circumstances forced them to learn, but which then became a useful tool for social correspondence.

**Fig. 37: Communication between slaves about expenses for the Saturnalia.**



*Tabulae Vindolandenses II 301, (Plate XXXIII).*

<i>S[ev]er[us] Candido suo</i>	
<i>salutem</i>	
<i>souxtum saturnalicium</i>	<i>vale frater</i>
<i>(asses) iiii aut sexs rogo frater</i>	
<i>explices et radices ne mi-</i>	
<i>nus (denarii) s(emissem)</i>	

All the social correspondence from Vindolanda shows use of the written language that goes beyond the immediate requirements of military administration. The writers include equestrian officers and their scribes, literate women, slaves and an ex-soldier (?), Chrauttius. The evidence is fairly early in date, the end of the first and the beginning of the second century A.D., but it highlights the mechanism, by which the Latin language spread, and changed. In turn, this leads to a better understanding of how society would evolve, during the Roman occupation, into a fusion of cultures that can be termed Romano-British, but which was probably very patchy fusion of more than two cultural forces. The social pattern, in Britain as a whole, must have been complicated by the arrival of romanised Germans, Gauls and Spaniards, as well as some from Italy, Africa and the Eastern provinces. The relative purity of much of the Latin that survives here, must owe a great deal to the training of scribes for both

military and civilian occupations. One wonders what range of skills were offered by the *tirones probati*, who are recorded on a building stone, found near the west gate of the Diocletianic fort at Vindolanda.<sup>134</sup> There is no way of knowing where they were recruited or whether they had had any opportunity of learning to read and write. The recruiting system, *probatio*,<sup>135</sup> would reveal their legal status and physical fitness but might also take into account any special skills, such as literacy.

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<sup>134</sup> *Britannia* iii, 1972, 354 no. 13.

<sup>135</sup> G.R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, Thames and Hudson 1969, 38ff.

**Table P8: PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND DOMESTIC LIFE - SPELLING  
IRREGULARITIES.**

Type -E: Spelling irregularities. Numbers refer to RIB II, unless another source is specified.

1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).

**Ownership marks:**

2420.18	Medugenus	for	Medigenus?
2427.4-12	Dometi	for	Domiti
2428.1	Ebuti	for	Aebuti?
2501.166	Dubitate	for	Dubitatae
2501.169	Eli	for	Aeli?
2501.305	Lucile	for	Lucillae
2501.370	Maxumi	for	Maximi
2501.377	Melenio	for	Melanio
2501.484	Saese	for	Saesae
2501.553	Tungre	for	Tungrae
2503.207	Bebi	for	Baebi
2503.234	Conne	for	Connae
2503.240	Decuma	for	Decima
2503.244	Disete	for	Disetae
2503.269	Getl	for	Gaetulus?
2503.317	Marcuri	for	Mercuri?
2503.342	Melitine	for	Melitene?
2503.347	Menervinus	for	Minervinus
2503.359	Nevius	for	Naevis?
2503.376	Perigrina	for	Peregrina
2503.380	poeri	for	pueri
2503.382	Postimia	for	Postumia
<i>Britannia</i> xxv 1994 308, nos. 84-5:			
	Silvicole	for	Silvicolae

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

2420.30	Ingenuae vivas (h)	for	Ingenuae vivas
2422.62	mi	for	me
2422.66	valiatis	for	valeatis
2447.28b	clusus	for	clausus
2447.28d	fidis	for	fides?
2448.7a	frammefer	for	framifer?
2491.79	pedicator?	for	paedicator
2491.157	pedicat?	for	paedicat
RIB I 631	mintla	for	mentula

**Education**

2448.8a	cerulea	for	caerulea
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**Fun and games**

2503.119	sac	for	secutor?
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**Personal communication**

*Tabulae Vindolandeses II:*

227	Cerialis	for	Cerealis (regularly so in the Vindolanda texts but Cereali in 261)
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*Britannia* xxvii 1996 326-8:

Vindolande	for	Vindolandae
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2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).**Ownership marks**

2445.32	Ursli	for	Ursuli
2501.349	Martnus	for	Martinus
2501.418	Ostla	for	Ostila
2503.269	Getl	for	Gaetulus

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

2415.54	...citr	for	feliciter?
2491.147	Austalis	for	Augustalis
RIB I 631	mintla	for	mentula

**Education**

2448.8a	regmen	for	regimen
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**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

310-6	rescripti	for	rescriptsisti
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3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).**Ownership marks**

2441.4	eqitis	for	equitis
2442.16	Novixi	for	Novicii?
2501.54	Recini	for	Regini?
2503.444	parbo	for	parvo (uncertain reading / interpretation)

**Fun and games**

2491.151	ecum	for	equum?
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4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections (h).**Ownership marks**

2494.113	Carito	for	Charito?
2503.358	Nicefori	for	Nicephorou?

**Education**

2448.8a	delfinis	for	delphinis
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**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

196-8	sunthesi...	for	synthesi...
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5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).**Ownership marks**

2501.54	Ani	for	Anni
2501.55	Iuliuss	for	Iulius?
2501.305	Lucile	for	Lucille
2503.112	ola	for	olla
2503.364	Odeysus	for	Odysseus

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

(Table P8 cont.)

2447.1a          cacass                  for          cacas

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandeses II:*

203                  offellam                  for          ofellam

299-3              missit                      for          misit (deliberate use of archaic spelling)

310-13             promissit                  for          promisit

6. Loss of final consonant.**Ownership marks**

2501.533          Tallu                      for          Tallus?

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

2422.77          vita volo                  for          vitam volo

2503.111          lagona                      for          lagonam? (sc. dedit?)

**Fun and games**

2503.119          Valentinu                  for          Valentinus

7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.**Ownership marks**

2427.21.i          Cresces                  for          Crescens

2503.311          Masuetus                  for          Mansuetus

**Education**

2448.8a          scultum                      for          sculptum

**Fun and games**

2440.28          caled(ae)                  for          calendae

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandeses II:*

301-3              souxtum                  for          sumptum

302-3              formonsa (h)              for          formosa

8. Various renderings of x.**Ownership marks**

2417.18          Isxarninus                  for          Ixarninus?

2503.256          Exuperatus                  for          Exsuperatus

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandeses II:*

301-4              sexs                          for          sex

9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections (h).**Ownership marks**

2441.9              Iuliao                      for          Iuliavo? (uncertain reading)

2501.525          Suais                          for          Suavis?

2503.222          Caus                          for          Cavus?

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

(Table P8 cont.)

2503.104 solenda for solvenda?

**Education**

2491.147 Austalis for Augustalis

10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.**Ownership marks**

2501.261 Ipponic(i) for Hipponici

2503.170 Abiti for Habiti

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

2448.7a omicida for homicida

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

291-14 have for ave (deliberate archaism)

11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.**Ownership marks:**

2420.17 deii for dei

2420.20 deii for dei

2420.21 deii for dei

**Salutations, slogans, charms and obscenities**

2420.I Aeternus vivas for Aeterne vivas (vocative case ceased to be used)

2491.147 dibus for diebus

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

261 novom for novum (archaic spelling, not an error)

12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

233 exercias for exsarcias

13. Confusion over personal names.**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

192-1 a Gavvone for a Gavone? (see ratio Gavonis in line 10))

310-1 Veldeio for Veldedeio? (both spellings occur in this letter)

14. Grammatical confusion. (references to points of grammar for *TVII* in Adams *JRS* lxxxv 1995 see also tables P6 and P7)



15. Errors by writer.**Ownership marks:**

2415.63 i	<i>Crescent</i> with S inserted above the EN - error for <i>Crescentis</i> .
2415.67	Accidental repetition of A, in <i>Maximu(s)</i> , overwritten by X.
2417.18	Retrograde S <u>before</u> the X in <i>Isxarninus</i> .
2423.23	Accidental repetition of E, recut as N, in <i>Orientalis</i> .
2425.3	<i>Victorsi</i> for <i>Victoris</i> by metathesis.
2427.19	<i>Prime</i> in error for <i>Primi</i> ?
2494.111	<i>Candi</i> for <i>Candidi</i> , by haplography?
2497.19	<i>Nertoris</i> in error for <i>Nestoris</i> ?
2501.9	<i>Sesquplicari</i> in error for <i>sesquplicari</i> ?
2501.48	<i>Amada</i> in error for <i>Amanda</i> ?
2501.50	<i>Ammasui</i> in error for <i>Ammausi</i> ?
2501.69	<i>Asisi</i> in error for <i>Agisi</i> ?
2501.86	<i>AVNIINSS Martialis</i> - a blundered attempt at <i>Aurelius Martialis</i> ?
2501.143	<i>Coriluius</i> in error for <i>Cornelius</i> ?
2501.145	<i>CRES</i> , recut as <i>CRHS</i> - for <i>Chresimi</i> ?
2501.147	<i>Crescns</i> in error for <i>Crescens</i> .
2501.264	<i>IVIL</i> for <i>IVLI</i> by metathesis.
2501.307	<i>Vass</i> for <i>vas</i> with second S erased. <i>Uli</i> for <i>Iuli</i> .
2501.600	<i>VIIIRIR</i> - an attempt to write <i>Verus</i> ?
2503.212	<i>Binis</i> in error for <i>Binius</i> ?
2503.364	<i>Odeysus</i> for <i>Odysseus</i> by metathesis? (Greek characters).
2503.589	Confused version of <i>sum Severi</i> ? Writing exercise?

**Salutations, slogans charms and obscenities.**

2416.8	<i>VTERE ELIX</i> in error for <i>utere felix</i> .
2417.32	<i>VERE FELEI</i> - bungled attempt at <i>utere felix</i> , or incorrect reading?
2420.35	<i>Persveranit viavs</i> for <i>Perseveranti vivas</i> by metathesis
2422.10	<i>Olympei</i> in error for <i>Olympi</i> (Greek characters).
2422.14	<i>IIN</i> for <i>IN</i> by dittography in <i>vivas in de(o)</i>
2503.102	<i>con&lt;e&gt;clamant</i> in error for <i>conclamant</i> .

*Brit. xxv 1994, 308 nos. 80-2: Quissunt vivat* erased, written in error for *Quintus vivat*? (3 spoons)

**Education**

2491.146 i	<i>RECTEBI</i> for <i>recte tibi</i> by haplography?
2491.147	<i>Sib</i> in error for <i>sibi</i> .
2503.162	Confused letter sequence in alphabet
2503.168	CD omitted from alphabet and added underneath; P-X written retrograde above A-O
2503.364	Blundered attempt to write <i>Odysseus</i> in Greek characters: <i>Odeysus</i> .

*Tabulae Vindolandenses II 118: ubem* in error for *urbem*

**Personal communication***Tabulae Vindolandenses II:*

310-5	<i>Tot tempus</i> for <i>tamdiu</i> - foreigner's Latin? Colloquialism?
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## **CHAPTER VII**

### **SUMMARY**

## SUMMARY

A wide range of inscribed material from Roman Britain has been examined for the four areas of human activity outlined in the introduction. For each group of inscriptions attention has been paid to the instigators or scriptors. In Chapter 3, which deals with religious dedications, it has been shown that official military inscriptions are set up by soldiers of all ranks but particularly prefects, tribunes and centurions (Table R7). It is interesting that some recruits to the auxiliary forces prefer to identify themselves by their home district rather than by their military unit. The dedicators in the examples of official civilian religious epigraphy which have been examined include two provincial governors, priests, a priestess, a *haruspex* and local governing bodies. Those who set up personal and unofficial religious dedications often record only one Latin or Latinised name, if they include a name at all, and in most cases it is only possible to guess who they might have been; a few craftsmen emerge and ladies with military connections. Lossio Veda, the Caledonian (RIB 191), and Similis of the *Cantiaci* (RIB 192) are natives of Britain. There are Germans who must have had links with the auxiliary forces, but there is no indication that they were serving soldiers when their altars were inscribed. The high proportion of British and Celtic deities represented on unofficial altars suggests interaction between Roman and native. Many of the small altars might have originated in the *vici*, among the families of soldiers.

Judging from the items lost, the petitioners at the shrines at Bath and Uley are not generally thought to be high-ranking civilians. Farmers or small land owners could be responsible for some curses deposited at Uley and Ratcliffe-on-Soar. In the curse tablets found at Bath, Celtic names and names containing Celtic elements outnumber Roman names in the ratio 80:70. These tablets span the second to fourth centuries A.D., and so the later examples provide evidence of literacy at a period when official epigraphy on stone had tailed off. The miscellaneous religious dedications at the end of Chapter 3 provide little information about the instigators. There are a few more Celtic names and some late Latin names on items of silver ware, thought to have Christian associations.

Inscriptions giving evidence of working life are considered in Chapter 4. Official military building inscriptions are usually the product of military workshops and their quality is generally good at all periods. The centurial stones which mark building work at military installations and along Hadrian's Wall are often crudely cut and were probably inscribed by members of the building party, using whatever tools were available.

Producers of metal ingots and artefacts are named on their stamps but the craftsmen who made the dies for stamping these wares remain anonymous. A few bronzesmiths incised their goods rather than stamp them, so they must have been literate. An illiterate craftsman could use a stamp, whatever material he worked in. Tilemakers generally applied stamps that were cut in wood and they could have been prepared at the tileworks. Tile stamps from Gloucester seem to be produced by a metal die. The stamps could be used many times, but wooden ones would probably have to be replaced more frequently than metal ones. Some private tilemakers produced more interesting designs by cutting them on wooden rollers or blocks.

Potters from northern Gaul introduced the production of mortaria and the habit of stamping their names on the rim. Surviving names of British potters who entered this market have helped to trace producers to particular kiln sites and build up information about their movements and the distribution of their wares. Mortaria made in Britain were stamped during the first and second century A.D.; there are both Roman and Celtic names among those preserved (Table W7). Hand written production marks on manufactured goods are much rarer than stamps but they are far more interesting since they provide evidence of literacy among metalworkers, potters and tilemakers. Producers of less durable goods, such as textiles, wood and leather, perhaps also signed their work but the evidence is lost.

Literate traders are attested in the correspondence of military personnel at Vindolanda. Other merchants are known from tombstones and religious dedications but documentation relating to their commercial activities does not survive. Oculists'

stamps from civilian sites in Britain are evidence of local or travelling practitioners who must have been literate. Whoever cut the dies needed to be familiar with the medical terms and those who produced and dispensed the salves had to be able to read the names of the remedies. One British stamp has secondary inscriptions on the flat surface to facilitate selection of the correct face of the die (RIB 2446.2). Shopkeepers, tavernkeepers and cooks might have been responsible for secondary graffiti on amphorae and other coarseware vessels, which bear records of capacity or content. Evidence from Britain is meagre, however, and it is possible that dipinti and other non-durable records have been lost.

Military personnel of the rank of *optio* and above are evidenced in communication concerning a variety of administrative matters at Vindolanda. This correspondence dates to the very end of the first century and the beginning of the second century A.D. Military diplomas show that official documentation was perhaps bought and certainly kept by soldiers who retired from the army and remained in Britain. They valued these documents, whether they were able to read them personally or not.

Anyone who travelled along the major roads of Britain in the Roman period would have been aware of milestones bearing the names of the emperor. These continued to be inscribed into the fourth century when other official epigraphy is very rare. Those concerned with the transportation of goods, whether in a restricted area close to forts or further afield would be familiar with labels and lead sealings bearing scratched names and official stamps respectively.

Professionals and scribes engaged in matters of law in Roman Britain were probably responsible for a great deal of written material. Unfortunately little survives, though many fragments of tablets, which are as yet undeciphered, probably contain information of a legal nature.

Chapter 5 deals with funerary inscriptions. Setting up an inscribed stone memorial to the dead was a minority practice in Roman Britain. Most of the surviving tombstones come from the vicinity of forts and from highly romanised towns. Over half of the

funerary inscriptions examined record the deaths of serving soldiers or veterans of both legionary and auxiliary forces. A Brigantian tribesman, who served with *Coh. II Thracum* is recorded on a tombstone from the Antonine Wall near Falkirk (RIB 2042). Civilian deceased include women and children, many of whom must have been the wives and offspring of soldiers. There are also slaves, freedmen, fosterchildren, perhaps a few traders and some high-ranking officials. There are two British ladies, both buried far from their tribal home (RIB 639, 1065). A small number of tombstones are of fourth or even fifth century date ; they are crudely inscribed and bear Celtic names.

Chapter 6 covers a wide range of inscriptions associated with personal, social and domestic life. Ownership marks are most numerous because they were often applied to durable materials. Roman, Celtic and other non-Roman names are recorded from Roman Britain. Ownership graffiti are found on pottery from military and civilian sites and continue into the late third and fourth centuries. It is worth bearing in mind that ownership marks could also have been written on non-durable items or in non-permanent forms.

Many prestige goods from Roman Britain bear salutations or slogans, usually professionally inscribed. Similar messages sometimes appear on wallplaster, sherds of pottery, brick and tile; the writers of such graffiti are unlikely to belong to a highly educated social élite. There is some evidence of attempts to learn to write in the surviving alphabets, writing exercises and snatches of verse. Most of these are written on pieces of pottery, brick or tile, although a line of Vergil has been found on the back of a leaf tablet at Vindolanda (*Tab. Vind. II* 118). Lines of verse displayed prominently in wallpaintings and mosaics suggest a higher level of education on the part of their wealthy owners; examples are found at villa sites. Domestic and personal matters are the subject of some of the Vindolanda texts. Writers include domestic slaves, scribes in the households of officers, the wives of officers and Chrauttius who might have been a German who was not absolutely fluent in Latin.

The reasons for the many uses of literacy identified have been discussed in some detail and, where apparent, the techniques of skilled craftsmen involved in producing the inscriptions. Professionals whose occupation depended on their ability to read, write and copy include stonemasons, diemakers, engravers, scribes, literate slaves and administrators in both military and civilian life. Non-professionals are found to have used written records in their personal lives. Discussion of the implications in terms of literacy in Roman Britain will be reserved for the final chapter.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

## **CONCLUSIONS**



## CONCLUSIONS

Any literate record, distanced by time from the person who created it, can only provide evidence of what was produced on that occasion. All the implications of human activity and capability in the field of literacy cannot be satisfactorily deduced from archaeological material. However, each written record usually indicates that the writer had attained at least the degree of literacy needed for that particular exercise. He or she might have been able to do very much more, but this is not discernible in a single piece of evidence.

Many uses of literacy in Roman Britain have been closely examined in the preceding chapters. It has been suggested that some participants need not have been literate themselves and yet had a need for literate records. Those who produced the written material that survives have left evidence of literacy at a basic, moderate and higher levels.<sup>1</sup> It is now proposed to draw some conclusions based on the various levels of literacy attested. There will then be a few brief comments on the spelling tables which accompany Chapters 3-6,<sup>2</sup> followed by some final remarks and suggestions for future study.

### **Illiterates participating in literate activity.**

There is no irrefutable evidence from Roman Britain of illiterates using amanuenses. There is evidence of dictation at Vindolanda but, since the author of the letter is the prefect Flavius Cerialis, who produced several drafts in his own hand, this is certainly not a case of dictation by an illiterate.<sup>3</sup> One of the British curse tablets, discussed in Chapter 3, is written by a third party who states that he is acting *nomine Camulori(s) et Titocun(ae)*.<sup>4</sup> The couple bear Celtic names and it is possible that they are native Britons who could not write, but were making a complaint to a deity through a literate friend or by paying for the service. This would be a very reasonable interpretation of

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<sup>1</sup> See introduction.

<sup>2</sup> An amalgamation of these tables is included with the catalogue in Volume II.

<sup>3</sup> For dictation error see Table W11 no. 15 - TV II 234.

<sup>4</sup> *Britannia* xxiv 1993 310 no.2. Ratcliffe on Soar, Nottinghamshire.

the text, since no other British curse tablet has this *nomine* formula. The status of Camulorix and Titocuna is uncertain, but they may have owned a mule if *mula* is in fact intended where *mola* (millstone) occurs in the text. It is, of course, arguable that they asked someone to buy a piece of lead and inscribe their message, not because they could not write, but because they could not travel to the shrine on that occasion. However, I feel that the former explanation is perhaps more likely.

Manufacturers who stamped their wares need not have been literate but could have employed professional die makers to produce their dies. Their employees could include some who were literate and others who were not; much depends on the size of the operation. Anyone could apply a stamp to an item of silver, leather, wood or clay. A craftsman might accept that the stamp testified to the quality or quantity of his output, even though he personally would not have been able to sign the product. Another reason for using stamps, of course, is that the result can be very attractive whereas a handwritten mark would not be; manufactured goods were often stamped in a prominent place rather than under the base.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore possible that stamps tell us nothing about the literacy or illiteracy of the people who applied them but they were nevertheless expected to be read.

In present society it is necessary to hold certain official documentation. There is very little from Roman Britain that falls into this category: there are no birth records or tax receipts for example. Military diplomas were perhaps an optional purchase for those who had served for twenty five years, or were retiring from the army.<sup>6</sup> Some of the Vindolanda texts are accounts with goods and amounts recorded against the names of individuals.<sup>7</sup> There is no way of knowing whether the owners of military diplomas or the people named in the accounts could actually read these records. It is possible that they accepted the need for them without being sufficiently literate to read them. Legal documents pertaining to land use and sale might have been required by landowners

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<sup>5</sup> e.g. Fig. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter 4 (Administration).

<sup>7</sup> e.g. TV II 180, 181.

who were not necessarily literate, but the current state of the evidence from Britain does not permit further comment.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the evidence from Roman Britain suggests that sometimes illiterates attempted to write. There are several pseudo-inscriptions on lead tablets from Bath.<sup>9</sup> The marks are intended to resemble writing but no letter forms can be distinguished. A rather better effort can be seen in RIB 1458, a small altar from Chesters; here the writer seems barely literate.<sup>10</sup> Similar problems are apparent in some of the uninterpreted graffiti on pottery.<sup>11</sup> Very simple religious dedications, bearing only the name of the deity, could have been produced by people who were virtually illiterate but who managed to copy the name from an existing altar, perhaps the work of a literate friend or colleague. Some of those illustrated in Figure 7a could have been inscribed in this way, but there is nothing in the evidence to imply that they were.<sup>12</sup> The fourth-century dedication slab from Ravenscar is a different matter. It has been discussed in some detail in Chapter 4 (p. 147-8). There are so many copying errors that the mason cannot have understood the draft and was perhaps barely literate.<sup>13</sup> When a Chi-Rho monogram occurs in isolation it cannot be taken as evidence of literacy, since it is simple enough to be drawn or copied by anyone who had seen it, even if he did not appreciate the significance of the combination of Greek letters.

### **Basic literacy**

In the introduction basic literacy was defined as “a knowledge of letters; the ability to write a name or spell simple words phonetically and very limited reading ability”. Anyone who could do this would be capable of copying simple text. Very many of the surviving inscriptions from Roman Britain can only provide evidence of this level of literacy. It is important to stress that this is because of the limitations of the archaeological record and not because the writers themselves had only mastered the

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter 4 (Business and Law); RIB II 2443.13 and addendum 2504.29.

<sup>9</sup> TSMB 2 112-16.

<sup>10</sup> Fig. 7a.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. RIB II 2503.589.

<sup>12</sup> e.g. RIB 972, 1139, 1140.

<sup>13</sup> Fig. 18 - RIB 721.

initial stages of reading and writing. It would be wrong to assume that what survives is all that they were capable of writing.

Inscriptions which could have been produced by people with only basic literacy include: very simple altars and votive offerings;<sup>14</sup> curse tablets bearing only names crudely incised in capital letters;<sup>15</sup> functional building stones recording legion, cohort or century;<sup>16</sup> simple hand written production marks and records of weight and measure; tilemakers' notes;<sup>17</sup> hand-written potters' marks;<sup>18</sup> lead tags inscribed with the names of cohorts, centuries and cavalry regiments; ownership marks scored on items of pottery, bone, leather, wood, and stone; casual graffiti on wallplaster, pottery, brick and tile, alphabets and a writing exercises; late tombstones crudely inscribed with just a name;<sup>19</sup> the closing greeting added in a second hand in some of the Vindolanda tablets.

Although in practical terms all these inscriptions could have been produced by people with only basic literacy, caution should be exercised before concluding that they were. Much depends on the environment in which they were produced and the lifestyle of the writers. Many of the simple religious dedications come from areas of military occupation. It is not known whether personal altars and votives were inscribed by serving soldiers, veterans, children and relatives of soldiers, traders who followed in the wake of the army or native Britons who adopted the epigraphic habit through contact with the army. There are many possibilities, but the common link is the army. This is without doubt. Anyone who lived inside or close to a fort would see inscribed stones every day: impressive dedication slabs, official altars, statue bases, tombstones, building stones and milestones. They had the opportunity to read these, or at least pay attention to any new ones that appeared, and they might also be aware of more ephemeral public notices. The fact that their personal dedications took a written form

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<sup>14</sup> Fig. 11.

<sup>15</sup> TSMB 2 nos. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Figs. 15-17.

<sup>17</sup> e.g. items produced, batch totals, dates, names of workers - see RIB II 2491.78 (Binchester) and *Britannia* xxiv 1993 321-2 n0. 30 (Caerwent).

<sup>18</sup> e.g. RIB II 2496.4 - *Tamesubugus fecit* (Oxford).

<sup>19</sup> Fig. 24 and cf RIB 862, 863, 908.

is in itself revealing. It was presumably a matter of choice. The implication is that they accepted the advantages of written communication and might well have been the type of people who were in the habit of reading the public inscriptions and notices mentioned above. It seems fairly unlikely that they would acquire literacy skills for the sole purpose of inscribing a small altar or votive. They perhaps had other motives, and one should bear in mind that they might have participated in a range of activities which required literacy of which no trace remains.

Since so much unofficial epigraphy occurs near forts it seems likely that the necessary writing skills were acquired in the same environment. Opportunities for a career in the army or for profitable commercial ventures in a military environment seem likely motives for learning to read and write. People who lived in the *vici* might have seen a need for literacy whereas those living in remote areas would not. It has been demonstrated that military administration depended to a great extent on literate records and communication. This obviously created a need for literate personnel. It could be argued that some sort of schooling might have been organised by the army in certain areas, to ensure that some literate recruits would be available and that they would have a reasonable standard of training. The schools on the Rhine<sup>20</sup> might have been replicated in Britain but no record survives.

Simple votives from civilian areas are difficult to assess. As isolated finds they reveal little about literacy among town dwellers or in rural communities. Owners of villas and rural estates might well have been educated and literate. Some members of their households no doubt were as well, helping with efficient management. It is fairly logical to suppose that dedicators of inscribed votives from rural areas were in some way linked to the villa population, but the evidence does not easily support this. There is a small stone relief from Chedworth villa, which is now illegible but which was apparently inscribed *[L]en(o) M[arti]* and an alphabet has also been found there.<sup>21</sup> The two together suggest occupation by people who were literate and at some point taught their children or slaves to write. The management of the villa probably

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<sup>20</sup> Tacitus *Ann.iii* 43; Suetonius *Caligula* 45 3; also see introduction.

<sup>21</sup> RIB I 126; RIB II 2503.166.

required written records. The *Dea Regina* relief<sup>22</sup> and the *Cudae (?)* group<sup>23</sup> are not connected with particular villa sites, although they are both from Gloucestershire where there was extensive villa habitation. The relief from Easton Grey, Wiltshire, inscribed *Civilis fegit*, was found at the site of a minor Roman settlement on the road from Bath to Cirencester. The identity of people who scratched names in crude capitals on pieces of lead at Bath will never be known. They were evidently more accomplished at writing than those who scribbled pseudo-scripts.

Functional building stones, used to identify the work of legions and of particular cohorts and centuries within them, have been discussed in Chapter 4. Many of these stones are crudely inscribed, not because the writers could not write well, but because the materials and tools to hand did not allow for better production; in any case the inscription only needed to be legible and not pleasing to the eye. The inscription is the work of one literate member of the building party. Figure 17 shows the names of centurions appearing on more than one building stone on which the writing shows some differences of style. It has to be admitted that some of the differences are very slight and writing produced on different occasions can vary even if it is produced by the same hand. Even spelling variations do not guarantee that two different people were at work. All that can be deduced is that the working parties included at least one literate person responsible for inscribing the building stone at the end of the section. He could have been the *optio* or centurion in charge or the task might have been delegated.

Building inscriptions should not really be considered in isolation. It is sometimes possible to cross-reference archaeological material but care has to be taken not to go beyond what can be supported by the evidence. For military building tasks related uses of literacy are likely to have involved records at the fort, listing those who have been assigned to a building party. Although earlier in date than many of the functional building stones, such lists are known from Vindolanda. A *renuntium* report might then confirm that all the men and equipment are present and correct. During

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<sup>22</sup> RIB 125.

<sup>23</sup> RIB 129.

the building work there might well be a written report on quality and progress, although no records of this nature have been found to date. Written requests for materials might have to be sent. These are attested at Vindolanda. Finally, when the work was complete, men might be assigned to different tasks, within or away from the fort, and a record would be made. Equipment transferred within a military environment would be labelled with the name of the unit scratched on a lead tag. The current state of evidence from Vindolanda suggests that written reports were prepared by men of the rank of *optio* and above. If men of this same junior-officer rank also inscribed building stones when the occasion demanded, it would be wrong to judge their writing ability on the basis of these simple, crudely incised inscriptions.

Hand written production marks attest the literacy of various craftsmen. Weights are recorded for instance on metal ingots after casting and on silver bullion, presumably so that the correct price could be calculated.<sup>24</sup> Some of the best examples from Roman Britain of hand-written production marks on tiles come from civilian locations. Caerwent has recently produced a tile bearing six names in second century cursive, with numbers next to them and a total at the end. The numbers presumably record units of production.<sup>25</sup> Silchester, another *civitas* capital, has a tile recording a date and an amount and another with a cursive graffito.<sup>26</sup> These and other graffiti from tileries are discussed under “Manufacturing” in Chapter 4. They show that some workers in tileries were literate but it is not possible to tell what proportion were literate or how advanced was their ability to read and write.

It happens that, during the drying process, tiles are a very convenient material to inscribe. They are also durable and so some evidence survives. Tilemaking was introduced to Britain by the Romans, initially for military purposes. Archaeological evidence suggests that tileries were organised with typical Roman efficiency. Batch totals and tally marks suggest that stock was carefully monitored; dates indicate that the drying process was supervised. Many literate employees could have been

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<sup>24</sup> Precise weight, in Roman pounds, of a lead ingot recorded in a graffito after casting - RIB II 2404.26 (Caerwent); weight of silver bullion RIB II 2414. 7, 8 (Mildenhall).

<sup>25</sup> *Britannia* xxiv 1993 321-2 no.30.

<sup>26</sup> RIB II 2491.14; RIB II 2491 1 (*Fecit tubu(m) Clementinus*).

involved. This raises the question: how many other businesses were highly organised and used written records to aid efficiency? Tileries are not likely to be the only examples but tiles have a better chance of surviving than many materials. Perhaps the makers of hooded cloaks, blanket weavers, suppliers of foodstuffs also marked their stock. Workers who use literacy in their employment also have this facility in their private lives.

Ownership marks have been discussed at some length in Chapter 6. The most significant points for this concluding chapter are: the fact that they are all hand-written; they are found at civilian as well as military locations; and they continued to be used into the fourth century. Writing one's name is the most basic level of literacy. It is not, however, the only way of marking property. Any personal mark or symbol could be used as a means of identification. An inscribed X is more common than any other single letter or number on pieces of pottery and could be an ownership mark. Other identification marks could have been lost or missed. The use of a literate ownership mark says a great deal about the environment in which it was used. Names are written to be read and not only by their owners. For the system to work, written communication must be established procedure within that milieu. It therefore follows that where literate ownership marks are found, other uses of writing probably existed. The vast majority of ancient written material does not survive into the archaeological record. Without ownership marks, some sites would have no evidence of literacy at all. With them, basic literacy is proven, but there is always the suspicion that there was perhaps very much more. Ownership marks alone are unlikely to be a representative sample of the uses of literacy at any particular location.

Social change tends to proceed at a slower pace than political change. The habit of writing one's name on property could not have been established in Britain before the arrival of the Romans. It was a military habit and could have passed from there to the civilian population, but civilian incomers might also have helped to introduce the practice. There is evidence that ownership graffiti from civilian sites, *vici*, *civitas* capitals, small towns and villas continued into the fourth century. The implications of this should be carefully considered. The continued use of even these very basic



written records must imply that some families became literate and passed on the skill to successive generations. Romanised centres carried on being romanised at least in this respect. It is not exactly a manifestation of the words of Tacitus, which were quoted in the introduction,<sup>27</sup> but if romanised families continued to be literate, they must have found a means of educating their children in Britain, either at home or in schools. Literacy continues over too long a period to claim that only incoming administrators were literate or the “sons of chiefs” were sent abroad to study. The surviving evidence does not show this. It reveals people scratching their names on pottery for purposes which served everyday life. This is not to claim universal literacy, but a degree of literacy seems to have been fairly widespread. Casual graffiti and obscenities scratched on wallplaster or sherds of pottery brick and tile support this.

The means by which literacy was transmitted cannot be detected from archaeological material in any satisfactory way. Alphabets and writing exercises have been discussed in Chapter 6 but these must be the tip of the iceberg. Military schools, schools in towns, private tutors, informal instruction among family and friends are all possibilities. Inevitably some communities will have been better served than others. As long as public life and military service created a need for literates, the need will have been met somehow. Private individuals perhaps saw to the training of literate staff to run their estates and businesses. From an employee’s point of view, literacy must have been a very marketable skill, and trained scribes or secretaries must have had a much more comfortable life than manual workers. A literate slave probably commanded a very high price.

The work of scribes can, of course, be identified in the Vindolanda tablets. In many cases a practised scribe has written the main text and the closing greeting has been added by the person who sent the letter.<sup>28</sup> Some of the closing greetings are very simple and, in theory, could indicate only basic literacy on the part of the writer.

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<sup>27</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola* 21: “Agricola trained the sons of chiefs in the liberal arts and expressed a preference for British natural ability over the trained skill of the Gauls. The result was that, in place of distaste for the Latin language, came a passion to command it”.

<sup>28</sup> Tables P6 and P7.

This, however, is not a reasonable deduction. The texts, both official and private, represent communication between officers and their families. The wife of a prefect writes her own closing greeting; a writing exercise has been found which might be the work of one of the children of Flavius Cerialis.<sup>29</sup> All the Vindolanda texts belong to a highly literate milieu, but one in which it was custom and practice for scribes to serve officers and their household. There is no reason to believe that those who added a simple closing greeting could not have written the whole letter if they chose. They probably read the ones that they received. Many of the letters from Vindolanda are about very mundane matters. Scribes must have represented a labour-saving device. Officers could delegate writing tasks to scribes, either by verbal instruction or through efficient organisation of routine, so that they themselves could attend to more important matters.

### **Moderate literacy.**

Much of the inscribed material from Roman Britain is evidence of a moderate degree of literacy. I have suggested in the introduction that this could involve knowledge of formulae, the ability to compose simple sentences in Latin and reading and copying skills. The sort of inscriptions which would require these abilities are: simple religious dedications which include the name of the deity, the dedicator's name, a verb and customary formula; commemorative and honorific building inscriptions; tombstones; milestones; professionally produced dies, moulds, and oculists' stamps; salutations and slogans; lines of verse written from memory; lists and accounts; military reports; some legal documents. The majority of these inscriptions involve the work of professionals such as stonemasons, die-makers, jewellers, engravers and scribes or secretaries. As well as being able to fashion products from the material in which they worked, many craftsmen had to have a degree of literacy.

Most of the surviving official inscriptions on stone from Roman Britain were generated by the army and many civilian examples are clustered around military sites. Both military and civilian stonemasons were probably at work but the degree of

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<sup>29</sup> TV II 118.

uniformity in style and standards in western provinces indicates special training. Commissioning an inscription on stone will usually have involved use of a draft. Many of the errors which occur are probably caused by mis-copying.<sup>30</sup> The draft could be supplied by the person instigating the inscription, either writing it down personally or using his own scribe. Alternatively the draft could be prepared in the mason's workshop. This is perhaps more likely, since there would need to be some negotiation about style, formulae and decoration. Preparation of a draft is certainly a literate skill and so is transferring the draft onto the stone using a brush, chalk, charcoal or by lightly scoring the surface. The clients need not be literate but, if they were concerned with setting up something as durable as an inscription on stone, it is tempting to think that most were. The actual stonecutter would not have to be literate unless he was the same person who transferred the draft. A few of the errors seem to indicate genuine lack of understanding, rather than accidental mis-copying.<sup>31</sup>

It is to be expected that busy workshops would employ experienced craftsmen and apprentices who were learning their trade. There would be a range of tasks suitable for a trainee, whereas more difficult jobs would require an expert. Some craftsmen might have specialised in relief, leaving the written work to someone else. This was perhaps the case with some of the altars from Maryport on which the quality of the decoration is far superior to that of the lettering.<sup>32</sup> Milestones might have been cut and re-cut *in situ* because of their size. A draft could have been taken to the site and copied there. The lettering on British examples is often very crude.

Transference of skills between provinces has already been noted. Some military tombstones from Roman Britain share features with examples from the Rhineland. Attention has also been drawn to similarities of relief on some of the later tombstones from the north of Britain and reliefs from *Gallia Belgica*.<sup>33</sup> Gaulish masons probably came to Britain just as Gaulish potters did, attracted by new commercial

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<sup>30</sup> See Tables W11 and F18 no.15.

<sup>31</sup> Table R12 no.15 - RIB 2146; Table W11 no.15 - RIB 721, 2249.

<sup>32</sup> RIB 816, 827.

<sup>33</sup> Chapter 5: Figs.28, 29a, 29b.

opportunities. A mason from Chartres is in fact recorded at Bath<sup>34</sup> but native British masons were also at work, for example in the Cotswold area.<sup>35</sup>

Good quality dies for stamping the products of potters, metal workers, tile manufacturers and the preparation of oculists could require the skills of professional die-cutters. One die maker's name survives on a clay die from the *vicus* at Malton.<sup>36</sup> This particular die is not of very good quality and it is uncertain what it was used to stamp. Many dies could have been produced in the workshops in which they were used, since the materials and skills required were generally available there or would not be difficult to acquire. Dies for stamping mortaria could be made from clay or wood.<sup>37</sup> The letters were usually cut retrograde to give an orthograde impression and some decoration might be included. If a "professional" produced them, he need be no more than a skilled and literate potter, but it is a fairly delicate task.

Since it is known that potters used several dies in their working life, it possible that early ones became worn, or were lost or broken and had to be replaced. It would clearly be convenient if this could be done on the premises. Some craftsmen were obviously more skilled at making them than others, since some later versions of the same stamp show a marked deterioration in quality. Several potters' stamps show this phenomenon but it is particularly apparent in the case of the potter Doinus, at Brockley Hill. Some later stamps have dubious spellings which makes one wonder how they were produced; presumably it was not by Doinus himself. Mortaria are usually stamped on the rim and unless the die is very carefully applied the impression is not always clear or complete. It could be that a craftsman attempted to make a new die by copying the name from an imperfect impression of an old die and got it wrong, but this would imply that he was virtually illiterate.

Tile stamps were mostly cut in wood and most of them conveyed only simple information. It was inevitable that they would eventually become clogged, damaged

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<sup>34</sup> RIB 149.

<sup>35</sup> RIB 105.

<sup>36</sup> Chapter 4 (Manufacturing); RIB II 2409.24: *cela<i>vi Vali(rius) Valentinus*.

<sup>37</sup> Chapter 4 (Manufacturing).

or broken and would have to be replaced. The early versions of *Leg II Aug* stamps from Caerleon have well-formed letters and read left to right, whereas some of the later ones are less clear or retrograde. It is unlikely that the skill required to make these stamps had to be sought outside the tilery. There is plenty of evidence of literacy among tile-workers. The design of the private tilemaker Cabriabanus must have been quite difficult to accomplish.<sup>38</sup> The words had to be cut retrograde onto a wooden(?) roller, or possibly a block. Anything written retrograde is easier copied from a normal draft, but in this case the first word, *parietalem*, is inverted to the rest of the text and retrograde in impression. He nevertheless achieved a striking and unique design in handwriting which flows very naturally.

Metal goods could be stamped using a punch or the production mark could be impressed in the mould used for casting. Some lead vessels from Roman Britain bear rather poor inscriptions.<sup>39</sup> If the craftsman used a die impressed into the sand of the mould, it would be necessary to begin with an orthograde reading to make a retrograde impression which would then read the right way when cast. The same method could be used in a clay mould, or the inscription could be cut in the clay before it was fully hardened. The process is no more difficult than making stamps on pottery or tiles, but some British craftsmen seem to have had problems.<sup>40</sup>

Oculists' stamps appear to have been produced professionally because of their quality and the specialised information which they contain. A draft would probably be essential since they are cut retrograde. They contain relatively few spelling irregularities and none that would obscure the intended reading. This suggests that the die-cutters either had medical knowledge, or worked from very clear drafts. Someone who was used to engraving metal might be capable of the work, since a very fine cutting tool was needed.

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<sup>38</sup> Box flue tiles reading *parietalem Cabiabanu(s) farbicavi* from sites in Kent - see Chapter 4 and RIB II 2490.6.

<sup>39</sup> Chapter 4 (Manufacturing).

<sup>40</sup> RIB II 2416.2,3,7.

Makers of jewellery, vessels and other artefacts inscribed with slogans would have to include literacy in their range of professional skills. The practicalities of putting written messages on their goods would involve many of the same skills needed to produce other forms of decoration. They probably produced inscribed and uninscribed goods according to demand. If they had a sufficiently large business, their level of literacy might have been more important for organising their business affairs and keeping records of their stock and orders for goods. It just happens that the only archaeological evidence of literacy is a few inscribed wares.

The final inscriptions which reveal moderate literacy are all hand-written. If the metrical fragments inscribed on tiles were written from memory, this would represent a higher attainment in literacy than if they were copied.<sup>41</sup> Lists and reports found in the Vindolanda documents need not have been prepared by people with very highly developed literacy skills. However the impression gained from the Vindolanda texts as a whole suggests that the people involved were accomplished at reading and writing. Different degrees of linguistic sophistication have already been discussed.<sup>42</sup> However, it would be unwise to consider here whether an *optio* who wrote a *renuntium* report, for example, was any less literate than centurions who wrote correspondence about supplies. They are just performing different tasks. They must all have received formal education and training somewhere, and this would equip them to deal with all the clerical duties that they were to experience.

### **Higher level of literacy.**

This would involve the ability to read any form of written Latin and well developed composition skills. Inscriptions which fall into this category would include the more unusual religious dedications, in which additional information is given about the dedicators or the reasons for the dedications, and those that are written in verse. Some sepulchral inscriptions display similar features. The curse tablets, although formulaic, are not rigidly so, and the ability to manipulate formulae, to include

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<sup>41</sup> RIB II 2491.147-8.

<sup>42</sup> Chapters 3 and 6

information relevant to a particular case and to adapt the manner of address shows higher level literacy skills. The lengthier texts from Vindolanda should also be considered here.

The factor which sets these inscriptions apart from most of those which reveal only basic or moderate literacy is the element of composition. The ability to compose coherent prose or verse is a highly developed skill which is only usually achieved through formal schooling. The level of education goes far beyond mere instruction in the use of letters and, in some cases it could include the reading and appreciation of Classical authors. Of course, some of the people who have only left their name scratched on a piece of pottery might have been so educated, but that will never be known. Individuals whose written Latin suggests a relatively advanced level of education are listed below in Table C1. They have been selected largely because there is some indication of their rank or identity and the inscriptions include some personal detail. Many official religious and commemorative inscriptions, which were produced in military workshops, also required quite advanced literacy skills. Lengthy imperial titles must have been more difficult to inscribe than very brief formulae. The verse inscriptions on the mosaics at Lullingstone and Frampton are also sophisticated compositions but their authors are unknown (RIB 2448.6, 8).

**Table C1: Individuals whose written Latin suggests a relatively advanced level of education.**

Those who drafted slightly unusual religious dedications in Roman Britain:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rank / status</b>	<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Date</b>
		RIB	
G. Severius Emeritus	<i>centurio regonarius</i>	152	2nd century?
G. Tetius Veturius Micianus	<i>praef. alae Sebosianae</i>	1041	3rd century?
Tineius Longus	<i>senator / quaestor designatus</i>	1329	late 2nd century?
Vassinius	?	215	?
Celatus	<i>aerarius</i> who added a note the statuette of Mars dedicated by the Colasuni	274	?

Those who wrote / commissioned verse dedications:

(Table C1 cont.)

Name	Rank / status	Ref.	Date
		RIB	
?	<i>miles</i>	1228	3rd century?
Marcus Caecilius Donatinus	<i>tribunus</i>	1791	3rd century
Antonianus	entrepreneur?	2059	2nd-3rd century
Publianus	Christian?	2414.2	4th century

Those who drafted / commissioned slightly unusual epitaphs in Roman Britain:

Name	Rank / status	Ref.	Date
		RIB	
?	relative of the young man who died?	204	?
Iulius Maximus	<i>singularis consularis</i>	594	3rd century
Aelius Surinus?	centurion	754	3rd century
G. Classicus Aprilis	heir of a centurion	675	3rd century?
Tadia Exuperata	daughter of a legionary?	369	3rd century?
Avo	father of Aurelius	931	3rd century?
Iulia Lucilla	wife of the tribune Rufinusat High Rochester	1288	3rd century?

Those who wrote / commissioned verse epitaphs:

Name	Rank / status	Ref.	Date
		RIB	
?	A Greek, relative of Hermes of Commagene?	758	3rd century?
?	parent of young girl?	265	3rd century?
Q. Corellius Fortis	father of Corellia Optata	684	3rd century?
?	heir of Titus Flaminius? (Leg XIV)	292	1st century

Petitioners named on curse tablets which show individual features / manipulation of formulae:

Name	Ref.*	Date
Docimedis	Tab. Sulis 5	3rd century?
Docilianus	Tab. Sulis 10	2nd century?
Docilinus	P - Uley	2nd century?
Civilis	Tab. Sulis 31	2nd - 3rd century



(Table C1 cont.)

Docca	Tab. Sulis 34	2nd - 3rd century
Arminia	Tab. Sulis 54	2nd - 3rd century
Exsibuus	Tab. Sulis 57	2nd - 3rd century
Enica	Tab. Sulis 59	2nd - 3rd century
Oconeia	Tab. Sulis 60	2nd - 3rd century
Lovernisca	Tab. Sulis 61	2nd - 3rd century
[...]jeocorotis	Tab. Sulis 62	2nd - 3rd century
Exsuperius	Tab. Sulis 66	2nd - 3rd century
Uricalus, Docilosa,		
Docilis & Docilina	Tab. Sulis 94	4th century
Basilina	Tab. Sulis 97	4th century
Annianus (Son of Matutina?)	Tab. Sulis 98	4th century
Deomiorix	Tab. Sulis 99	4th century
Varenus	A - Kelvedon, Essex.	?
Canis(?) Dignus	B - Ratcliffe on Soar	3rd century?
Cenacus	E - Uley	3rd century?
Saturnina	F - Uley	?
Nase...	H - Caistor St. Edmund	?
Lon....	I - Pagan's Hill	3rd century?
Biccus	M - Uley	?
Honoratus	R - Uley	3rd century?
Camulorix & Titocuna	S - Ratcliffe-on-Soar	?
Silvianus	Lydney (RIB 306)	3rd century?

At Vindolanda: (late 1st / early 2nd century A.D.)

Prefects	drafts believed to have been written by Flavius Cerialis
Centurions	writing reports and closing greetings on letters
<i>Optiones</i>	writing reports and closing greetings on letters
<i>Curatores</i>	writing reports and closing greetings on letters
<i>Decuriones</i>	writing reports and closing greetings on letters
Military scribes	writing bulk of letters from Vindolanda, taking dictation, copying drafts
Civilian entrepreneurs	Octavius writing in person? <i>Homo trasmarinus</i> complaining about maltreatment? Gavo?
Civilian scribes?	writing on behalf of entrepreneurs?
Chrauttius	sending personal correspondence
Slaves	organising domestic supplies

This is where one might hope to identify “sons of British chiefs trained in the liberal arts”, the educated social élite of Britain. Sadly they are not recognisable in the lists. Those named in religious dedications and tombstones belong to a fairly wealthy privileged class. This is clear from their rank and their expensive tributes. They need not have composed the inscriptions personally, of course, but some might, and they were certainly concerned to have some very precise information inscribed. They would presumably have made sure that it was written to their satisfaction. Tadia Exuperata is perhaps the nearest there is to a native Briton among the group. Her mother, Tadia Vallaunius, has a Celtic name and was perhaps a local lady married to a legionary stationed at Caerleon. One wonders how the family was informed of the death of the son, Tadius Exuperatus, in Germany. Official dispatches were probably sent to the fortress, but it is impossible to know whether the family would be informed in writing or by word of mouth.

Most of the lengthier curse tablets required fairly advanced literacy skills. Knowledge of formulae, the ability to adapt them, understanding of sentence structure, ability to convey a certain tone in the message are all indications of this. The names of petitioners who deposited such curses are listed above, but there are several more texts of a similar nature in which the petitioners are un-named. The likely status of the people involved has been discussed in Chapter 3. Docilinus and Honoratus might have been landowners, but no-one in the list can be claimed to be a Briton of high social rank. It remains uncertain whether they inscribed their own tablets or sought the help of a scribe. Some of the texts have a very direct and personal tone and it would not be unreasonable to suggest that some petitioners wrote their own or supplied their own drafts. It is possible that the practical difficulties of writing legibly on a small piece of lead motivated “professionals” to charge a fee for supplying the material and copying out the customer’s own draft, perhaps helping occasionally with the wording of the formulae. The quality of the Latin is variable in the curse tablets; some contain many errors, others few. Honoratus’ appeal is particularly well written, in a practised hand. There are few spelling irregularities and only two small

omissions which have been corrected by inserting the missing letters above the line. It shows signs of very careful composition.

The people who wrote the texts at Vindolanda had certainly received formal training. The educated language of Flavius Cerialis and his probable background have been discussed in Chapter 4 (p.183). It seems very likely that he belonged to an influential Batavian family and had received a Roman education before commanding recruits from his own country here. He is perhaps the German equivalent of Tacitus' "sons of British chiefs". British nobles might have undergone similar experiences and then taken up posts in other provinces.

### **Spelling irregularities.**

Lists of spelling irregularities have been included at the end of Chapters 3-6, and an amalgamation of these tables is included in the catalogue volume. An attempt has been made to make the lists fairly comprehensive but points may have been missed through oversight. It is not the purpose here to offer any detailed analysis of the linguistic evidence, since this would require a separate work. Spellings which reflect pronunciation or changing morphology would need to be compared numerically to correct usage of similar words. It would then be necessary to look at the date and origin of the inscriptions and investigate subsequent linguistic evolution. The possibilities for research in this field are clearly enormous and could cover not only inscriptions from Roman Britain but also comparable evidence from other provinces. The comments which follow are only intended as a brief appreciation of the sort of Latin that was produced by the identifiable social groups, whose literate output has been the subject of this thesis. The discussion uses the same headings as are found in the spelling lists.

## 1. Changes in vowel sounds and related hypercorrections (h).

Changes in single vowel sounds, particularly the confusion between *e* and *i*, can be seen in all the groups of inscriptions but no evidence can be supplied here on the ratio between correct and incorrect usage. The lists simply show that vowel changes were a feature of the speech patterns of all the writers. Military personnel responsible for official religious dedications and commemorative inscriptions have left some evidence of vagueness about vowel sounds but examples are few.<sup>43</sup> Most of the confusion is found in proper names which were always prone to doubt about spelling; *lebertus*<sup>44</sup> and *baselicam*<sup>45</sup> are exceptional. Those who made unofficial religious dedications provide more examples of common words mis-spelt: *aureficinam*, *collignio*, *colligni*<sup>46</sup> and several variants of *deae*.<sup>47</sup> Examples are fairly abundant among the British curse tablets giving the impression that the writers of unofficial religious dedications and curses perhaps acquired their Latin in a less formal educational environment than the scribes and craftsmen who were trained to serve military needs. However, it is important to bear in mind that curses are much freer in terms of composition than religious dedications on stone. In the late first and early second century evidence from Vindolanda, variant vowel sounds are uncommon. The scribes seem to have been trained in strict rules of orthography. Many of the unofficial religious dedications and curses are much later in date, which is a significant factor, but the likelihood of formal training is probably also important. Funerary inscriptions provide few examples of confusion over vowel sounds except for the treatment of the diphthong *ae* which is discussed below. The evidence from writing related to personal social and domestic life mainly comprises variants of personal names among the ownership marks, and there are a few vowel changes in the salutations and slogans.

The reduction of the diphthong *ae* to *e* can also be seen in all the lists. The earliest examples are in a stilus tablet from London<sup>48</sup> and in the Vindolanda texts. It is

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<sup>43</sup> Tables R12 and W11 no.1.

<sup>44</sup> R12 no.1 - RIB 143.

<sup>45</sup> W11 no.1 - RIB 978.

<sup>46</sup> Table R13 no.1 - RIB 712, 923, 2102, 2103.

<sup>47</sup> R13 no.1 - *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> RIB 2443.11.

interesting to note that the Vindolanda examples are confined to letters 186 and 343, which Adams believes to have come from civilian sources, and were therefore not written by the military scribes, who appear to have been trained to avoid this monophthongisation.<sup>49</sup> Next in date are examples found on altars from the Antonine Wall.<sup>50</sup> Most of the other examples are late second century or third century, since much of the inscriptional evidence dates to this period. Later examples can be seen on tombstones and in fourth century curse tablets.<sup>51</sup>

In official religious dedications and building inscriptions, examples of *e* for *ae* happens to occur mainly in the initial syllable of words such as *prefectus*, *preest*, and *Cesari*.<sup>52</sup> Unofficial religious dedications and sepulchral inscriptions provide more opportunity to examine *e* as a first declension genitive or dative ending.<sup>53</sup> This is partly because the names of deceased females are likely to appear in the dative on tombstones. Table F17 in Chapter 5 (p. 258) shows 49 examples of reduction of *ae* to *e* in epitaphs, of which 40 are dative. These occur in 50 sepulchral inscriptions which also contain 41 examples of correct retention of the diphthong. Five of the 50 stones show both correct retention and reduction to *e*. Three of the tombstones which show only correct retention of *ae* are probably of first or very early second century date since they use the *HSE* formula<sup>54</sup> or the full *Dis Manibus*.<sup>55</sup> None of the stones showing reduction to *e* appears to be as early as this. Curses, ownership marks and slogans have *e* for *ae* in both initial syllables and dative and genitive endings.<sup>56</sup> There are fourth century examples but the evidence, as it is presented here, cannot permit comments on the possible increased tendency towards monophthongisation in the later inscriptions of Roman Britain.

One feature of Table R14 seems to be worth mentioning. The variable quality of the Latin in the curse tablets is clear from the fact that certain tablets feature frequently in

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<sup>49</sup> See Chapter 4 (Trade and Commerce) and Table W11 no.1.

<sup>50</sup> Table R12 no.1 - RIB 2148, 2195.

<sup>51</sup> Tables F18 and R14 no.1.

<sup>52</sup> Tables R12 and W11 no.1.

<sup>53</sup> Tables R13 and F18 no.1.

<sup>54</sup> RIB 21, 163.

<sup>55</sup> RIB 262.

<sup>56</sup> Tables R14 and P8 no.1.

Table R14, whereas others appear rarely or not at all. Honoratus' appeal at Uley has been mentioned as a case in point. The writer was clearly very skilled with a high level of literacy. The personal tone suggests that Honoratus might have supplied his own draft. In contrast to this, the short text from Eccles villa (J) displays vagueness about vowel sounds and the curse from Caistor St. Edmund (H), which lists many stolen items, has several irregular spellings.

## 2. Elision of medial vowel and related hypercorrections (h).

Loss of a medial vowel in some well-known words gives a good indication of common pronunciation. There is little evidence of this in the religious dedications and official building inscriptions, but some of those connected with daily working life, some epitaphs, charms and ownership marks show this feature and it gives the flavour of common parlance. The examples collected cannot however show whether the contracted forms were used more or less frequently than the full word. Priminus who inscribed a phallic symbol at Adel, Yorkshire, clearly said *mintla* and not *mentula*.<sup>57</sup> Tile-makers might often have said *tegla* and not *tegula*; one worker has certainly left evidence of this at South Shields.<sup>58</sup> In the Vindolanda tablets, an *aquilifer* of the Second legion addresses his correspondent very warmly as *fraterclo* and not *fraterculo* and the sender of another administrative letter describes himself as *corniclario* not *corniculario*. These spoken forms in a written text show a degree of informality and in the case of *fraterclo*, it seems to emphasise the friendly tone of the letter.<sup>59</sup> The pronunciation of *veteranus* as *vetranus* is attested on two tombstones from Chester but it was probably very common.<sup>60</sup> Shortening a proper name through elision of a medial vowel is found in several of the lists, for instance: Hercli for Herculi, Augstinus for Augustinus and Austalis for Augustalis.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Table R15 no.2 - RIB 631.

<sup>58</sup> Table W11 no.2 - RIB II 2491.7.

<sup>59</sup> Table W11 no.2 - TV II 214, 215.

<sup>60</sup> Table F18 no.2 - RIB 478, 495.

<sup>61</sup> Tables R12, F18, P8 no.2.

### 3. Changes in sounding of consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

Very few examples of this feature survive from Roman Britain. There is no evidence of **b/v** confusion<sup>62</sup> apart from one imported inscription;<sup>63</sup> examples in Tables R14 and P8 are both doubtful interpretations. The Vindolanda tablets have produced four examples of **t** for **d**: *aliquit, quit, it quot*. The first two appear in a letter from a civilian entrepreneur and the others in a note to Cerialis from the prefects Niger and Brocchus.<sup>64</sup>

### 4. Greek letters - various renderings and related hypercorrections (h).

Since in most cases proper names are involved, the difficulty of rendering Greek letters in Latin can be seen as one more aspect in the general confusion about spelling names. Unusual names were often written phonetically. Only those with a Greek background or some educational advantage are likely to have been familiar with Greek spelling.

### 5. Geminated consonants - confusion about double or single consonants and related hypercorrections (h).

It has been seen that in the Vindolanda tablets use of a double consonant after a long vowel in some words was the standard practice of some of the military scribes who had been trained in old-fashioned but correct spelling.<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere vagueness about whether to use a double or a single consonant is understandable and a certain proportion of writers make mistakes. Such slips occur in all the spelling lists without any indication that one group of writers was significantly worse than another in this respect. It is perhaps surprising that a very common word, *annos / annis*, is found with a single consonant on tombstones. The scribes and masons involved must have been trained, but their education need not have been very formal or advanced. Personal names inevitably present problems over spelling.

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<sup>62</sup> Which is found in Greek-speaking provinces.

<sup>63</sup> Table R13 no.3 - RIB 1.

<sup>64</sup> Table W11 no.3.

<sup>65</sup> See Table W11 no.5 (Trade and Commerce) and Chapter 4.

## 6. Loss of final consonant.

This certainly seems to be more common in unofficial inscriptions, where one might expect to find evidence of sub-standard written Latin. Official religious dedications and major building inscriptions have few examples,<sup>66</sup> whereas personal altars, curses, manufacturing inscriptions, tombstones, ownership marks and slogans all provide ample evidence.<sup>67</sup> Loss of a final consonant is not a feature of the tablets from Vindolanda. Date could be of some significance and this feature might have become more common by the third century, but later official building inscriptions from Roman Britain mostly maintain correctness in this respect. It seems more likely to be a matter of education and the source of the inscription. Current evidence seems to suggest that those who were serving the military and civilian administration and producing official inscriptions and documents were more likely to observe rules of conventional orthography in their written work.<sup>68</sup> This is probably the result of their education and training. Evidence which comes from outside the administrative régime shows a more casual approach and more frequent use of spoken forms and colloquial terms in written Latin. Certainly unofficial uses of literacy come from a much wider range of sources than official documentation and inscriptions. The language perhaps reflects the sort of Latin that was heard among ordinary civilians, veterans and some soldiers who settled in the towns, small settlements and *vici* of Roman Britain, whose opportunity for formal education must have been limited.

## 7. Reductions and changes in the sounding of grouped consonants.

All the spelling tables show some changes in the sounding of various consonant clusters. There are no particular differences attributable to different groups of writers and some of the variations are obviously very common and well established such as *tramarinus* for *transmarinus* and *conlabsus* for *collapsus*. *Coniux* also appears fairly

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<sup>66</sup> Tables R12, W11 no.6.

<sup>67</sup> Tables R13, R14, W11 (Manufacturing), F18, P8 no.6.

<sup>68</sup> Their spoken Latin might have been quite colloquial but they knew how to write correctly.



frequently for *coniunx*.<sup>69</sup> *Souxtum*, on the other hand, is unique as a rendering of *sumptum* (expense).<sup>70</sup> It has already been discussed in Chapter 6 and Adams has shown that the slave who wrote this used a spelling in which Celtic influence on the consonant cluster **mpt** is apparent.<sup>71</sup> Several of the Vindolanda texts examined in Chapter 6 are written by slaves. They were perhaps of Continental origin, arriving in Britain with recruits from Germany, but it is possible that later in the occupation, British slaves might have been trained for clerical duties.

### 8. Various renderings of **x**.

The variants show both an emphasis of the **ks** sound in **x** and a weakening of the sound to **s**, as in *destrale*, *ussor*, and *laset*<sup>72</sup> or *Alesander*.<sup>73</sup> As with the loss of a final consonant, there are very few examples from major official inscriptions.

### 9. Loss of medial consonant and related hypercorrections. (h).

Loss of a medial consonant is found infrequently in the inscriptions from Roman Britain and it is very rare in official epigraphy. Occasionally examples seem to show graphic shortening rather than spoken forms: *Flavius* is hardly likely to have been pronounced *Flas* or *civis* as *cis*.<sup>74</sup> *Serus* for *servus* in some of the curse tablets actually shows loss of a “semi-vowel”. It could reflect a spoken form or it could just show a reluctance to repeat the letter **v** in juxtaposition.

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<sup>69</sup> Table F18 no. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Table P8 no.7 - TVII 301 (Personal Communication).

<sup>71</sup> Adams *JRS* 1995; see also Fig.37.

<sup>72</sup> Table R14 no. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Table F 18 no.8.

<sup>74</sup> Table F18 no.9 - RIB 955, 984.

## 10. Miscellaneous contractions and glides.

The main features in this category are: loss of initial **h**;<sup>75</sup> the deliberate archaism *have* for *ave*, in a letter from Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina at Vindolanda, which was perhaps a minor affectation, just as someone might say “farewell” instead of “goodbye” today;<sup>76</sup> and the various abbreviations of *cohortis* on building stones.<sup>77</sup> A tilemaker at Holt gives what is probably the most accurate representation of the spoken form in a graffito; *cortis*.<sup>78</sup> Most written abbreviations include the letter **h**: *cho*. A civilian entrepreneur may have been responsible for an account found at Vindolanda in which the word *Februar-* occurs with an extra **v** sound inserted as a glide between the **u** and the **a**, giving *Februuar-*.<sup>79</sup> This is presumably how the word sounded to him.

## 11. Changes and errors in the form of nouns / adjectives.

These are found throughout the spelling tables. Some forms, such as *dibus* for *dis*, are very early changes which became well established and feature in both official and unofficial epigraphy.<sup>80</sup> Others are less well attested but are symptomatic of changing morphology, for instance: in an official dedication at Bath *serie* (5th declension) is given a first declension termination, *seria*.<sup>81</sup> The five declensions of Classical Latin were gradually reduced to three in late Latin. The vocative case also ceased to be used: thus *Aeternus vivas* appears on a silver spoon from Colchester.<sup>82</sup> A number of the divergent forms found in Roman Britain are not really evidence of linguistic evolution but are just errors on the part of the writers. The authors of the curse tablets provide several examples and confusion about gender and case endings occurs in one or two of the Vindolanda tablets.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Tables F18, P8 no.10.

<sup>76</sup> Table P8 no.10 - TVII 291.

<sup>77</sup> Table W11 no.10.

<sup>78</sup> Table W11 no.10 - RIB II 2491.96.

<sup>79</sup> Table W11 no.10 - TVII 186.

<sup>80</sup> Tables R12, R13 no.11.

<sup>81</sup> Table R13 no.11 - RIB 141.

<sup>82</sup> Table P8 no.11 - RIB II 2420.1.

<sup>83</sup> Tables R14, W11 no.11.

## 12. Changes and errors in the form of verbs.

As with nouns, some verb forms underwent changes over time. Very little of the British evidence comes from official inscriptions. Most of the examples from the Vindolanda texts are long established and accepted contractions, apart from the use of *debunt* for *debent* in the *renuntium* reports.<sup>84</sup> Some of the people who wrote unofficial or personal religious dedications and epitaphs show confusion about the spelling of *posuit*. Authors of curse tablets in Roman Britain provide a slightly more extensive range of errors.<sup>85</sup>

## 13. Confusion over proper names.

Evidence for this is abundant and understandable, particularly in the case of British and other non-Roman names for which there was no established Latin form. The only possible approach was to write them down phonetically but, since there was often confusion about the pronunciation the spellings can be very varied. The results are quite interesting from a linguistic point of view, but they do reveal that the writers were at least familiar with the Roman alphabet and the sounds which the letters represent. The best evidence comes from the northern frontier where the writers might have been of German or British extraction or of mixed race. Variants of the name of the British deity “Belatucadrus”<sup>86</sup> show that some people elided the first vowel and said *Blatu...*, and sometimes the final part of the word was in doubt causing variations like *Blatucairo* and *Belatucadro*. The *hueteri* / *huetiri* / *huitiribus* variants of *veteri* / *veteribus* perhaps show German influence, since **hu** is not a letter combination normally found in Latin. It could reflect the German pronunciation of initial *v*.<sup>87</sup> The producers of small altars from the area of Hadrian’s Wall are unlikely to have been highly educated, but their ability should not be judged on their attempts to write unfamiliar names in Latin. Even people with well-developed literacy skills would have to resort to phonetic spelling when writing an unusual name for the first

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<sup>84</sup> Table W11 no.12 and see p. 179.

<sup>85</sup> Tables R13, F18, R14 no.12.

<sup>86</sup> which has no certain correct form but see Table R13 no.12.

<sup>87</sup> Fig. 5.

time. The people who inscribed these small altars might have been able to write familiar words perfectly well.

#### 14. Grammatical confusion.

All the groups of inscriptions show some examples of grammatical confusion. There is clear evidence of accepted alternative forms such as: the ablative *annis* instead of the accusative *annos* to express the age of the deceased on tombstones;<sup>88</sup> locative ablatives used in the second declension singular - *Isurio*, *Cataractio*, *Londinio*, *Luguvalio*.<sup>89</sup> Where errors occur they must often be the fault of the person who prepared the draft. A cavalry prefect Aemilius Crispinus, of African origin, was responsible for a lengthy dedication to Jupiter and the imperial household which was set up at Carlisle in A.D.242. The draft was perhaps the work of a military scribe who showed confusion about the use of datives and ablatives. It is interesting that the tombstones of Victor the Moor and of Regina at South Shields both show grammatical confusion as well as similarities in craftsmanship.<sup>90</sup> Perhaps both texts were drafted by the same scribe whose knowledge of Latin was a little vague. The lettering does not appear to have been cut by the same mason, but one person could have dealt with both orders and drafted the epitaphs in the workshop.

More serious grammatical errors occur in the curse tablets.<sup>91</sup> The scribes or petitioners who wrote them used idioms and colloquialisms which are sometimes difficult to interpret. These people do not represent a highly educated social élite. Their Latin is sub-literary and probably provides a more accurate picture of provincial Latin than official public inscriptions can.

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<sup>88</sup> Table F18 no. 14.

<sup>89</sup> Table W11 no.14.

<sup>90</sup> RIB 1064, 1065 and see Chapter 5.

<sup>91</sup> Table R14 no.14.

## 15. Errors by craftsmen and scribes.

Accidental errors are inevitable and occur in all the lists. Fairly detailed comments have been included to suggest how the errors might have occurred, and attention has been drawn to any corrections. These, of course, imply that the scribe or craftsman checked his own work, or perhaps a superior in the workshop or a client cast a critical eye over what was written. Anyone can make a mistake, but a correction shows that someone was sufficiently concerned about detail to want the finished product to be without fault. Evidence of this can be seen in official and unofficial religious dedications, curses, letters drafted at Vindolanda, tombstones, and in a range of inscriptions associated with personal, social and domestic life.<sup>92</sup> Faults which actually suggest illiteracy have been covered above in the discussion of illiterates participating in literate activity.

## 16 Unusual words / new forms.

This additional category has been added at the end of Tables R14 and W11. The evidence comes from curse tablets and the Vindolanda texts. Colloquialisms reveal some of the liveliness and colour of the living language and are of particular interest. The adoption of new words and development of new usage in Latin give some indication of how Romano-British society became ethnically mixed during the occupation. The Celtic words *tossea* and *bedox* are prime examples.<sup>93</sup> *Baro* (man) seems to have entered Britain through contact with Germany. It might have had the sense of “warrior” or suggested courage, and have come to be used by German recruits when speaking of themselves.<sup>94</sup> It is not the normal Classical or Vulgar Latin

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<sup>92</sup> Table R12 no.15 - RIB 2143;  
Table R13 no.15 - RIB 140, 652;  
Table R14 no.15 - TSMB 2 61, 62, 97, E, H;  
Table W11 no.15 - TVII 218, 317, 234;  
Table F18 no.15 - RIB 356, 488, 295, 690, 2182;  
Table P8 no.15 - RIB II 2415.63i, 2415.67, 2423.23, 2501.145, 2501.307, 2503.168,  
*Britannia* xxvi 1994 308 nos 80-2.

<sup>93</sup> TV II 192 - account of Gavo.

<sup>94</sup> Adams *Britannia* xxiii 1992.

word for man, but it occurs in several British curse tablets, where it is the opposite of *mulier* (woman). If German recruits introduced the word, it was perhaps adopted into Romano-British language as veterans and their families settled and became absorbed into the cultural blend.

*Hospitium*, which is found in several of the curse tablets, is also an unusual word for house<sup>95</sup>. It is used in military contexts to describe a soldier's billet or the residential quarters of an officer.<sup>96</sup> It could be that among soldiers and veterans it came to have a more general meaning of "house". Three and a half centuries of military occupation are bound to have had some impact on the language and the use of "quarters" or "billet" for "house" seems likely enough.

Some specialised terms associated with commerce and finance appear in the Vindolanda texts. There is probably a wealth of vocabulary from the world of work and practicalities of daily life which is unknown from literary sources. Instead of *area* (threshing floor), the entrepreneur Octavius uses *excussorio*, the meaning of which has to be deduced from the context. The abstract noun *coriationem* is also a new usage which seems to mean "leather work".<sup>97</sup> A recently published tablet from Vindolanda has two new words which seem to be items of clothing, probably cloaks: *infibulatoria* and *saga corticia*.<sup>98</sup> Businessmen who supplied goods and commodities to the army probably employed scribes, managers and secretaries who had to have a working knowledge of business Latin. This is not the sort of Latin that one might associate with a highly educated social élite. It is the Latin of ordinary working people, whose livelihood depended on the ability to keep written records and communicate by letter.

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<sup>95</sup> *Casa* is the more common term which passed into Romance languages.

<sup>96</sup> TVII 156 and note.

<sup>97</sup> Table W11 no.16 - TVII 343, for both *excussorio* and *coriationem*.

<sup>98</sup> Table W11 no.16.

One of the suppliers mentioned in a new Vindolanda text is a veteran.<sup>99</sup> Nothing more is known about this particular man, but veterans might have found it very profitable to trade with the army after retirement and those who were literate would have a distinct advantage. They would be the sort of people who would find it worthwhile to educate their sons and so literacy might slowly spread into the civilian population. It would be an asset to anyone entering public life even in the *ordo* of a small community. If certain sectors of the population saw a need to educate their children they would find a means to do it. It has been seen in Chapter 4 that town councils in *civitas* capitals could organise the setting up of an inscribed altar or statue base (p. 191). It is surely not unreasonable to suggest that they could organise a schoolroom and a teacher for local children if they so wished.

#### Final remarks.

Very many of the inscriptions which survive from Roman Britain have a military source or military connections. This must be partly because of the range of sites excavated but the influence of the army was perhaps the most significant factor in the spread of literacy in the province. Civilians might have become literate through direct or indirect contact with the army. The literate milieu spread beyond the walls of forts through family relationships and trade, but the underlying factor in military areas was the presence of the army. Its internal administration and the control which it exercised externally over the military zone both created needs for literacy. To some extent these needs could be satisfied by drawing recruits from previously romanised provinces, as was the case with senior officers. Prefects, tribunes and centurions all needed a supporting network of literate staff. Officers no doubt sent and received letters of introduction and found posts for friends and acquaintances, but it is doubtful that all the literate staff required for the administration of Roman Britain could be supplied from outside the province for three and a half centuries. The need would be too great and the Roman army was too highly organised to ignore such a need. Some sort of initial training in literacy in Britain would seem to be the obvious solution,

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<sup>99</sup> *Britannia* xxvii 1996 307 no.2 line 22.

especially where local recruitment was involved. It is impossible to offer proof however.

Major civilian inscriptions are less numerous than military ones from Roman Britain, but when items of *instrumentum domesticum*, graffiti of various kinds and curse tablets are taken into consideration, the body of evidence for literacy use among civilians is growing. The need for literacy skills in civilian life is much the same as for military life. Governors and their retinue of legal, financial and administrative staff were chosen from the educated social élite of various provinces. Local government would probably rest with leading families among the British tribes and some influential incomers. Some perhaps had comfortable villas where they might have enjoyed literary pursuits (p. 318). Evidence of inscriptions generated by cantonal councils has been presented in Chapter 4 (Administration), but it is very difficult to identify any native Britons. The concept of distinguishing between native Briton and 'Roman' is not really valid. Throughout this thesis some emphasis has been given to the fusion of cultures which eventually made up Romano-British society. Some sixteen centuries later the prospect of separating native and incomer in the epigraphic record is virtually impossible. In a few instances the evidence of a Celtic name, an expensive offering to a Celtic deity or a tribal name can cause one to suspect that Britons of fairly high social status might be involved, but there is no proof. A list of potential candidates is presented below. The person most likely to have been a British noble educated in the liberal arts is probably Tiberius Claudius Catvarus, but he is identified only from a single piece of evidence, a gold ring recently discovered at Fishbourne (p. 378).

**Table C2: Individuals evidenced in inscriptions, who could be Britons of some social standing:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
Titus Tammonius Victor	rare <i>nomen</i> , so far only known from Silchester (RIB 67, 87) and perhaps Wanborough, Wilts (RIB 2503.421)	RIB 87



(Table C2 cont.)

Flavius Bellator	<i>decurio</i> of <i>colonia</i> at York. Celtic name; no origin recorded in epitaph and so he might have been local.	RIB 674
Flavius Martius	councillor and ex-quaestor of the canton of the <i>Carvetii</i> .	RIB 933
Lossio Veda	a Caledonian making a dedication, <i>Deo Marti Medocio Campesium et Victorie Alexandri Pii Felicis Augusti</i> at Colchester.	RIB 191
Similis	of the <i>Cantiaci</i> , making a dedication <i>Matribus Sulevis</i> at Colchester.	RIB 192
Titus Aurelius Quintus	set up altar, <i>Deo Breganti et Numini Augusti</i> , at his own expense, near Slack, Yorks.	RIB 623
Marcus Ulpius Ianuarius	no real evidence to suggest that he was British, but he presented a stage to the villagers at Petuaria.	RIB 707
Titus Aurelius Aurelianus	<i>magister sacrorum</i> who set up an altar, <i>Deae Victoriae Brigantiae et Numinibus Augustorum</i> , at Greetland, Yorks.	RIB 627
Vatiaucus	has Celtic name and dedicated a silver plaque at his own expense, inscribed <i>Deo Abandino</i> . (Godmanchester)	RIB 2432.4
Verecunda Rufi <i>filia</i> and Excingus	Verecunda is a Dobunnian tribeswoman and her husband has a Celtic name. Her expensive tombstone at York originally had relief showing deceased.	RIB 621
Tiberius Claudius Catvarus	named on gold signet ring found at Fishbourne; could belong to the family of Cogidubnus.	<i>Brit</i> xxvii 1996, 455, no. 48

The evidence for literacy among people of lower social status in Roman Britain is very encouraging. Although Celtic names evidenced in the inscriptions do not necessarily indicate British Celts, it seems highly unlikely that no native Britons are involved. They are found among potters, manufacturers of metal goods, in ownership graffiti from civilian sites, on tombstones and in curse tablets. Some of these literacy uses continued into the fourth century. British deities are also well represented in unofficial religious dedications. Casual graffiti were written on walls, presumably not by the highest social orders. Among the craftsmen who must have continued to make inscriptions in Latin, it is perhaps worth mentioning those who updated milestones into the fourth century. This must have been done fairly promptly since some emperors lasted only a short time. News must have been brought in official dispatches and it seems to have been important that the correct information should be displayed on the milestones. Similar updating took place on other official inscriptions in which the names of officials who had been discredited were removed. It implies that the information was expected to be read. Craftsmen also continued to make inscribed prestige goods for wealthy villa owners.

There is enough evidence to show that literacy was not confined to the upper echelons of society in Roman Britain. Some of the uses are so mundane and casual that they suggest writing was quite a normal activity for many people. The evidence does not suggest that literacy was universal or that attainment levels were generally high. The archaeological record cannot possibly reveal this. There must have been many areas of the country where literacy was unknown. Even in romanised areas it is impossible to know what proportion of the population would be literate. No schools can be identified in Roman Britain. The way in which literacy was transmitted has to be a matter of speculation. It is likely to have differed from community to community. Provision must have been patchy and perhaps sporadic. Enlightened individuals might have made their own arrangements or tried to help the needs of their community. Large towns might have had schools; perhaps some military areas had organised schooling. The uses of literacy in the province and the length of time which they span suggest that people across the social spectrum had an interest in gaining or transmitting literacy skills.

Whether these people form any sort of social élite is a matter of opinion. Certainly the notion that literacy in Roman Britain was confined to a wealthy, educated upper class can be rejected. Those who were employed as clerks might have had a more comfortable life than manual workers and could possibly be regarded as some sort of élite within the workforce. Town dwellers who could read public notices or scratch slogans on walls might have thought they were in some way better than those who could not. Such speculation, however, is unprofitable. It seems best to accept that the rich blend of cultures which permeated Romano-British society produced literate people of widely differing social backgrounds. There is no need to label them further.

#### Ideas for future study.

There is always the hope that archaeologists will discover more material that is as richly rewarding as the Vindolanda tablets and the curses from Bath and Uley. A chance find from a centre such as London, York or a *civitas* capital could add enormously to the knowledge of civilian communities in Roman Britain. This can be no more than a hope, however. The reality is that there are inscribed pieces of lead, stilus and leaf tablets which have not yet been deciphered. Particularly welcome is the discovery of more tablets at Vindolanda, which have been recovered from the bonfire site.<sup>100</sup> Their publication is eagerly awaited.

This thesis deals only with inscriptions from Roman Britain and omits the study of coins. There is therefore scope for comparison with material from other western provinces, perhaps, Gaul, Germany or Spain and with inscriptions on coins. Use of formulae, lettering, linguistic detail, relief and iconography all offer suitable areas for study. Within Britain attention could be given to the sub-Roman period. It seems unlikely that there was no continued use of literacy beyond the first quarter of the fifth century. Tombstones and early Christian monuments would appear to be the obvious starting point.

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<sup>100</sup> R. Birley, *Current Archaeology* 153, p. 348.

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